



# **Study supporting the 2020 evaluation of promoting social inclusion, combatting poverty and any discrimination by the European Social Fund (Thematic Objective 09)**

Final Report

Written by ICF, Cambridge Econometrics and Eurocentre  
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evaluation of promoting  
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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

AIR	Annual Implementation Report
AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
AROPE	Number of persons at risk of poverty and social inclusion
CSOs	Civil society organisations
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EQ	Evaluation question
FEAD	Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived
IP	Investment Priority
MS	Member State
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NUTS-2	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics - basic regions for the application of regional policies
SCO	Simplified Cost Option
SFC	System for Fund Management in the European Union
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TO9	ESF support to social inclusion

## Glossary of ESF programme and monitoring terminology

<b>Achievement rate</b>	The level of recorded values for specific output and specific results in relation to target values set for the end of the programming period.
<b>Beneficiary</b>	A public or private body and, for the purposes of the EAFRD Regulation and of the EMFF Regulation only, a natural person, responsible for initiating or both initiating and implementing operations; and in the context of State aid schemes, as defined in point 13 of this Article, the body which receives the aid; and in the context of financial instruments under Title IV of Part Two of this Regulation, it means the body that implements the financial instrument or the fund of funds as appropriate.
<b>Category of regions</b>	The categorisation of regions as 'less developed regions', 'transition regions' or 'more developed regions' in accordance with Article 90(2) of the Common Provisions Regulation <sup>1</sup> .
<b>Common indicators</b>	Set of common output indicators and common result indicators to monitor the implementation of Operational Programmes defined in the ESF regulation <sup>2</sup>
<b>Economic favourability of regions</b>	All NUTS-2 regions in the EU were classified into four clusters based on their score on a socio-economic index constructed using several indicators available from Eurostat. The four clusters represent different levels of economic favourability.
<b>Financial indicators</b>	The ESF monitoring system records three types of financial indicators – planned amounts for TO9 operations, allocated amounts by Managing Authorities, and declared expenditures by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities.
<b>Funds planned for TO9 operations</b>	The amount of funds (EU and national) planned for ESF support to social inclusion for the 2014-2020 programming period. The level of planned funds is set at the beginning of

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 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).

<sup>2</sup> 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.

	the programming period and is only changed through OP modifications.
<b>Funds allocated to TO9 operations</b>	The amount of funds (EU and national) allocated by Managing Authorities to TO9 operations.
<b>Funds declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authorities</b>	The amount of funds (EU and national) recorded as spent by beneficiaries.
<b>Gold plating</b>	Gold-plating describes additional rules and regulatory obligations that go beyond the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) requirements set out at European Union (EU) level, and that make the implementation of ESIF more costly and burdensome for programme bodies and beneficiaries.
<b>Intermediate body</b>	Any public or private body, which acts under the responsibility of a managing or certifying authority, or which carries out duties on behalf of such an authority, in relation to beneficiaries implementing operations.
<b>Investment Priority</b>	<p>ESF TO9 (social inclusion) funds are programmed through six investment priorities:</p> <p>9i. Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability;</p> <p>9ii. Socio-economic integration of marginalized communities such as the Roma;</p> <p>9iii. Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities;</p> <p>9iv. Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest;</p> <p>9v. Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment; and</p> <p>9vi. Community-led local development (CLLD) strategies.</p>
<b>Managing Authority</b>	The institution in each Member State OP responsible for the strategic direction and financial management of the OP.
<b>Multi-fund/mono-fund</b>	Multi-fund OPs are OPs that are financed by ESF and other EU funds (e.g. ERDF). Mono-fund OPs under TO9 are financed exclusively by ESF. They do not get TO9 (social inclusion) resources from other ESI Funds.
<b>Operation</b>	A project, contract, action or group of projects selected by the Managing Authorities of the programmes concerned, or

	<p>under their responsibility, that contributes to the objectives of a priority or priorities (Common Provisions Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).</p>
<b>Operational Programme (OP)</b>	<p>The means through which the ESF support was implemented in the Member States, as agreed between the European Commission and the Member States. Each OP consists of several Priority Axes, which in turn consist of several actions, which in turn consist of several interventions.</p>
<b>Participant</b>	<p>The person who benefitted directly from a ESF funded activity.</p>
<b>Participation</b>	<p>The ESF monitoring system records the number of participations in an intervention, not the number of participants. A participant may participate multiple times in a number of ESF interventions over the course of the programming period.</p>
<b>Project selection rate</b>	<p>The share of planned funds for TO9 operations that were allocated to operations by Managing Authorities.</p>
<b>Partnership agreement</b>	<p>A document prepared by a Member State with the involvement of partners in line with the multi-level governance approach, which sets out that Member State's strategy, priorities and arrangements for using the ESI Funds in an effective and efficient way so as to pursue the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and which is approved by the Commission following assessment and dialogue with the Member State concerned.</p>
<b>Priority Axis</b>	<p>. An Operation Programme consists of priority axes As a rule, a Priority Axis concerns one Fund, one category of region, one Thematic Objective and one or more Investment Priority. Combination are possible where appropriate and in order to increase impact and effectiveness.</p>
<b>Physical indicators</b>	<p>ESF monitoring system indicators that include output and result indicators. The monitoring system also includes financial indicators.</p>
<b>SFC2014</b>	<p>The exchange system for all formal communication between the European Commission and the Member States for all matters (documents and data) regarding the 2014-2020 programmes. The ESF monitoring data is transmitted through this system.</p>
<b>Simplified Cost Option</b>	<p>Standardised reimbursement procedures that involve flat rate financing, standard scales of unit costs and lump sums, as a way to establish eligible costs to be reimbursed not on</p>

the basis of what has been precisely spent (and which need to be justified by documentary evidence), but on the basis of pre-defined criteria.

**Programme-specific indicators**

Managing Authorities can define additional output and result indicators to monitor the implementation of Operational Programmes.

**Success rate**

The share of participations that generate a positive result. Success rates were estimated for each of the nine common result indicators.

## Executive Summary

The European Social Fund (ESF)<sup>3</sup> is the main financial instrument for operationalising the European Union's policies related to employment, education, training and social inclusion. It supports four of the eleven Thematic Objectives defined in the Common Provision Regulation,<sup>4</sup> one of which is Thematic Objective 9 (ESF support to social inclusion): "promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination" in the 2014-2020 programming period.

This study took stock of the achievements under Thematic Objective 9 (Social Inclusion) in the period up to end 2018, with the objective to formulate findings and identify lessons learned to support the negotiation of the Programmes for the European Social Fund plus; and to provide inputs to the Commission's ex-post evaluation due by December 2024. The study covered the six Investment Priorities (IP) of ESF support for social inclusion and the 28 EU Member States<sup>5</sup>. In total, 145 concerned Operational Programmes (OPs) were reflected in the analysis.

Reviewing the evolution of the socio-economic context, the analysis finds that in 2014, the greatest concern was on addressing urgent needs related to high levels of unemployment registered across the EU following the financial and economic crisis of 2008. Since then until the end of 2018, labour markets showed significant signs of recovery while the proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion declined by about 2.7% between 2014 and 2018 at EU level. The baseline analysis shows that groups at higher risk of poverty or social exclusion included children and young people (aged 18- to 25-year olds), women, people who were inactive, people with lower educational attainment, people with a severe activity limitation (i.e. a disability or poor health) and the Roma.

The study was carried out in accordance with the Better Regulation Guidelines<sup>6</sup> five evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency relevance, coherence and EU added-value. It drew on a wide range of evidence sources including the Operational Programmes, the Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) for 2016, 2017 and 2018 and the corresponding monitoring data (recorded data for financial and physical indicators until the end of the 2018 calendar year), national evaluations and other relevant literature, interviews and focus groups with national stakeholders including Managing Authorities, a public

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<sup>3</sup> 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, <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/regulation-eu-no-13042013-european-parliament-and-council>

<sup>4</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 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).

<sup>5</sup> At the time the study was initiated, the UK was a Member State of the EU.

<sup>6</sup> Better Regulation Toolbox, Tool 46 – Designing an Evaluation. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/better-regulation-toolbox-46\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/better-regulation-toolbox-46_en_0.pdf)

consultation, 19 case studies, cost benefit analyses, a macro-economic modelling exercise and lastly an EU-level Delphi survey. The fieldwork concluded in the initial months of 2020 before the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak reached Europe. As such, **this study does not reflect the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation on ESF support to social inclusion and its target populations.** Based on a review of planned and implemented operations under ESF support to social inclusion, six types of operations were identified to facilitate a more detailed analysis. These included: Type 1 Employment-focused actions; Type 2 Enhance basic skills; Type 3 Basic school education; Type 4 Access to services; Type 5 Social entrepreneurship; and Type 6 Actions influencing attitudes and systems. A typology of target groups was also identified. All social inclusion operations were classified in terms of types of interventions and target groups to facilitate analysis and comparison. The main conclusions by evaluation criterion are presented below and followed by the key lessons learned.

### **Effectiveness**

The extent to which planned funds for ESF support for social inclusion were allocated by Managing Authorities was low considering the advanced stage of the programming period. Yet, the evidence reviewed suggests that ESF support for social inclusion contributed to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy targets, primarily in relation to the engagement of participants in job searching activities, participation in education and training, and labour market integration.

In total, ESF support to social inclusion reached an estimated 6.2 million participations by the end of December 2018. More than half of these participations were by unemployed people (53%). Two groups at risk of social exclusion – migrants or other persons with a foreign background (28% of participations) and persons with a disability (17% of participations) make up a larger share of participations under Thematic Objective 9 (Social inclusion) as compared to Thematic Objective 8 (Employment) and Thematic Objective 10 (Education and training). However, the share of persons living in rural areas who were reached by ESF support to social inclusion was lower than EU average (16% of participations as compared with 29% of the EU population). Recorded participations by the end of 2018 amounted to 99% of the targets set for 2023. Some Member States exceeded their 2023 targets while others still show a very low level of achievement. The low generation of outputs may be due to delayed or under-reporting of outputs, in particular for operations that focused on health care services, where data cannot be collected on patients to protect their personal information.

ESF operations successfully generated a range of immediate and longer-term results. In total, more than 3 million common results were recorded for ESF support to social inclusion in terms of engagement in job search, participation in education and training as well as accessing employment including self-employment. ESF support to social inclusion has generated other impacts including enhanced access to public services, greater transition to community-based services, and cross-sectoral collaborations to promote innovative approaches.

ESF support to social inclusion targeted a more diverse set of operations than what the breakdown by Investment Priority suggests. More than half of results generated were related to employment-focussed actions. An addition 35% were related to actions influencing attitudes and systems.

In terms of soft outcomes, ESF support for social inclusion contributed to reducing discrimination, improved integration of marginalised communities, changed attitudes

towards education, increased soft-skills (e.g. self-care skills, interpersonal and communication skills) and self-confidence. However, the available evidence on soft outcomes is limited and mostly qualitative, as only a few Managing Authorities have attempted to measure them.

The effectiveness of ESF support to social inclusion was promoted by a high level of multi-level and cross-sectoral cooperation, the correct definition of the target group and tailored outreach, and alignment of OPs with national policy. The high level of multi-level and cross-sectoral cooperation was central to adapting interventions to the specific needs of target groups. Effectiveness was hindered by several factors including delays in implementation, low administrative capacity of beneficiaries, and high prevalence of discrimination in communities where the operations are implemented.

### **Efficiency**

At this stage of the programming efficiency can only be approximated by the cost per participation. The cost-effectiveness of ESF support for social inclusion varied substantially across Investment Priorities and Member States. The large variance in the cost per participation and the cost per short-term result reflects the wide range in the types of operations encompassed by ESF support for social inclusion as well as the different costs levels in the Member States. It also reflects issues relating to underreporting or delayed reporting of participations and costs. A detailed cost-benefit analysis for a selection of projects found the net benefits to be positive in most instances. An inquiry into the macroeconomic effects of ESF support to social inclusion using the RHOMOLO model also indicate positive returns.

Non-take-up among potential beneficiaries was driven by low awareness and limited administrative capacity, in particular to take on financial expenditures without assurance of timely reimbursement. These challenges were especially felt by small and local organisations. The Member States which invested in communication with potential beneficiaries and launched activities to enhance their capacity were able to achieve a better take-up of ESF support for social inclusion.

The introduction of standardised reimbursement procedures known as Simplified Cost Options may initially have led to an increase in the administrative burden for those beneficiaries that needed to adjust procedures and train their staff. Over time, however, the use of SCOs promoted the take-up of ESF and lowered the administrative burden. Another key factor found to limit the efficiency of ESF support for social inclusion was gold plating.

### **Relevance**

The study found that ESF support for social inclusion overall identified the most relevant target groups at the design stage given the socio-economic context. Relevance increased from planning to implementation stage, which in most cases reflected an increased focus on specific target groups whilst operations were being shaped further through implementation. In terms of target groups reached, ESF support to social inclusion reached a high share of Roma and ethnic minorities as well as persons with a disability as compared with other Thematic Objectives of the ESF. However, ESF support to social inclusion performed less well as compared with other Thematic Objectives in reaching populations in rural areas.

The highest levels of funding were allocated to economically less favourable regions, although these regions may have lower absorption capacity. The high level of involvement

of different types of partners in the programming and implementation phases helped to further enhance the relevance and effectiveness of ESF support for social inclusion.

Lastly, ESF support for social inclusion was sufficiently flexible to adapt to socio-economic and policy changes. Operations addressing social inclusion and anti-discrimination issues were relevant in 2014 and are still relevant by 2018. The flexibility of ESF support for social inclusion allowed Member States to deal with unexpected shifts in the socio-economic context, such as the 2015 refugee crisis.

### **Coherence**

ESF support for social inclusion in the Member States was found to be aligned with the overall EU policy framework in this area. However, few references were made to EU policies for specific target groups (e.g. Roma and persons with a disability) while in practice these target groups were frequently addressed by ESF support for social inclusion.

The analysis identified a high risk of overlap between ESF support for social inclusion and other Thematic Objectives. The broad nature of social inclusion actions could offer a way to get around the compulsory earmarking of 20% of ESF for social inclusion. Indeed, up to 55% of recorded participations were for employment-focussed actions that could potentially have been programmed under Thematic Objective 8 (Employment). Actual overlaps between ESF support for social inclusion and other Thematic Objectives are however considered to be much lower, due to the greater concentration on some target groups (e.g. Roma and ethnic minorities, persons with a disability, homeless) and the more holistic approach that is typically taken to address their needs by drawing on a wider variety of resources (e.g different public services).

ESF support to social inclusion was found to have strong coherence with other EU funds in particular the ERDF and the FEAD. ERDF and FEAD provided infrastructure and goods that complemented the provision of services provided for by ESF support for social inclusion.

### **EU-added value**

The study found that ESF support for social inclusion generated value beyond what the Member States could achieve alone. This value was noted in relation to four dimensions that are highlighted below:

Volume effect: ESF support to social inclusion played a primary role in funding social inclusion policies and complementing national efforts in 22 Member States.

Scope effect: ESF support to social inclusion allowed for reach to target groups that would not have been covered with other funds in 17 Member States.

Role effect: ESF support to social inclusion enhanced existing national frameworks, tested new collaborations and partnerships, developed new standards and piloted innovative actions in 24 Member States.

Process effect: ESF support to social inclusion improved the administrative capacity and knowledge in the design and delivery of services promoting social inclusion in 18 Member States.

### **Lessons learned**

The study identified several key lessons concerning the design and implementation of ESF support for social inclusion during the 2014-2020 programming period.

More inclusive partnerships and outreach strategies promote the recruitment of participants leading to greater relevance of the intervention. Cross-sectoral partnerships facilitate the effective engagement with the target group and generate greater effectiveness. The study found that ESF support for social inclusion engaged target groups which may not have been addressed otherwise by addressing their specific needs and helping them get closer to the labour market.

The study found that providing sufficient time and personalised support for participants is crucial to ensure their needs are met and to generate the desired results. The provision of personalised support is costly and requires more intense training of providers. A participatory approach to designing and implementing social inclusion interventions can also enhance the provision of individualised support.

With regards to potential beneficiaries, more comprehensive support as well as direct communications through interaction platforms can promote awareness and take-up of ESF support for social inclusion. SCOs have the potential to increase the take-up of ESF funds and lower administrative burden.

If possible, the assessment of soft outcomes should be built into the monitoring and evaluation framework of social inclusion operations. Ideally a few common output and results indicators should be introduced to measure them, or guidance should be given by Managing Authorities to beneficiaries on the development of specific indicators.

Lastly, other EU funds (e.g. ERDF, FEAD, AMIF) can complement ESF support for social inclusion and enhance synergies, but this requires strong coordination and clear roles and responsibilities to promote the 'simultaneous' implementation of multiple funding streams.

## Synthèse analytique

Le Fonds social européen (FSE)<sup>7</sup> est le principal instrument financier visant à opérationnaliser les politiques de l'Union Européenne relatives à l'emploi, l'éducation, la formation et l'inclusion sociale. Il soutient quatre des onze objectifs thématiques définis dans le Règlement portant dispositions communes,<sup>8</sup> dont l'un est l'objectif thématique 9 (soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale) : « promouvoir l'inclusion sociale, lutter contre la pauvreté et les discriminations » pendant la période de programmation 2014-2020.

Cette étude dresse le bilan des avancées réalisées dans le cadre de l'objectif thématique 9 (inclusion sociale) jusqu'à la fin 2018, l'objectif étant de formuler des conclusions et d'identifier les enseignements tirés afin de soutenir la négociation des programmes pour le Fonds social européen plus et fournir des informations pour l'évaluation ex-post de la Commission prévue au plus tard en décembre 2024. L'étude couvre les six priorités d'investissement (IP) du soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale et les 28 États membres de l'UE<sup>9</sup>. Au total, 145 programmes opérationnels (OP) concernés ont été pris en compte dans l'analyse.

Considérant l'évolution du contexte socioéconomique, l'analyse montre que, en 2014, la préoccupation majeure était de répondre à des besoins urgents liés aux niveaux de chômage élevés, enregistrés dans les différents pays de l'UE suite à la crise économique et financière de 2008. Depuis, jusqu'à la fin 2018, les marchés du travail montraient des signes notables de reprise tandis que le nombre de personnes exposées au risque de pauvreté ou d'exclusion sociale avait baissé d'environ 2,7 % entre 2014 et 2018 au niveau de l'UE. L'analyse de base montre que des groupes exposés à un risque de pauvreté ou d'exclusion sociale plus élevé comprenaient des enfants et des jeunes (âgés de 18 à 25 ans), des femmes, des personnes inactives, des personnes ayant un scolarité plus faible, des personnes ayant une activité très limitée (par ex, un handicap ou une santé fragile) et les roms.

L'étude a été menée conformément à cinq critères d'évaluation des lignes directrices pour une meilleure réglementation<sup>10</sup> : efficacité, efficience, pertinence, cohérence et valeur

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<sup>7</sup> Règlement (CE) n°1304/2013 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 17 décembre 2013 sur le Fonds social européen et abrogeant le règlement (CE) n°1081/2006 du Conseil, <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/regulation-eu-no-13042013-european-parliament-and-council>

<sup>8</sup> Règlement (CE) n°1303/2013 fixant des dispositions communes sur le Fonds européen de développement régional, le Fonds social européen, le Fonds de cohésion, le Fonds européen agricole pour le développement rural et le Fonds européen pour les affaires maritimes et la pêche et fixant les dispositions générales sur le Fonds européen de développement régional, le Fonds social européen, le Fonds de cohésion et le Fonds européen pour les affaires maritimes et la pêche et abrogeant le règlement (CE) du Conseil.

<sup>9</sup> Ndlr : Au moment où l'étude est lancée, le Royaume Uni est un État membre de l'UE à part entière.

<sup>10</sup> Boîte à outils Meilleure réglementation, Outil 46 – Concevoir l'évaluation. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/better-regulation-toolbox-46\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/better-regulation-toolbox-46_en_0.pdf)

ajoutée européenne. L'étude s'est appuyée sur de nombreuses sources probantes incluant les programmes opérationnels, les rapports annuels de mise en œuvre (AIR) pour 2016, 2017 et 2018 et les données de contrôle correspondantes (données enregistrées pour les indicateurs financiers et physiques jusqu'à la fin de l'année civile 2018), des évaluations nationales et autre documentation pertinente, des interviews et groupes de discussion avec des acteurs nationaux, incluant les autorités de gestion, une consultation publique, 19 études de cas, des analyses coûts-bénéfices, un exercice de modélisation macro-économique et enfin une enquête Delphi à l'échelle de l'UE. Le travail sur le terrain a été achevé au cours des premiers mois de l'année 2020 avant que l'émergence de la COVID-19 (coronavirus) n'atteigne l'Europe. Ainsi, **cette étude ne reflète pas l'impact de la COVID-19 sur la mise en œuvre du soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale et ses populations cibles**. Sur la base d'un examen des opérations planifiées et mises en œuvre dans le cadre du soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale, six types d'opérations ont été identifiées pour faciliter une analyse plus détaillée. Il s'agit notamment des opérations suivantes : Type 1 Mesures axées sur l'emploi, Type 2 Améliorer les compétences de base, Type 3 Éducation de base, Type 4 Accès aux services, Type 5 Entreprenariat social et Type 6 Mesures influençant les attitudes et les systèmes. Une typologie des groupes cibles a également été identifiée. Toutes les opérations d'inclusion sociale ont été classifiées selon les types d'interventions et les groupes cibles afin de faciliter l'analyse et la comparaison. Les principales conclusions par critère d'évaluation sont présentées ci-dessous et suivies par les enseignements clés tirés.

### **Efficacité**

Le niveau d'allocation des fonds prévus pour le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale par les autorités de gestion était bas compte tenu du stade avancé de la période de programmation. Toutefois, les données examinées indiquent que le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a contribué à la réalisation des objectifs de la stratégie Europe 2020, principalement en lien avec l'engagement des participants dans les activités de recherche d'emploi, la participation dans l'éducation et la formation ainsi que l'intégration sur le marché du travail.

Au total, le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a atteint un nombre estimé de 6,2 millions de participations avant la fin décembre 2018. Plus de la moitié de ces participations concernaient des personnes sans emploi (53 %). Deux groupes exposés au risque d'exclusion sociale, à savoir les migrants ou autres personnes d'origine étrangère (28 % des participants) et les personnes ayant un handicap (17 % des participants), représentent une part importante des participations dans le cadre de l'objectif thématique 9 (inclusion sociale) par rapport à l'objectif thématique 8 (emploi) et à l'objectif thématique 10 (éducation et formation). Cependant, la part des personnes vivant dans des régions rurales, qui ont pu bénéficier du soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale, était inférieure à la moyenne européenne (16 % des participations par rapport à 29 % de la population des pays européens). Les participations enregistrées avant la fin 2018 s'élevaient à 99 % des objectifs fixés pour 2023. Certains États membres ont dépassé leurs objectifs 2023, tandis que d'autres montrent encore un niveau de réalisation très bas. Il se peut que ce faible niveau soit dû à un retard ou à une insuffisance de rapports de résultats, en particulier pour des opérations axées sur les services de santé, où les données relatives aux patients ne peuvent pas être collectées afin de protéger leurs informations à caractère personnel.

Les opérations du FSE ont généré, avec succès, une série de résultats, immédiats et à plus long terme. Au total, plus de 3 millions de résultats communs ont été enregistrés pour le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale en termes de recherche d'emploi, participation à

l'éducation et formation ainsi que d'accès à l'emploi, dont le travail indépendant. Le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a généré d'autres impacts, dont un meilleur accès aux services publics, une meilleure transition vers des services de proximité et des collaborations intersectorielles visant à promouvoir des approches innovantes.

Le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a ciblé un ensemble plus varié d'opérations que ne suggère la ventilation par priorité d'investissement. Plus de la moitié des résultats générés étaient en lien avec des mesures axées sur l'emploi. 35 % des résultats étaient en lien avec des mesures influençant les attitudes et les systèmes.

En termes de résultats généraux non chiffrables, le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a contribué à réduire la discrimination, à améliorer l'intégration de communautés marginalisées, à changer les comportements vis-à-vis de l'éducation, à accroître les compétences relationnelles (par ex. aptitude à se prendre en charge, relations humaines et communication) et la confiance en soi. Cependant, les données disponibles concernant ces résultats généraux sont limitées et essentiellement qualitatives étant donné que seules quelques autorités de gestion ont tenté de les mesurer.

L'efficacité du soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a été favorisée par un niveau élevé de coopération multi-niveaux et intersectorielle, la définition correcte du groupe cible, la diffusion personnalisée et la conformité des OP avec la politique nationale. Le niveau élevé de coopération multi-niveaux et intersectorielle a été essentiel pour adapter les interventions aux besoins spécifiques des groupes cibles. L'efficacité a été entravée par plusieurs facteurs, dont des retards de mise en œuvre, une faible capacité administrative des bénéficiaires et une forte prévalence de la discrimination dans des communautés où les opérations sont mises en œuvre.

### **Efficience**

À ce stade de la programmation, l'efficience ne peut être estimée que par le coût par participation. Le rapport coût-efficacité du soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale variait sensiblement selon les priorités d'investissement et les États membres. Les écarts importants en termes de coût par participation et de coût par résultat à court terme reflètent le large éventail des types d'opérations visées par le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale ainsi que les différents niveaux de coûts dans les États membres. Ils montrent également les problèmes relatifs à l'insuffisance ou au retard des rapports de participations et de coûts. Une analyse coût-bénéfice détaillée pour une sélection de projets a révélé que les bénéfices nets étaient positifs dans la plupart des cas. Une investigation des effets macroéconomiques du soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale à l'aide du modèle RHOMOLO montre également des retours positifs.

Le non-recours au soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale parmi les bénéficiaires potentiels s'explique par une faible sensibilisation et une capacité administrative limitée, en particulier pour la prise en charge de dépenses sans qu'un remboursement en temps opportun ne soit assuré. Ces défis se sont particulièrement imposés aux petites organisations locales. Les autorités de gestion qui ont investi dans la communication avec des bénéficiaires potentiels et lancé des activités visant à améliorer leurs capacités ont pu obtenir un meilleur résultat du soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale.

L'introduction de procédures de remboursement normalisées, également appelées options de coûts simplifiés, peut avoir initialement conduit à une augmentation de la charge administrative pour ces bénéficiaires qui devaient ajuster les procédures et former leur personnel. Au fil du temps, l'utilisation d'options de coûts simplifiés a favorisé la prise en

compte du FSE et diminué la charge administrative. Un autre facteur-clé ayant limité l'efficacité du soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a été la surréglementation (le « gold plating »).

### **Pertinence**

L'étude a révélé que le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a en général identifié les groupes cibles les plus importants à la phase de conception et compte tenu du contexte socioéconomique. La pertinence s'est renforcée de la phase de planification à la phase de mise en œuvre, montrant dans la plupart des cas une focalisation accrue sur les groupes cibles spécifiques tandis que les opérations prenaient forme par la mise en œuvre. En termes de groupes cibles atteints, le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a permis d'atteindre un nombre élevé de roms et de minorités ethniques, ainsi que de personnes avec un handicap, par rapport à d'autres objectifs thématiques du FSE. Cependant, le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a obtenu de moins bons résultats que d'autres objectifs thématiques en ce qui concerne les populations en zones rurales.

Les niveaux les plus élevés de financement ont été alloués à des régions économiquement moins favorisées bien qu'il se peut que ces régions aient une capacité d'absorption inférieure. Le niveau élevé d'engagement de différents types de partenaires dans les phases de programmation et de mise en œuvre a contribué à améliorer davantage la pertinence et l'efficacité du soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale.

Enfin, le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale était suffisamment flexible pour s'adapter aux changements socioéconomiques et politiques. Les opérations abordant les questions d'inclusion sociale et de lutte contre les discriminations étaient pertinentes en 2014 et l'étaient encore en 2018. La souplesse du soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a permis aux États membres de traiter des changements imprévus dans le contexte socioéconomique, comme la crise des réfugiés en 2015.

### **Cohérence**

Le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale dans les États membres était en conformité avec le cadre d'orientation globale de l'UE dans ce domaine. Cependant, peu de références ont été faites aux politiques européennes en faveur des groupes cibles spécifiques (par ex. les roms et les personnes ayant un handicap) tandis que, en pratique, ces groupes cibles étaient souvent l'objet du soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale.

L'analyse a identifié un risque de chevauchement élevé entre le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale et d'autres objectifs thématiques. Le caractère général des mesures d'inclusion sociale pourrait offrir un moyen de contourner l'allocation obligatoire de minimum 20 % du FSE pour l'inclusion sociale. En effet, jusqu'à 55 % des participations enregistrées étaient des mesures axées sur l'emploi, pouvant potentiellement avoir été programmées dans le cadre de l'objectif thématique 8 (emploi). Les chevauchements réels entre le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale et d'autres objectifs thématiques sont cependant considérés comme étant beaucoup plus faibles en raison d'une plus grande concentration sur certains groupes cibles (par ex. roms et minorités ethniques, personnes ayant un handicap, sans-abris) d'une part, et de l'approche plus holistique qui est généralement adoptée pour répondre à leurs besoins en puisant dans un plus large choix de ressources (par ex. différents services publics) d'autre part.

Le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a révélé une forte cohérence avec d'autres fonds de l'UE, en particulier le FEDER et le FEAD. Le FEDER et le FEAD ont fourni une infrastructure et des biens, complétant les services offerts par le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale.

### **Valeur ajoutée européenne**

L'étude a révélé que le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a généré une valeur au-delà de ce que les États membres auraient pu réaliser seuls. Cette valeur a été estimée selon quatre dimensions mises en évidence ci-après :

Effet de volume : Le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a joué un rôle primordial dans le financement de politiques d'inclusion sociale et complémentaire aux efforts nationaux dans 22 États membres.

Effet de périmètre : Le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a permis d'atteindre des groupes cibles qui n'auraient pas pu bénéficier d'autres fonds dans 17 États membres.

Effet de rôle : Le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a amélioré les cadres nationaux existants, testé de nouvelles collaborations et de nouveaux partenariats, développé de nouvelles normes et piloté des actions innovantes dans 24 États membres.

Effet de processus : Le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a amélioré la capacité administrative et la connaissance dans la conception et la fourniture de services promouvant l'inclusion sociale dans 18 États membres.

### **Enseignements tirés**

L'étude a permis d'identifier plusieurs enseignements-clés concernant la conception et la mise en œuvre du soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale pendant la période de programmation 2014-2020.

Des partenariats plus inclusifs et des stratégies de sensibilisation favorisent le recrutement de participants, ce qui conduit à une plus grande pertinence de l'intervention. Des partenariats intersectoriels facilitent l'engagement efficace avec le groupe cible et génèrent une plus grande efficacité. L'étude a révélé que le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale a atteint des groupes cibles qui n'auraient pas pu être atteints autrement, en répondant à leurs besoins spécifiques et en les aidant à se rapprocher du marché du travail.

L'étude a révélé qu'il est essentiel d'accorder un temps suffisant et un soutien personnalisé pour que les besoins des participants soient satisfaits et que les résultats escomptés soient produits. Le soutien personnalisé est coûteux et requiert une formation plus approfondie des opérateurs. Une approche participative à la conception et à la mise en œuvre d'interventions d'inclusion sociale peut également améliorer le soutien individualisé.

En ce qui concerne les bénéficiaires potentiels, une assistance plus globale et une communication directe par le biais de plateformes d'interaction peuvent favoriser la sensibilisation et l'adhésion au soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale. Les options de coûts simplifiés offrent le potentiel nécessaire pour accroître le recours aux fonds du FSE et diminuer la charge administrative.

Dans la mesure du possible, l'évaluation de résultats généraux non chiffrables devrait être intégrée dans le cadre de contrôle et d'évaluation des opérations d'inclusion sociale. Idéalement, quelques indicateurs de résultats communs devraient être introduits pour les mesurer ou des lignes directrices devraient être données aux bénéficiaires par les autorités de gestion en ce qui concerne le développement d'indicateurs spécifiques.

Enfin, d'autres fonds de l'UE (par ex. FEDER, FEAD, AMIF) peuvent compléter le soutien du FSE à l'inclusion sociale et encourager des synergies, mais cela requiert une forte

coordination et des rôles et des responsabilités clairement définis afin de favoriser la mise en œuvre « simultanée » de volets de financement multiples.

## Zusammenfassung

Der Europäische Sozialfonds (ESF)<sup>11</sup> ist das wichtigste Finanzierungsinstrument für die Umsetzung der EU-Politik in den Bereichen Beschäftigung, Bildung und Ausbildung und soziale Eingliederung. Er unterstützt vier der elf, laut Dachverordnung<sup>12</sup>, festgelegten thematischen Ziele. Eines davon ist Ziel 9 (ESF Förderung der sozialen Inklusion): „Förderung der sozialen Inklusion, Bekämpfung der Armut und jeglicher Diskriminierung“, das für den Programmplanungszeitraum 2014-2020 aufgestellt wurde.

Die vorliegende Studie fasst die Umsetzung des thematischen Ziels 9 (Soziale Inklusion) im Zeitraum bis Ende 2018 zusammen: sie arbeitet Ergebnisse und Erkenntnisse heraus um so die Verhandlungen über die Programme des Europäischen Sozialfonds Plus zu unterstützen und zur die Ex-post-Bewertungen der Kommission beizutragen, die bis Dezember 2024 abgeschlossen werden sollen. Die Studie berücksichtigt dabei die sechs Investitionsprioritäten (IP), mit denen der ESF die soziale Inklusion und die 28 EU-Mitgliedstaaten unterstützen soll<sup>13</sup>. Insgesamt wurden 145 operationelle Programme in die Analyse einbezogen.

Mit Blick auf die Entwicklung des sozioökonomischen Kontexts kommt die Analyse zu dem Ergebnis, dass 2014 das Hauptaugenmerk auf die dringendsten Bedürfnisse angesichts der hohen Arbeitslosigkeit in der EU gelegt wurde, die auf die Finanz- und Wirtschaftskrise von 2008 folgte. Bis Ende 2018 konnten sich die Arbeitsmärkte jedoch deutlich erholen, während der Anteil der Bevölkerung, der von Armut oder sozialer Ausgrenzung bedroht war, zwischen 2014 und 2018 auf EU-Ebene um etwa 2,7 % gesunken ist. Die Ausgangsanalyse zeigt, dass insbesondere Kinder und Jugendliche (im Alter von 18 bis 25 Jahren), Frauen, nichterwerbstätige Personen, Menschen mit geringem Bildungsniveau, Menschen mit schweren Einschränkungen (z. B. Behinderung oder schlechter Gesundheitszustand) und Roma stärker von Armut und sozialer Ausgrenzung bedroht waren.

Die Studie wurde unter Berücksichtigung der fünf Evaluierungskriterien der Leitlinien für eine bessere Rechtsetzung<sup>14</sup> erstellt. Diese betreffen Wirksamkeit, Effizienz, Relevanz, Kohärenz und EU-Mehrwert. Die Studie stützt sich auf Evidenz aus zahlreichen Quellen. Hierzu zählen operationelle Programme, die jährlichen Durchführungsberichte für 2016,

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<sup>11</sup> Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1304/2013 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 17. Dezember 2013 über den Europäischen Sozialfonds und zur Aufhebung der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1081/2006 des Rates: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/regulation-eu-no-13042013-european-parliament-and-council>

<sup>12</sup> Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1303/2013 mit gemeinsamen Bestimmungen über den Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung, den Europäischen Sozialfonds, den Kohäsionsfonds, den Europäischen Landwirtschaftsfonds für die Entwicklung des ländlichen Raums und den Europäischen Meeres- und Fischereifonds sowie mit allgemeinen Bestimmungen über den Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung, den Europäischen Sozialfonds, den Kohäsionsfonds und den Europäischen Meeres- und Fischereifonds und zur Aufhebung der Verordnung (EG).

<sup>13</sup> Bei Studienbeginn war das Vereinigte Königreich noch Mitglied der EU.

<sup>14</sup> Instrumentarium für eine bessere Rechtsetzung, Instrument 46 – Konzeption der Bewertung. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/better-regulation-toolbox-46\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/better-regulation-toolbox-46_en_0.pdf)

2017 und 2018 und die zugehörigen Kontrolldaten (Daten zu finanziellen und physischen Indikatoren bis zum Ende des Kalenderjahres 2018), nationale Bewertungen und andere einschlägige Literaturquellen, Interviews und Fokusgruppen mit nationalen Akteuren wie Durchführungsbehörden, eine öffentlicher Konsultation, 19 Fallstudien, Kosten-Nutzen-Analysen, eine makroökonomische Modellierung und schließlich eine Delphi-Umfrage auf EU-Ebene. Die Feldforschung wurde Anfang 2020 vor dem Ausbruch des Corona-Virus (Covid-19) in Europa abgeschlossen. Vor diesem Hintergrund **bleiben die Auswirkungen von Covid-19 auf die Umsetzung der ESF-Förderung zur sozialen Inklusion und die Zielgruppen in der vorliegenden Studie unberücksichtigt**. Mit Blick auf die geplanten und tatsächlich umgesetzten Maßnahmen im Rahmen der ESF-Förderung wurden sechs Maßnahmentypen identifiziert, die eine genauere Analyse verdienen. Diese lauten: 1) Beschäftigungsbezogene Maßnahmen, 2) Maßnahmen zur Verbesserung der Qualifikation, 3) Schulische Grundbildung, 4) Zugang zu Dienstleistungen, 5) Soziales Unternehmertum und 6) Maßnahmen zur Beeinflussung von Einstellungen und Systemen. Darüber hinaus wurde eine Zielgruppentypologie aufgestellt. Sämtliche Maßnahmen zur sozialen Inklusion wurden nach Interventionsart und Zielgruppe kategorisiert, um Analysen und Vergleiche zu ermöglichen. Nachstehend werden die wichtigsten Ergebnisse zu den einzelnen Bewertungskriterien vorgestellt. Im Anschluss werden die wichtigsten Erkenntnisse herausgestellt.

### **Wirksamkeit**

Die geplanten Mittel für die ESF-Förderung der sozialen Inklusion wurden von den Durchführungsbehörden nur in geringem Umfang abgerufen, wenn man sich vor Augen führt, wie weit der Programmplanungszeitraum bereits fortgeschritten war. Dennoch deutet die vorliegende Evidenz darauf hin, dass die ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion bereits einen Beitrag zur Erfüllung der Ziele der Strategie „Europa 2020“ geleistet hat. Dies gilt insbesondere mit Blick auf das Engagement der Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer bei der Arbeitssuche, die Teilnahme an Aus- und Weiterbildung und die Integration in den Arbeitsmarkt.

Insgesamt hat die ESF-Förderung für soziale Eingliederung bis Ende Dezember 2018 etwa 6,2 Millionen Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer erreicht. Bei mehr als die Hälfte von ihnen (53 %) handelte es sich um arbeitslose Menschen. Zwei Gruppen, bei denen das Risiko sozialer Ausgrenzung besonders hoch ist – Migranten und andere Personen mit Migrationshintergrund (28 % der Teilnehmer) und Menschen mit Behinderung (17 % der Teilnehmer) – stellen beim thematischen Ziel 9 (Soziale Inklusion) einen größeren Anteil als bei den thematischen Zielen 8 (Beschäftigung) und 10 (Bildung). Der Anteil von Menschen aus ländlichen Gebieten, die ESF-Fördermittel für die soziale Inklusion erreichten, war geringer als im EU-Durchschnitt (16 % der Teilnehmer im Vergleich zu 29 % der EU-Bevölkerung). Die Teilnehmerzahlen bis Ende 2018 entsprechen 99 % der für 2023 aufgestellten Zielwerte. Einige Mitgliedstaaten übertrafen ihre Zielsetzungen für 2023, während andere nur sehr geringe Erfolge vorweisen können. Die schwachen Ergebnisse gehen möglicherweise auf eine verzögerte oder mangelhafte Berichterstattung insbesondere mit Blick auf Maßnahmen im Gesundheitswesen zurück, wo aus Datenschutzgründen keine Patientendaten erfasst werden können.

Die ESF-Maßnahmen haben erfolgreich eine Reihe kurz- und langfristiger Ergebnisse zutage gefördert. Insgesamt wurden mit Blick auf die ESF-Förderung der sozialen Inklusion über drei Millionen Ergebnisse in den Bereichen Arbeitssuche, Zugang zu Bildung und Berufsbildung und Zugang zu Beschäftigung einschließlich Selbstständigkeit erfasst. Zudem konnte die ESF-Förderung der sozialen Inklusion weitere Erfolge erzielen; hierzu zählen unter

anderem ein besserer Zugang zu öffentlichen Dienstleistungen, ein verbesserter Übergang zu gemeindenahen Diensten (Deinstitutionalisierung) und die sektorübergreifende Zusammenarbeit zur Förderung innovativer Konzepte.

Die ESF-Förderung der sozialen Inklusion zielte auf eine größere Vielfalt an Maßnahmen ab, als die Aufschlüsselung nach Investitionsschwerpunkten erkennen lässt. Über die Hälfte der erzielten Ergebnisse bezieht sich auf beschäftigungsbezogene Maßnahmen. Zudem hatten 35 % mit Maßnahmen zur Beeinflussung von Einstellungen und Systemen zu tun.

Mit Blick auf die „weichen“ Ergebnisse leistete die ESF-Förderung der sozialen Eingliederung einen Beitrag zur Diskriminierungsbekämpfung, verbesserte die Integration marginalisierter Gruppen, veränderte die Einstellungen zum Thema Bildung und verbesserte Softskills (z. B. Selbstfürsorge-Kompetenz, zwischenmenschliche und kommunikative Fähigkeiten) und Selbstvertrauen. Die vorliegende Evidenz zu den weichen Ergebnissen ist jedoch begrenzt und meist qualitativer Natur, da sie nur von wenigen Durchführungsbehörden erfasst wird.

Die Wirksamkeit der ESF-Förderung der sozialen Inklusion wurde durch ein hohes Maß an hierarchie- und sektorübergreifender Zusammenarbeit, die korrekte Bestimmung der Zielgruppen, eine individuelle Ausgestaltung und die Abstimmung der operationellen Programme mit der nationalen Politik unterstützt. Ein hohes Maß an hierarchie- und sektorübergreifender Zusammenarbeit erwies sich dabei als entscheidend für die Anpassung der Maßnahmen an die konkreten Bedürfnisse der Zielgruppen. Die Wirksamkeit wurde jedoch durch zahlreiche Faktoren wie Verzögerungen in der Umsetzung, eine geringe Verwaltungskapazität der Begünstigten und ein hohes Maß an Diskriminierung in den Gemeinschaften verringert, auf die die Maßnahmen abzielen.

### **Effizienz**

Zum jetzigen Stand kann die Programmeffizienz lediglich anhand der Kosten pro Teilnahme eingeschätzt werden. Die Wirtschaftlichkeit der ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion schwankt je nach Investitionsprioritäten und Mitgliedstaat beträchtlich. Die großen Unterschiede bei den Kosten pro Teilnahme und den Kosten je kurzfristigem Ergebnis zeugen von der großen Vielfalt der Maßnahmen im Rahmen der ESF-Förderung der sozialen Inklusion und vom unterschiedlichen Kostenniveau in den einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten. Sie deuten zudem auf eine zu schwache bzw. verzögerte Berichterstattung zu Teilnahmezahlen und Kosten hin. Eine detaillierte Kosten-Nutzen-Analyse ausgewählter Projekte zeigt jedoch, dass der Nettoertrag in den meisten Fällen positiv ausfällt. Auch eine Untersuchung der volkswirtschaftlichen Auswirkungen der ESF-Förderung der sozialen Inklusion mithilfe des RHOMOLO-Modells deutet auf insgesamt positive Ergebnisse hin.

Die Nichtinanspruchnahme potenziell Anspruchsberechtigter geht vor allem auf eine zu geringe Sensibilisierung und die eingeschränkte Verwaltungskapazität - insbesondere mit Blick auf die Übernahme finanzieller Aufwendungen ohne Gewissheit einer zügigen Rückerstattung - zurück. Diese Herausforderungen sind insbesondere bei kleinen und lokalen Organisationen spürbar. Diejenigen Durchführungsbehörden, die in die Kommunikation mit den potenziell Begünstigten investiert und Maßnahmen zur Kapazitätssteigerung umgesetzt haben, konnten die Inanspruchnahme der ESF-Förderung für die soziale Integration aber verbessern.

Die Einführung einheitlicher Erstattungsverfahren mit sogenannten vereinfachten Kostenoptionen (VKO) mag anfangs zu einer Erhöhung der Verwaltungslast bei den Begünstigten geführt haben, die ihre Verfahren anpassen und ihre Mitarbeiter weiterbilden mussten. Mit der Zeit erhöhte sich durch die Verwendung der vereinfachten Kostenoptionen

jedoch die Inanspruchnahme des ESF, während die Verwaltungslast parallel verringert werden konnte. Ein weiterer wichtiger Faktor, der die Effizienz der ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion einschränkt, ist das sogenannte „Gold-Plating“ (EU-Rechtsvorschriften, die von Mitgliedstaaten bei der Umsetzung „übererfüllt“ werden).

### **Relevanz**

Die Studie kommt zu dem Ergebnis, dass bei der Planung für die ESF-Förderung zur sozialen Inklusion insgesamt die wichtigsten Zielgruppen unter Berücksichtigung des sozioökonomischen Kontexts bestimmt wurden. Die Relevanz erhöhte sich zwischen der Planungs- und Implementierungsphase. Dies deutet meist auf eine stärkere Konzentration auf bestimmte Zielgruppen bei der Ausgestaltung der Maßnahmen und deren Umsetzung hin. Mit Blick auf die erreichten Zielgruppen kam ein höherer Anteil von Roma und ethnischen Minderheiten sowie Menschen mit Behinderungen in den Genuss der ESF-Förderung für soziale Eingliederung als bei anderen thematischen Zielen des ESF. Jedoch erreichte die ESF-Förderung der sozialen Inklusion weniger Menschen in ländlichen Gebieten, als dies bei anderen thematischen Zielen der Fall ist.

Die meisten Fördermittel flossen in wirtschaftlich benachteiligte Regionen, obwohl diese mitunter eine geringere Aufnahmekapazität aufweisen. Die intensive Einbindung verschiedener Partner in Planung und Implementierung ermöglichte es, die Relevanz und Wirksamkeit der ESF-Förderung für soziale Eingliederung zusätzlich zu erhöhen.

Und schließlich erwies sich die ESF-Förderung für soziale Eingliederung auch als flexibel genug, um sie an sozioökonomische und politische Veränderungen anpassen zu können. Die Maßnahmen zur sozialen Inklusion und Diskriminierungsbekämpfung waren bereits 2014 relevant und sind dies auch im Jahr 2018 noch. Die Flexibilität der ESF-Förderung der sozialen Inklusion ermöglicht es den Mitgliedstaaten, unerwartete sozioökonomische Veränderungen -wie etwa die Flüchtlingskrise von 2015 - zu bewältigen.

### **Kohärenz**

Es zeigt sich, dass die ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion in den Mitgliedstaaten im Einklang mit der übergeordneten EU-Politik in diesem Bereich steht. Allerdings ist die Anknüpfung an andere politischen Rahmendokumente – und Bedingungen der EU zu bestimmten Zielgruppen (z. B. Roma und Menschen mit Behinderung) schwach, obwohl die ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion häufig auf diese abzielt.

Die Analyse deutet auf ein hohes Überlappungsrisiko zwischen der ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion und anderen thematischen Zielen hin. Der vielschichtige Charakter von Maßnahmen zur sozialen Eingliederung eröffnete eine Möglichkeit zur Umgehung der Zweckbindung von 20 % der ESF-Fördermittel für soziale Inklusion. Und tatsächlich handelt es sich bei 55 % der erfassten Inanspruchnahmen um Arbeitsmarktmaßnahmen, die auch dem thematischen Ziel 8 (Beschäftigung) hätten zugeschlagen werden können. Tatsächliche Überlappungen zwischen der ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion und anderen thematischen Zielen dürften wegen der starken Konzentration auf einige Zielgruppen (z. B. Roma und ethnische Minderheiten, Menschen mit Behinderung, Obdachlose) und der ganzheitlichen Herangehensweise bei der Erfüllung ihrer Bedürfnisse durch unterschiedlichste Ressourcen (z. B. verschiedene öffentliche Dienstleistungen) in der Realität jedoch weitaus seltener vorkommen.

Es kann festgestellt werden, dass die ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion sehr gut mit anderen EU-Fonds und insbesondere dem EFRE und dem EHAP abgestimmt ist. EFRE und

EHAP stellen Infrastruktur und Güter bereit, die die von der ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion vorgesehenen Leistungen ergänzen.

### **EU-Mehrwert**

Die Studie kommt zu dem Ergebnis, dass die ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion einen höheren Mehrwert erzeugt hat, als von den Mitgliedstaaten einzeln hätte erreicht werden können. Dieser Mehrwert zeigt sich in den folgenden vier Dimensionen:

Volumeneffekt: In 22 Mitgliedstaaten spielte die ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion eine wichtige Rolle bei der Finanzierung von Maßnahmen der sozialen Integration und ergänzte die nationalen Anstrengungen.

Verbundeffekt: Die ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion ermöglichte in 17 Mitgliedstaaten die Begünstigung von Zielgruppen, die von anderen Fonds nicht erreicht werden.

Vorbildwirkung: Die ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion ergänzte in 24 Mitgliedstaaten die bestehenden nationalen Rahmenwerke, ermöglicht die Erprobung neuer Kooperationsformen, Partnerschaften und innovativer Maßnahmen und stellte neue Standards auf.

Verfahrenseffekt: Die ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion konnte in 18 Mitgliedstaaten die Verwaltungskapazität und -kompetenz bei der Gestaltung und Umsetzung von Dienstleistungen zur Förderung der sozialen Inklusion erweitern.

### **Gewonnene Erkenntnisse**

Die Studie liefert zahlreiche Erkenntnisse zur Gestaltung und Implementierung der ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion im Programmzeitraum 2014 bis 2020.

Stärker auf Inklusion ausgelegte Partnerschaften und Kommunikationsstrategien begünstigen die Einbindung der Teilnehmer und erhöhen so die Relevanz der Maßnahme. Sektorübergreifende Partnerschaften unterstützen eine wirksame Ansprache der Zielgruppe und erhöhen so die Effektivität. Die Studie kommt zu dem Ergebnis, dass die ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion Zielgruppen erreicht hat, die ansonsten möglicherweise unerreich geblieben wären, da sie deren konkrete Bedürfnisse erfüllt und sie dabei unterstützt, in den Arbeitsmarkt einzutreten.

Die Studie konnte zeigen, dass ausreichend Zeit und eine individuelle Unterstützung der Teilnehmer entscheidend ist, um ihre Bedürfnisse zu erfüllen und die gewünschten Ergebnisse zu erzielen. Die Bereitstellung einer individuellen Betreuung ist jedoch teuer und erfordert eine bessere Ausbildung der Anbieter. Ein partizipativer Ansatz bei der Gestaltung und Umsetzung von Maßnahmen zur sozialen Eingliederung könnte die Bereitstellung von individualisierter Betreuung ebenfalls verbessern.

Mit Blick auf die potenziell Begünstigten ließe sich die Bekanntheit und Akzeptanz der ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion durch eine umfassendere Unterstützung und eine direkte Kommunikation über Interaktionsplattformen fördern. Vereinfachte Kostenooptionen bieten das Potenzial, die Aufnahme der ESF-Mittel zu erhöhen und den Verwaltungsaufwand zu verringern.

Falls möglich, sollte die Beurteilung der weichen Ergebnisse in die Monitoring- und Evaluierungsprozesse von Maßnahmen der sozialen Inklusion aufgenommen werden. Im Idealfall sollten zu deren Messung einige wenige gemeinsame Output- und Ergebnisindikatoren aufgestellt werden. Alternativ sollten die Durchführungsbehörden die Begünstigten bei der Formulierung spezifischer Indikatoren unterstützen.

Zu guter Letzt kommen andere EU-Fonds (z. B. EFRE, EHAP, AMIF) als Ergänzung der ESF-Förderung für soziale Inklusion und zur Schaffung von Synergien infrage. Allerdings wären eine genaue Koordinierung und klare Rollen und Zuständigkeiten erforderlich, um die parallele Implementierung mehrerer Finanzierungswege zu ermöglichen.

## 1. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The European Social Fund (ESF) is the main financial instrument for operationalising the European Union's policies related to employment, skills and social inclusion. It supports four of the eleven thematic objectives defined in the Common Provisions Regulation<sup>15</sup>, one of which is Thematic Objective 9 (TO9), which was defined as "promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination" in the 2014-2020 programming period. The ESF contributes to TO9 by supporting the following six Investment Priorities:

- (i) Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability;
- (ii) Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma;
- (iii) Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities;
- (iv) Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest;
- (v) Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment; and
- (vi) Community-led local development strategies.

This study aims to support an evaluation of ESF support to social inclusion (Thematic Objective 9). Its scope covers the six Investment Priorities and the 28 EU Member States in 2014-2018<sup>16</sup>. The purpose of the study is three-fold:

- Take stock of the results generated by ESF support to social inclusion so far in the 2014-2020 programming period;
- Generate findings and lessons learned to support the negotiation of the Programmes for the European Social Fund plus; and
- Provide inputs to the Commission's ex-post evaluation of the European Social Fund due by December 2024.

The evaluation of ESF support to social inclusion was carried out following the Better Regulation Guidelines of the European Commission. More specifically, the study assessed the effectiveness, efficiency relevance, coherence and EU added value of ESF actions support to social inclusion during the 2014-2020 programming period. The assessment of the evaluation criteria was guided by a set of sub-evaluation questions listed in the Terms of Reference. Substantiated responses to each question were developed through triangulation of evidence from a wide range of sources including ESF monitoring data, research publications and national evaluations, a public consultation, country based

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<sup>15</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 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).

<sup>16</sup> The study covers the UK, which was a Member State in 2014.

research with interviews and focus groups with national stakeholders, in-depth case studies of a selection of Operational Programmes and projects and a Delphi survey of EU-level stakeholders.

Section 2 presents the methodology and evidence sources reviewed to carry out the study. Section 3 presents the evolution of the socio-economic context in Europe over the 2014-2019 period. Section 4 provides an overview of the financial and operational implementation of ESF support to social inclusion. Section 5 presents the evaluation findings for each of the five evaluation criteria. Section 6 presents the conclusions of the study and Section 7 highlights good practices and lessons learned by evaluation criterion.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This section presents an overview of the work carried out, the different strands of the evaluation, the analysis applied, as well as reflections on the limitations and methodological recommendations for the ex-post evaluation.

### 2.1 Overview of evidence gathering and mapping activities

The study drew on different sources of evidence including programme-related documentation (e.g. the Operational Programme documents, the 2016-2018 Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs), and evaluations carried out in the Member States) and other relevant literature, ESF monitoring data<sup>17</sup>, interviews and focus groups with national stakeholders including Managing Authorities, a public consultation, case studies, cost benefit analysis, and an EU-level Delphi survey. A key activity was to define a typology of TO9 operations and target groups. More information about the evidence gathering and mapping activities is reflected in the annexes of the Final Report, which are briefly presented below:

**Annex 1: Synthesis of national evaluations and other relevant literature.** The research team collected relevant national evaluations from the evaluation library of the European Commission<sup>18</sup>, desk research of national sources and interviews with Managing Authorities. In total, 131 national evaluations were assessed by the research team and country experts, out of which 40 national evaluations from 16 Member States (CY, CZ, DK, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, NL, PL, SI, UK) were identified as being relevant for the study. A synthesis of the findings of these national evaluations is presented in Annex 1. The annex also includes a comprehensive bibliography of other relevant literature reviewed over the course of the study.

**Annex 2: Mapping of TO9 operations and target groups.** The research team, in consultation with the European Commission, developed a typology of TO9 operations and a typology of target groups to better understand what OPs planned and implemented, and to analyse their achievements. Annex 2 presents the methodological approach and the intervention logics constructed for each type of TO9 operation.

**Annex 3: Baseline assessment.** The research team conducted a baseline analysis of the socio-economic context in Europe and its development from 2014 to 2019. The analysis reviewed trends in the prevalence of the risk of poverty or social exclusion, material and social deprivation, severe housing deprivation or access to services and inclusion in the labour market. The research team also prepared a socio-economic index at the NUTS-2 level to assess the correspondence between the ESF investment and the evolution of the baseline.

**Annex 4: Descriptive analysis of ESF monitoring data.** The research team analysed data extracted from the ESF monitoring system, which is referred to as the SFC2014. The extraction reflects the state of operations by the end of the 2018 calendar year. The

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<sup>17</sup> The research team analysed monitoring data (recorded data for financial and physical indicators until the end of the 2018 calendar year) corresponding to the Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) for 2016, 2017 and 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Commission website where national evaluations are uploaded:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/)

extraction on which the analysis was based was made on 10 December 2019. Annex 4 provides a descriptive analysis of data recorded by the Managing Authorities for the financial and physical indicators. The financial indicators included planned amounts, the amounts allocated by Managing Authorities, and declared expenditures by beneficiaries to the Managing Authorities. The physical indicators included outputs and results (common and programme-specific). The analysis presents breakdowns of the data by Member State, Investment Priority, Type of operation and NUTS-2 region level where relevant for the study.

**Annex 5: Cost benefit analysis.** Building on the descriptive analysis of ESF monitoring data (see Annex 4), the research team carried out an EU-level cost benefit analysis to estimate the cost per participation and the cost per immediate result achieved. The annex also presents findings from a detailed cost benefit analysis undertaken for projects from five Member States: the Netherlands, Italy, Austria, Spain and Latvia.

**Annex 6: National fieldwork.** The study drew on several national fieldwork activities including interviews in all Member States, focus groups in 10 Member States and 19 case studies. This annex presents an overview of the activities carried out and the approach to selecting Member States and OPs for a more in-depth review.

**Annex 6.1: EU-level Delphi survey findings.** The survey was carried out in two rounds between 22 April and 13 May 2020. A total of 10 representatives participated from various organisations involved in policy debates on from a range of organisations involved in policy debates on social inclusion, poverty and discrimination<sup>19</sup>. The representatives provided inputs on a background document that presented the key findings from the evaluation as well as more specific findings pertaining to two focus areas: (1) Access of small and local organisations to ESF support for TO9 and (2) measurement of soft outcomes.

**Annex 7: Public consultation.** Following the Better Regulation Guidelines, a public consultation was launched on 26 September 2019<sup>20</sup> and closed on 19 December 2019<sup>21</sup>. A total of 574 replies to the questionnaire and 25 documents were received and analysed. Annex 7 provides a full analysis of the responses.

**Annex 8: Case studies.** 19 case studies were carried out for a selection of ESF OPs that planned for TO9 actions. Each case study presents an assessment of the OP and a selected project within the OP. A list of projects considered for the second section of the case study is included in annex to each case study.

## 2.2 Mapping types of TO9 operations and target groups

The study team followed a five-step methodology to define a typology of TO9 operations and a typology of target groups. The methodology drew on a systematic review of planned operations (drawing mainly from OP documents) and implemented operations (drawing on

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<sup>19</sup> 10 respondents participated in Round 1 and four participated in Round 2. The participants included representative from EU organisations, a Managing Authority not consulted in other stages of the study and an auditor.

<sup>20</sup> The launch was delayed due to the time needed for the translation of the questionnaire into all official EU languages. The original launch date was in July 2019.

<sup>21</sup> Link to the Public Consultation [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2018-6547571/public-consultation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2018-6547571/public-consultation_en)

AIRs 2016-18). The operation types were defined broadly to capture the wide spectrum of actions and objectives of TO9 operations, which supports the over-arching objective of promoting social inclusion. In total, six types of TO9 operations were identified.

At the same time, the research team developed a typology of target groups of TO9 operations, identifying twelve groups which were most cited in the programming documents for TO9 operations:

- Unemployed for 12 months or more
- Unemployed for less than 12 months
- Low-skilled people
- Self-employed people
- Recipients of minimum income
- Roma or other ethnic minorities
- People with a migrant or foreign background
- People with a disability
- People having a chronic problem/ requiring long-term care
- Single parents
- SMEs, micro companies (e.g. private and third sector organisations, NGOs, social enterprises)
- Public administrations/public services (including workers in public services)

ESF support to social inclusion also targeted homeless people, people suffering and/or at risk of housing exclusion, as well as substance abusers who were also excluded or at risk of being excluded from housing. As these target groups were mentioned infrequently in the programming documents and are somewhat related, they were combined in a category "Other groups".

Table 1 below presents an overview for each type of TO9 operation drawing from the intervention logics presented in Annex 2. It highlights the objectives, the main target groups addressed (based on the mapping of TO9 operations) and expected results for each type of operation.

Table 1. Typology of TO9 operations- objectives, main target groups and expected impacts

Type of operation	Objectives	Main target groups <sup>a</sup>	Expected impacts
Type 1 Employment-focused actions	Reduce barriers to employment; help people in vulnerable situations to enter or (re-enter) employment and those already in employment to enhance their job prospects, upgrade their skills and/or help them stay in the labour market.	People with a disability Unemployed for 12 months or more	Closer proximity to the labour market Enhanced employment prospects of participants Increased likelihood of employment (including self-employment) Increased prospects of generating income
Type 2 Enhance basic skills	Enhance the employment prospects of people in vulnerable situations by equipping them with the basic skills (e.g. social skills, IT, language skills) needed to 'move closer' to or enter the labour market.	Unemployed for 12 months or more People with a disability Low-skilled people	Engagement in job-searching/education/training Engagement in education and training Increased likelihood of gaining a qualification Closer proximity to the labour market Increased employment prospects of participants Increased likelihood of employment (including self-employment)
Type 3 Basic school education	improve the conditions for equal access to and inclusiveness of education, prevent early school leaving and marginalisation, increase parental	People with a disability Unemployed for 12 months or more Recipients of minimum income	Greater propensity to stay engaged in education Reduced early school leaving

	engagement in their children's education and enhance integration in schools.		
Type 4 Access to services	Enhance access to quality services. Services of general interests (health and education), mainstream social services (childcare and long-term care), personal targeted social services aimed predominantly at social and eventual labour market inclusion (needs-based).	People with a disability Unemployed for 12 months or more	Increased met health care needs Improved health Closer proximity to the labour market and prospects of income generation
Type 5 Social entrepreneurship	(i) support the labour market integration of people in vulnerable situations through social enterprises; and (ii) support social enterprises and their ecosystems, as well as the third sector overall, to ultimately develop the sector as engine of growth	People with a disability Other groups SMEs, micro-companies (e.g. private and third sector organisations, NGOs, social enterprises)	Individuals: Increased likelihood of employment (including self-employment) in social enterprises Acquisition of a quality and sustainable job in social enterprises/third sector increased income prospects  Entities: Increased survival rates for social enterprises
Type 6 Actions influencing	(i) raise awareness and inform about specific	People with a disability Unemployed for 12 months or more	Individuals: Reduce experiences of discrimination

attitudes and systems	and	<p>topics of interest with the aim of increasing the knowledge of the targeted population, fighting stereotypes, changing attitudes and behaviour (e.g. gender equality, antidiscrimination, health awareness); (ii) strengthen and enhance the capacity of organisations with the aim of improving the design and delivery of services (e.g. social services, health care services, employment services).</p>	<p>Increased levels of employment in the social economy  Improved the perceived quality of public service delivery  Improved health status  Entities:  Improved effectiveness of public services  Engaged relevant partners in providing assistance to target groups  Increased awareness among organisations of the potential impact of policy and practices</p>
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*Note:* This figure is summarised from the intervention logics presented in Annex 2. <sup>a</sup> The target groups are the most commonly identified from the OP documents.

## 2.3 Challenges and limitations

The study faced several challenges and limitations which are described below. They were predominantly encountered with respect to the monitoring data, which was used to carry out a standardised analysis across Member States.

**The classification and mapping of ESF support to social inclusion by type of operation was challenging.** The definition of the typologies for the types of TO9 operations and target groups (see Annex 2 and Section 3) and the subsequent classification of all TO9 operations was challenged by the complexity and high diversity of the operations across the Member States as well as differences in the definition of vulnerable groups.

**The monitoring data had a high level of inconsistency compounded by variation across the Member States.** Key issues encountered were time delays in the recording of costs, outputs and results, and an under-reporting of disadvantaged groups. While there are plausibility checks, few audits of data quality have been carried out to date.

**Identifying a measure that adequately reflected the state of implementation of operations was challenging.** Different measures from the ESF monitoring data were considered. After review of the options, the study used the project selection rate – the share of planned funds that were allocated – as the main measure. The share of planned funds that were declared expenditures by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities was not chosen due to known delays in the recording of expenditures. Achievement rates – which is the extent to which recorded outputs or results met targets – was also considered inadequate due to the varied approach in the setting of targets across OPs.

**The breakdown of ESF monitoring indicators by type of operation was a rough approximation.** Overall recorded figures for financial and physical indicators were disaggregated by type of operation (in total, there were six types of operation were identified). Recorded figures were broken down evenly by the types of operation identified within each OP/IP combination (for more information, see Annex 4).

**The expected benefits of ESF support to social inclusion is only reflected to a limited extent in the ESF common result indicators.** The common result indicators focus on 'hard', employment-related outcomes, such as for example job searching or gaining of a qualification, rather than on 'soft' outcomes, which are very important for monitoring social inclusion interventions, as also shown in the intervention logics developed for each type of TO9 operation (see Annex 2).

The type of information collected on 'hard' outcomes also limited the assessment. For example, the ESF monitoring data provides the number of qualifications gained data, but not the nature of the qualifications gained. It provides the number of jobs generated, but not the sector or the level of pay. Such additional information could serve to better link the operations with their desired outcomes.

**Specific result indicators are often defined to measure participations of certain target groups, not the results achieved. The indicators are not comparable across different TO9 operations to allow for an aggregate analysis.** The intervention logics of the TO9 operations (see Annex 2) present the expected benefits, which overall relate to 'soft' outcomes such as improved inter-personal skills, attitudinal and behavioural changes, enhancement of entrepreneurial skills, and improved capacity of entities. A review of specific result indicators for the TO9 operations found some examples of 'soft' outcomes, but not many (see Section 0). As these are different depending on OP, an aggregate analysis of these is not possible. Collecting harmonised

data on these expected benefits would support the assessment of effectiveness and efficiency of ESF interventions focusing on social inclusion.

As a consequence of the above two issues related to the results indicators, the evaluation had to heavily rely on qualitative evidence gathered through the country-based analyses and field research to identify and assess the benefits of TO9 operations, and on the inputs from social inclusion programme practitioners who took part in the EU-level Delphi survey.

**Limited availability of monitoring data on key characteristics of participants.**

One of the distinguishing features of TO9 is its strong focus on participants with different types and levels of vulnerabilities, as can also be seen from typologies of target groups defined for the evaluation (see Annex 2). As only a few of these target groups could be aligned with the ESF monitoring indicators, the evaluation's review of the targeting of ESF support for TO9 to the specific target groups defined for the evaluation (see Annex 2) was mainly qualitative.

**Limited alignment between recorded values for financial, output and result indicators.**

The delays in the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion (see Section 0) meant that so far, relatively more outputs had been generated than results, especially for on-going operations. However, as the ESF monitoring data does not indicate whether an operation is fully or partially implemented, this could not be accounted for in the analysis. Moreover, TO9 operations are diverse and might be fully implemented in a month (e.g. short-term training for the long-term unemployed) or in several years (e.g. improving access to social services). Issues related to the recording of data was also a limitation to the analysis, in particular the delays in the recording of declared expenditures by beneficiaries to the Managing Authorities.

**The replies to the public consultation are not representative of the EU.** The public consultation is a voluntary survey and caution should be taken to draw insight from descriptive analysis of the replies. Almost half of the 574 replies came from Bulgaria (21.4%), Hungary (14.3%) and Croatia (13.8%).

The evaluation recognised these challenges and overcame them to a large extent through triangulation of information from different sources - key findings are rarely based on one source of evidence. This triangulation typically drew on EU-wide sources (such as the monitoring data analysis) as well as national sources (such as the case studies and focus groups). Standardised measures were estimated by different dimensions including IP, Member State and type of operation. These measures included the following:

- **Project selection rate:** The share of planned funds for TO9 operations that were subsequently allocated by Managing Authorities. This measure serves as a proxy for the financial state of implementation.
- **Achievement rate:** The number of recorded values for specific outputs and specific results in relation to targets set for the end of the programming period. Targets may have been set as numbers or ratios by Managing Authorities.
- **Success rate:** The number of recorded results as a share of the relevant number of recorded participations. Success rates were estimated for each immediate result (CR01-CR04) that was relevant considering the intervention logic of the TO9 operation (see Annex 2). Results may be recorded upon completion of the intervention (immediate) or six months after its completion (longer-term).

- Cost per participation: Declared expenditures by beneficiaries to the Managing Authorities divided by the number of total participations that were recorded by the end of December 2018<sup>22</sup>.
- Cost per immediate-term result: Declared expenditures by beneficiaries to the Managing Authorities divided by the total number of immediate-term results that were recorded by the end of December 2018<sup>23</sup>.

One challenge that was addressed to only a limited extent and which was especially key for the assessment of ESF support for social inclusion was the identification of target groups. While the mapping of TO9 operations by the typology of target groups provided a systematic overview, the typology was too general to identify key groups of interest e.g. substance abusers. Moreover, the mapping could only identify whether the target group was present, but not how many. The issue of recording values for disadvantaged groups (e.g. homeless persons - CO18, persons living in rural areas -CO19 and participants with disabilities - CO16) is critical to address for the final evaluation.

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<sup>22</sup> Total participations were approximated by the sum of three common output indicators: CO01, CO03 and CO05.

<sup>23</sup> Total immediate-term results were approximated by the sum of four common result indicators: CR01, CR02, CR03 and CR04.

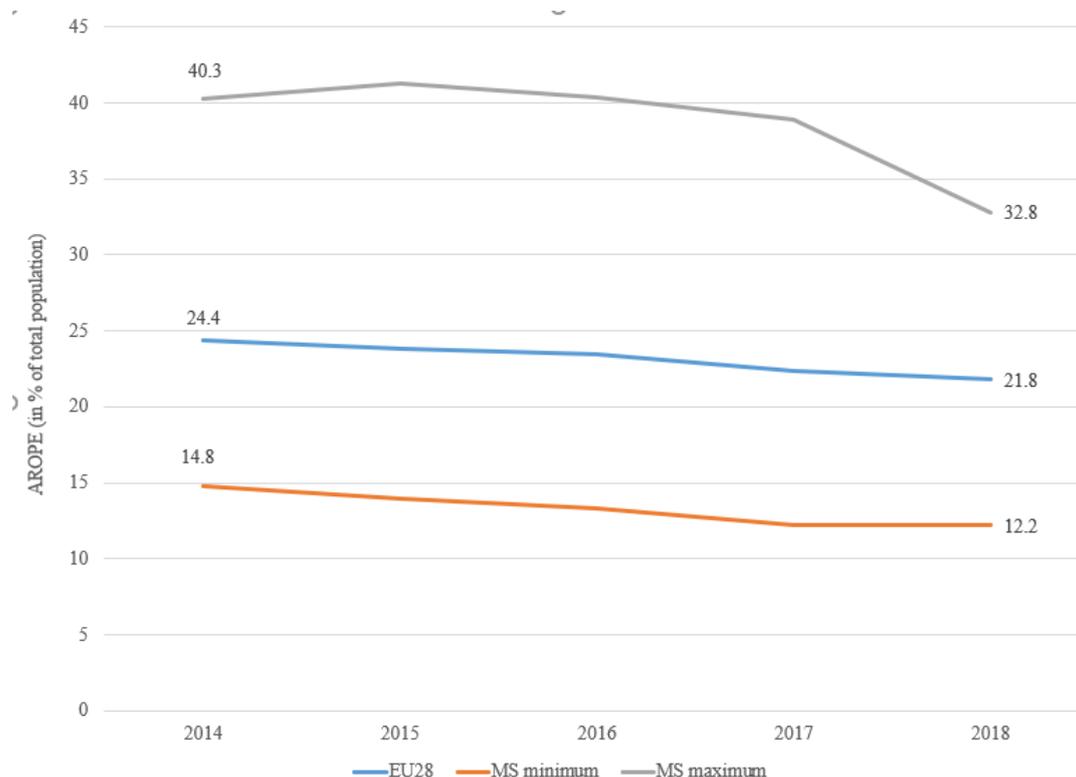
### 3. EVOLUTION OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT IN EUROPE 2014-2019

This section presents key statistics that illustrate the socio-economic context in Europe during the evaluation period. For more information, please refer to Annex 3.

The EU generally saw an improvement in living standards over the 2014-2020 period. This improvement is considered to be attributed in part to increases in real median income and household incomes, as well as improvements in economic activity and the labour market. The gross disposable household income increased in real terms since 2012-2013 across nearly all Member States, although in some this has not yet returned to pre-crisis levels (notably some southern Member States).

Despite these positive developments, as well as the Europe 2020 target of lifting 20 million people out of poverty, over one fifth of the EU population remains **at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE)** (see Figure 1). The Europe 2020 target was set before the 2008 economic and financial crisis, which had a detrimental impact on the EU's ability to reach this target.

Figure 1. Proportion of the EU population at risk of poverty and social exclusion (2014-2018)



Source: Eurostat, [People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex \[ilc\\_peps01\]](#), extracted on 18 December 2019. Notes: The line is the EU28 average; the light blue area represents the variation around the average

The proportion of people suffering from **material and social deprivation** declined between 2014 and 2018 from 19.3% to 12.8% in the EU-28. However, certain groups (people with low education, the inactive, children, women, people living in rural areas and people with disabilities) have seen little improvement in relation to this indicator.

The proportion of people in the EU-28 experiencing **severe housing deprivation** slightly declined from 5% to 4% between 2014 and 2018. Those who were

disproportionately affected by this condition included persons earning below 60% of median equivalised income, tenants, households with dependent children, people in rural areas and Roma.

With regards to **access to services**, the proportion of people in the EU-28 self-reporting unmet needs for medical examination declined from 6.7% to 3.6% between 2014 and 2018. However, strong inequalities persist across certain groups of the population, with people in lower income groups, the unemployed, people with low education and people living in rural areas more likely to report unmet needs for medical examination. The first reason for these unmet needs is the high cost, followed by long waiting lists. Although in 2016, 45% of EU children aged 3 and up to the minimum compulsory school age received formal childcare services, this varied widely between countries. Such country variations ranged from 95.9% in Denmark to less than 15% in other Member States (e.g. IT, HU, EE, ES).

**Regional disparities in unemployment and the prevalence of in-work poverty persisted.** Although unemployment rates declined between 2014 and 2018, strong regional disparities persisted (e.g. FR, BE, BG, IT). On average, in 2018, 43.2% of unemployed people in Europe have been long-term unemployed (this has decreased by 6.1 percentage points since 2014).

Although employment is generally seen as a route out of poverty, in 2018 the EU average of in-work poverty rate was 9.5%, unchanged from 2014. Groups more at risk of in-work poverty are people in households with low work intensity, single parents with dependent children, people with low education, migrants, people with a disability and young people.

#### **4. IMPLEMENTATION OF TO9 OPERATIONS**

This section presents an overview of the financial and operational implementation of TO9 operations in the EU. Section 4.1 provides an overview of TO9 operations in terms of identified OPs, type of operation and target groups. Section 4.2 elaborates on the financial implementation of TO9 operations and their geographical scope. The findings mainly draw from the analysis of data extracted from the ESF monitoring system (the SFC2014) that was integrated with the mapping of TO9 operations into six different types (see Section 2.1).

##### **4.1. Overview of TO9 operations**

Of the 187 OPs that received ESF support during the 2014-2020 programming period, 145 OPs planned for TO9 operations<sup>24</sup>. More than half of these OPs were implemented in four Member States (ES, IT, DE and PL)<sup>25</sup>. 70 OPs were financed by the ESF and other EU funds such as the ERDF (these are referred to as multi-funds OPs) while in the remaining 74 OPs TO9 operations were exclusively financed by the ESF. More information about the 145 OPs that planned for TO9 operations can be found in Annex 4.

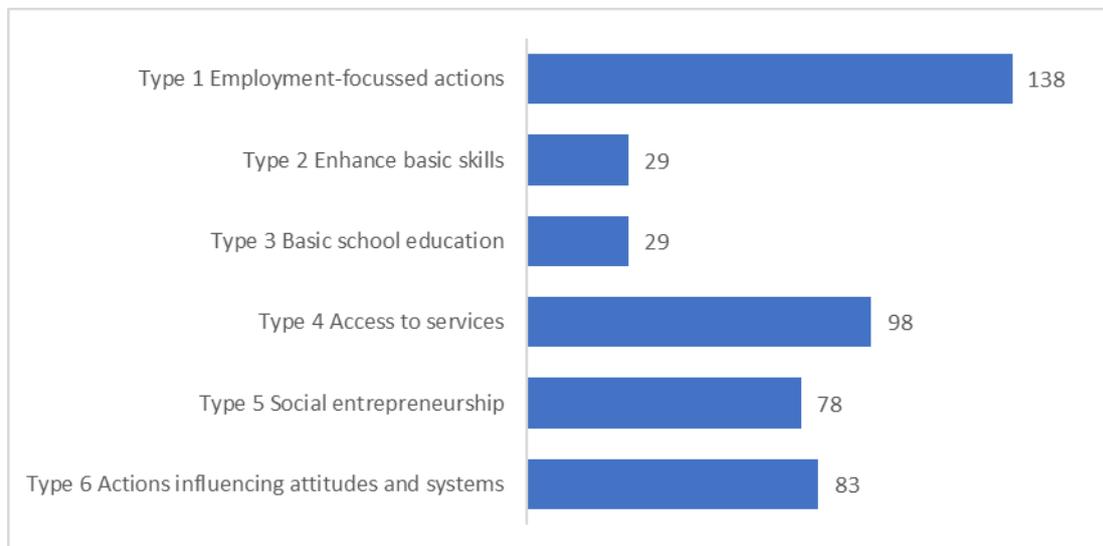
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<sup>24</sup> Please see Annex 4 for the full list of OPs that planned for TO9 operations, as identified by the evaluation team.

<sup>25</sup> 21 OPs were identified in Spain, 24 OPs were identified in Italy, 17 OPs were identified in Germany and 17 OPs were identified in Poland.

The evaluation identified six types of TO9 operations. Types 1 to 4 targeted certain groups of individuals while Types 5 and 6 focused on entities. Figure 2 presents the results of the mapping exercise of TO9 operations. Type 1 operations were the most commonly identified (being reflected in 138 OPs) while Type 2 and Type 3 operations were the least common (being reflected in 29 OPs).

Figure 2. Mapping of ESF support to social inclusion OPs by type of operation



Source: ICF mapping exercise of OPs with planned TO9 operations. The sum exceeds the total number of OPs as an OP may cover multiple types of operations. For more information, please see Annex 2.

OPs typically included more than one type of operation<sup>26</sup>. The following combinations were the most common:

- OPs which combine Type 1, 4, 5 and 6 operations (25 OPs);
- OPs with Type 1 only (18 OPs);
- OPs with Type 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 (13 OPs); and
- OPs with Type 1, 4, 5 (12 OPs).

Table 2 presents the mapping of OPs with TO9 operations by target group<sup>27</sup>. On average, an OP planned to address between five and six different target groups. The most common target groups in TO9 operations were the unemployed for more than 12 months (103 OPs) and people with a disability (108 OPs). 53 OPs targeted Roma or other ethnic minorities while 77 OPs targeted persons with a migrant or foreign background. 94 OPs target groups mentioned less frequently. This “Other Groups” is discussed in Section 2.2 and in the reply to EQ 3.2.

Some operations in 55 OPs did not provide a clear target group or suggested a broad group such as people in vulnerable situations or marginalised communities without a specific reference to Roma or other minority groups.

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<sup>26</sup> Only 20 OPs included just one type of operation.

<sup>27</sup> For more information on the methodology and the findings, please see Annex 2.

Table 2. Mapping of OPs with TO9 operations by target group

Category of target group	Number of OPs that planned to reach the category of target group
Unemployed for 12 months or more	103
Unemployed for less than 12 months	11
Low-skilled people	46
Self-employed people	7
Recipients of minimum income	70
Roma or other ethnic minorities	53
People with a migrant or foreign background	77
People with a disability	108
People having a chronic problem/requiring long-term care	16
Single parents	49
Other groups (e.g. homeless people, people experiencing housing exclusion, substance abusers) <sup>a</sup>	94
SMEs, micro companies (e.g. private and third sector organisations, NGOs, social enterprises)	63
Public administrations/public services (including workers in public services)	61
Target group unclear/broad	55

Note: ICF mapping exercise of OPs with planned social inclusion operations. The sum exceeds the total number of OPs as an OP may cover multiple target groups. For more information, please see Annex 2. <sup>a</sup> For more information please refer to Section 2.2.

## 4.2. Financial implementation of TO9 operations

A total of 31.3 billion euro (EU and national) was planned for TO9 operations in the EU for the 2014-2020 programming period. This represents about a quarter of the total ESF allocation of 120.8 billion euro (EU and national). Of this amount, 22.3 billion euro (EU and national) were allocated by Managing Authorities to TO9 operations by the end of December 2018. The level of allocated funds exceeded one billion euro in five Member States – Germany, France, Italy, Poland and the UK. The breakdown of these figures by EU and national amounts, Member State and IP can be found in Annex 4<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> The breakdown of planned amounts can be found in Table 4 while the breakdown of allocated amounts can be found in Table 5.

Member States were required to dedicate at least 20% of their ESF funds to social inclusion<sup>29</sup>. According to a 2018 report, all Member States met this requirement in terms of planned amounts<sup>30</sup>. In terms of allocated amounts, however, three Member States did not meet the 20% threshold by the end of December 2018 - Finland and Portugal were below but close to the target (19% and 18% respectively) while Slovenia was further from the target (15%)<sup>31</sup>.

By the end of 2018, beneficiaries had declared 8.8 billion euro of expenditures to the Managing Authorities<sup>32</sup>. Declared expenditures were highest in regions located in France, Portugal, Spain, Northern Germany, Western Greece, Poland, Romania, South Ireland and in the Baltic countries (see Map 1). In relation to GDP, the level of declared expenditures related to ESF support to social inclusion was highest in Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Southern Italy (see Map 2)<sup>33</sup>.

The Common Provisions Regulation (art 96.2.b.v)<sup>34</sup> required Member States to set physical and financial targets at the Priority Axis level as part of the overall performance framework. For financial indicators, mid-term targets (milestones) were set for the end of 2018 and final targets were set for the end of 2023. All Member States achieved or exceeded 85% of the milestones by December 2018, except for Croatia which achieved 77% of the milestone<sup>35</sup>. Some Member States that exceeded the mid-term targets instead reported a lower achievement of the final targets. For example, Italy and Portugal exceeded the mid-term target, but achieved less than 15% of the final target to date<sup>36</sup>.

Figure 3 breaks down the declared expenditures for TO9 operations by IP and type of operation<sup>37</sup>. The analysis shows that TO9 funds concentrated on IP9i (Active inclusion)

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<sup>29</sup> ESF regulation, Article 4.2

<sup>30</sup> ESF Transnational Platform, 2018. Social inclusion indicators for ESF investments - areas for development in addressing the 20% social inclusion target. The report notes that overall, 25.6% of ESF funds were planned for social inclusion (TO9).

<sup>31</sup> Research team analysis of allocated amounts recorded in the SFC2014. See Annex 4 for estimated figures by Member State.

<sup>32</sup> These figures were estimated from an extraction of financial data from the ESF monitoring system (the SFC2014) and include the EU and national amounts for all Member States as well as the UK. For more information about the data, please see Annex 4.

<sup>33</sup> Joint Research Centre, 2020. Social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination (Thematic Objective 9) evaluation using RHOMOLO. Draft Final Report.

<sup>34</sup> Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 215/2014 of 7 March 2014 laying down rules for Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L69, 8.3.2014 Art. 5(2).

<sup>35</sup> The CIR considers a target to be achieved if at least 85% of the milestone value.

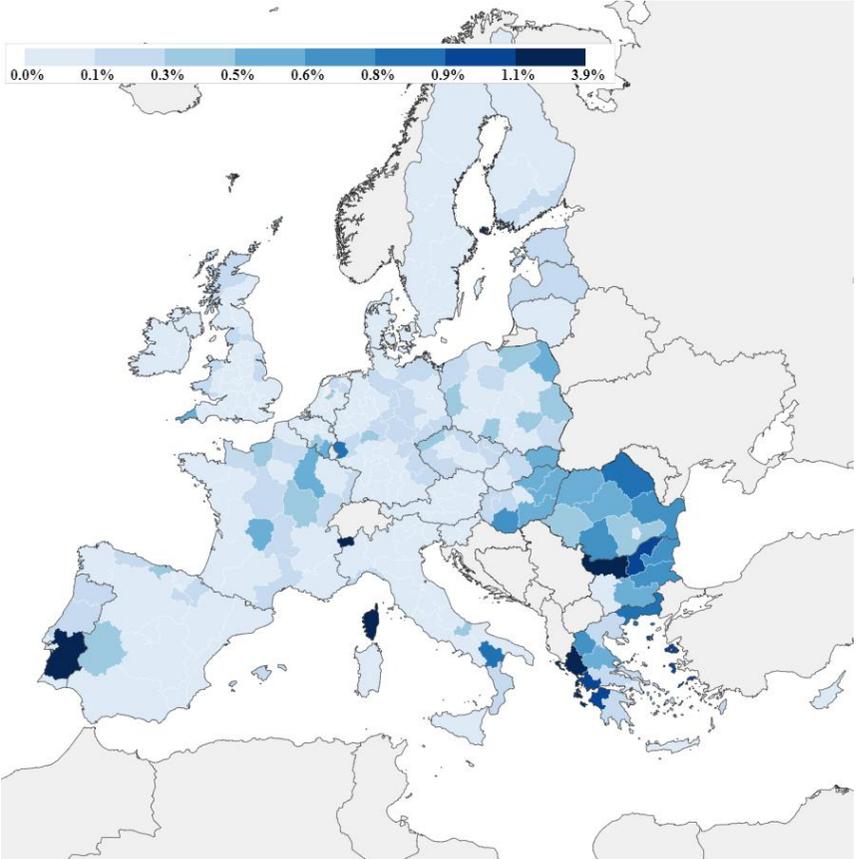
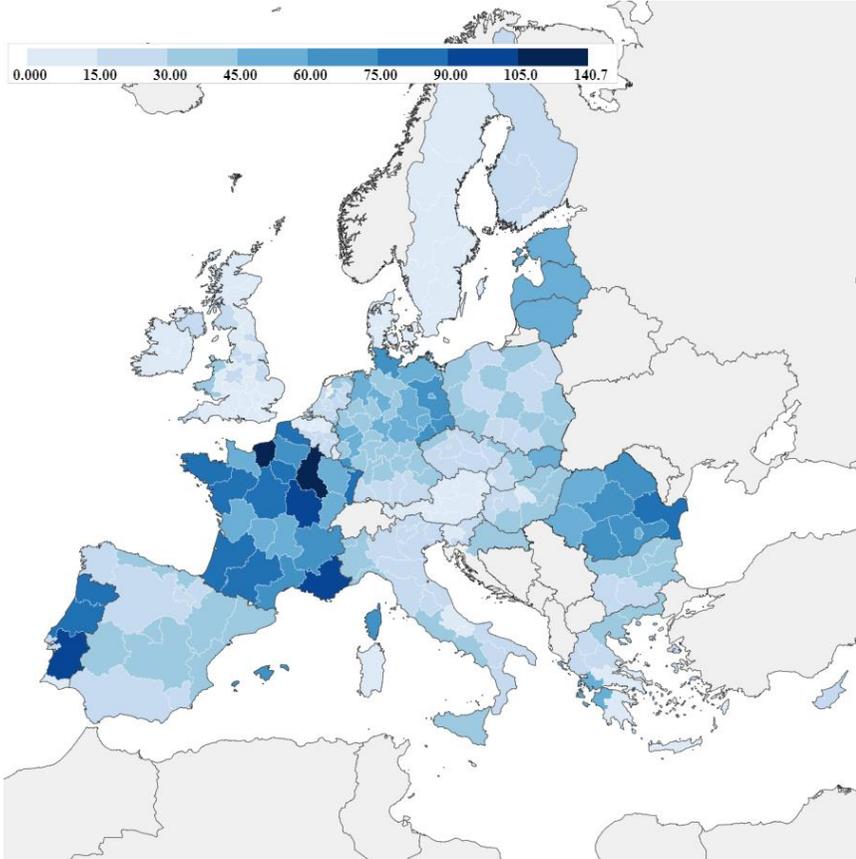
<sup>36</sup> Estimates of achievements of financial milestones and targets for other Member States can be found in Annex 4.

<sup>37</sup> Given the multiple types of operation per OP, the analysis makes several assumptions that are elaborated in Annex 4. The breakdown of allocated funds by IP and type of operation can also be found in Annex 4.

and Type 1 operations (Employment-focussed actions). The distribution across the six types of operations is more evenly spread than the distribution by IP. Overall, it seems that ESF support to social inclusion targeted a more diverse set of operations than what the IP breakdown suggests.

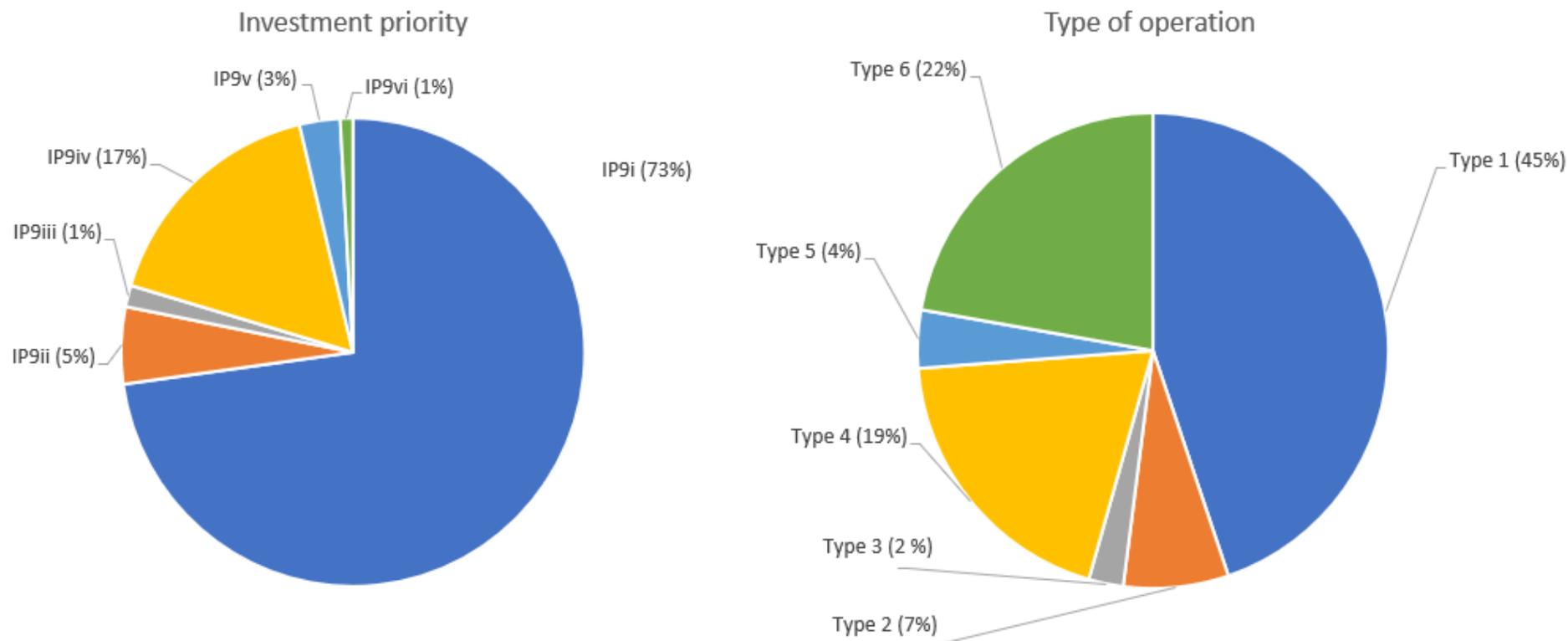
Map 1 Declared expenditures for TO9 operations by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities (€, millions)

Map 2 Declared expenditures for TO9 operations by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities (% regional GDP)



Source: Joint Research Centre, 2020. Social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination (Thematic Objective 9) evaluation using RHOMOLO. Draft Final Report. The analysis draws on an extraction of monitoring data from the SFC2014, based on AIR2018, made on 10 December 2018. The methodology for estimating planned and allocated amounts at the NUTS-2 regional level is presented in Annex 4.

Figure 3. Expenditures declared by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities for TO9 operations, by IP and type of operation



Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018 (data extracted on December 10, 2018) and OP2018 (data extracted on July 1, 2019). Recorded expenditures include both EU and national amounts. ICF mapping exercise of OPs with planned TO9 operations. The sum exceeds the total number of OPs as an OP may cover multiple types of operations. For more information, please see Annex 2; Note: The IPs include: IP9i) Active inclusion, IP9ii) Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities, IP9iii) Non-discrimination and equal opportunities, IP9iv) Access to services, IP9v) Social entrepreneurship and IP9vi) Community-led local development strategy. The types of operation include: Type 1 – Employment focussed action, Type 2 - Enhance basic skills Type 3 - Basic school education, Type 4 – Access to services, Type 5 – Social entrepreneurship, Type 6 - Actions influencing attitudes and systems. The methodology for estimating expenditures by type of operation is presented in Annex 4.

## 5. EVALUATION FINDINGS

This section presents findings by evaluation criterion in the form of specific answers for each evaluation question and sub-question, with due reference to the evidence sources and annexes where more detail is provided.

### 5.1. Question 1 – Effectiveness: How effective was the ESF in achieving the objectives of Thematic Objective 9?

The assessment of effectiveness reviews the extent to which ESF support to social inclusion contributed to the promotion of social inclusion, combatting poverty and discrimination. The assessment considers the translation of national strategies and policy contexts into TO9 operations, the changes that they generated, and the factors that facilitated and hindered their implementation.

The assessment draws on all qualitative and quantitative information collected and analysed as part of the study including an extraction from the ESF monitoring data. The assessment was supported by answers to five sub-evaluation questions, which are presented below.

#### **EQ 1.1 Effectiveness: To what extent did the financial implementation and the achievement of the expected outputs progress according to the targets set in the programmes? What were the main factors involved (delays in implementation, ESF absorption...)?**

Sub-question 1.1 reviews the progress made in the financial implementation of ESF support for TO9.

***The project selection rate was 71%, which is rather low considering the advanced stage of the programming period, but in pace with other TOs.***

Overall, there were delays in the financial implementation of ESF support to social inclusion. These delays are reflected in the low project selection rate – only about 71% of planned funds were committed to social inclusion operations by the end of December 2018<sup>38</sup>. The absorption rate was similarly low for other TOs suggesting that similar challenges were encountered across the ESF<sup>39</sup>.

The project selection rate varied across the Member States and was especially low in Italy (48%), Greece (50%) and Bulgaria (54%):

- In Italy (2014IT05SFOP001) the low project selection rate appears to have been driven by changes to the national anti-poverty strategy<sup>40</sup> and related legislation that changed the means-testing rules and the thresholds, leading to an increase

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<sup>38</sup> The methodology and estimates by Member State can be found in Annex 4.

<sup>39</sup> European Commission (2019). *Synthesis Report of ESF 2018 Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs), Final report.*

<sup>40</sup> The national anti-poverty strategy changed names from 'Support for active inclusion' - SIA in 2016, to 'Inclusion income' -REI in 2018 and finally to 'Citizen income' - RdC in 2019.

in the number of persons targeted<sup>41</sup>. Implementation was further delayed due to the long negotiation periods and coordination efforts between the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and other administrations/actors at multiple governance levels. Beneficiary organisations also required time to understand and adapt to the new approaches.

- In Greece, significant delays in 13 regional OPs were attributed to difficulties with internal management<sup>42</sup>.
- In Bulgaria, the delays in implementation were attributed to an insufficient level of coordination and lack of clarity in the definition of responsibilities between the institutions managing the ESF and ERDF funds that supported the operations.

The country-based analyses identified several other reasons for delays in the implementation of TO9 operations. These reasons included complexity in the requirements of the ESF framework, which requires involvement of multiple actors and coordination. Several examples include:

- Spain: The perceived complexity of requirements for the new ESF framework (mainly related to audit procedures and data collection systems), delays in the designation of intermediate bodies and overlaps with the previous programming period all contributed to delays in implementation;
- Slovenia: Coordinating between the six ministries involved in the implementation of TO9 was a challenge in particular with regards to the budget allocation (some budgets had to be cut/scaled down) in the initial phase of implementation; and
- Portugal: Difficulties in coordinating the national government bodies and the MAs in the operationalisation of types of operations that were already not part of the implementation routine. The ESF's administrative demands in terms of mapping and procedures for contracting also contributed to delays.

A lack of expertise, capacity or relevant previous experience among beneficiaries was also noted (e.g. IT, LV, ES, PL). The country-based analyses (e.g. IT, PL, PT, LV, ES) suggest that the introduction of administrative procedures to the programming period contributed to a lower project selection rate. Lastly, it is important to highlight that some Managing Authorities exhibit different patterns in how funds are allocated – some do it in phases and some allocate the full amounts early in the programming period. Over time these differences should be less critical.

Figure 4 below plots the project selection rate against another measure of the absorption rate of TO9 funds, namely the share of planned funds that was declared as expenditures by beneficiaries to the Managing Authorities. A linear trend between the two measures evidently suggests a correlation: a Member State that has allocated a higher share of planned funds is also likely to have more funds declared as spent to the Managing

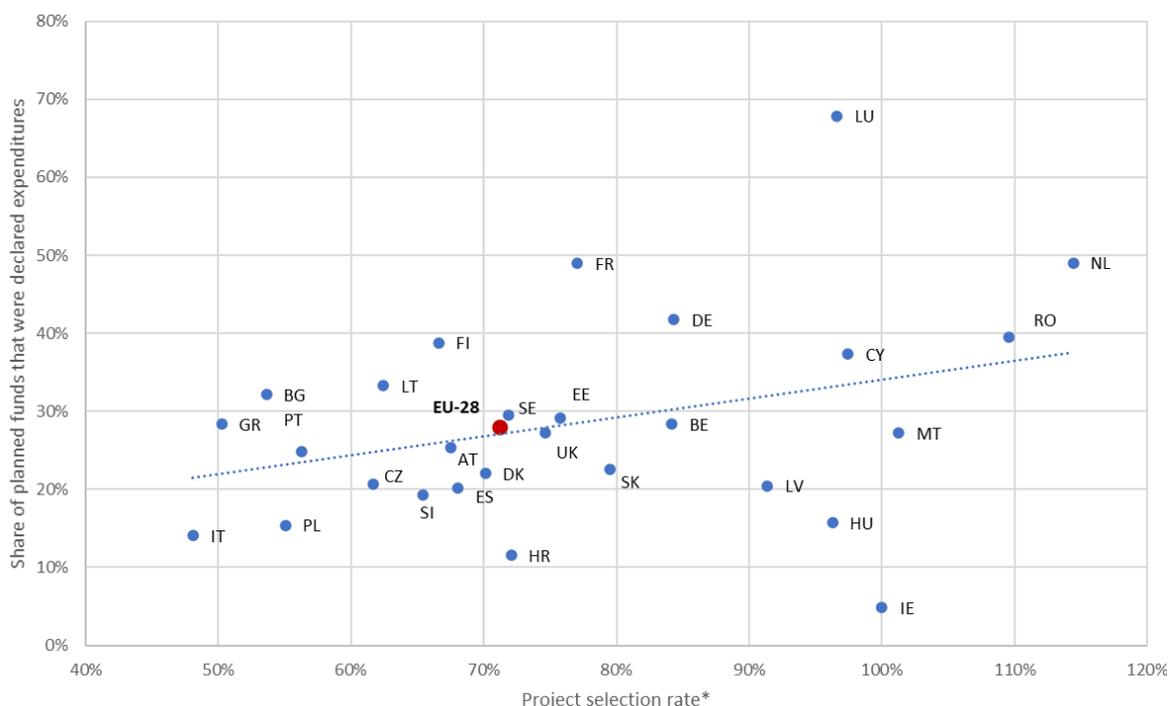
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<sup>41</sup> Annual Implementation Report, 2018 from the National OP in Italy (2014IT05SFOP001), pg 78.

<sup>42</sup> There were planned funds but no allocated funds for one OP in Greece (2014GR05M9OP001). The planned amount was 57.3 million, which was small relative to the overall planned amount of 1.2 billion and is therefore unlikely to be a significant driver of the overall project selection rate in Greece. The project selection rate across OPs in Greece varied between 31% and 63%

Authority or Authorities<sup>43</sup>. Yet, there are some Member States where the two measures are not aligned (e.g. IE, HU, HR, MT). The country-based analyses suggest that the declaration of expenditures by beneficiaries to the Managing Authorities in these Member State were delayed.

Figure 4. Project selection rate and the share of planned funds that were declared expenditures for ESF support for social inclusion, by Member State



Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019; Note: A linear trend line based on the data is presented in the figure. \*The project selection rate is the share of planned funds for TO9 operations that were allocated by Managing Authorities.

**Overall, the generation of outputs for social inclusion operations has been high, often exceeding the targets set for the end of the programming period.**

There is a regulatory obligation to set targets where relevant. Most Managing Authorities set targets for programme-specific indicators rather common indicators, to reflect progress made towards the specific objectives of their actions. In effect, targets were set for almost all<sup>44</sup> recorded values of programme-specific outputs. Output-level achievement rates were estimated as the share of recorded values for programme-specific outputs against the targets set for the end of the programming period<sup>45</sup>.

The overall output-level achievement rate by the end of December 2018 was estimated to be 99%<sup>46</sup>. In some Member States, the number of outputs generated from TO9 operations surpassed the targets leading to achievement rates greater than 100%. This

<sup>43</sup> The underlying figures can be obtained in Annex 4.

<sup>44</sup> Targets were set for 1,023 of 1,025 recorded values of programme-specific outputs.

<sup>45</sup> More information on the methodology and the findings can be found in Annex 4.

<sup>46</sup> More information can be found in Annex 4.

was the case in Belgium (131%), Luxembourg (234%) and the Netherlands (580%). In other Member States, the generation of outputs from TO9 operations was lower than planned (e.g. 1% in Romania and 9% in Hungary). The low generation of outputs may be due to delayed or under-reporting of outputs, in particular for Type 4 operations that focused on health care services, where data cannot be collected on patients to protect their personal information. While it was not possible to assess the extent to which this occurred in TO9 operations, the hypothesis seems plausible in Romania and Hungary where Type 4 operations were implemented.

The achievement rate also varied by category of region, IP and type of operation. For example, the estimated achievement rate was higher in transition regions (156%), Type 1 and Type 2 operations (130% and 69% respectively), and IP9i (118%).

***A high output-level achievement rate however may not always reflect a high level of progress. Output-level targets may have been set low in some Member States to increase the likelihood of their achievement.***

The analysis found that the project selection rate was low (71%) while the output-level achievement rate was high (99%). One possible explanation for these seemingly contradictory findings is that targets were set low to increase the likelihood of their achievement. Figure 5 plots these two measures against each other by Member State. The two measures should be correlated, on the assumption that more advanced financial implementation would result in a higher achievement rate. Yet, the figure shows that the output-level achievement rate was high in some countries despite a low project selection rate.

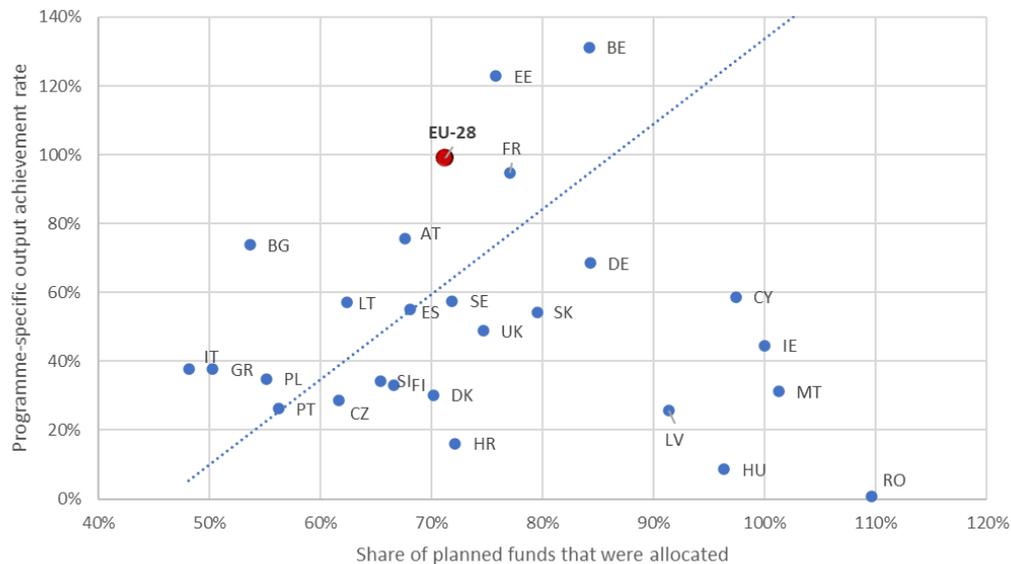
For example, when examining two Member States with a similar project selection rate, Austria (68%) and Finland (67%), the achievement rate in the former was 76% while 33% in the latter. Assuming all other factors remain constant, these estimates suggest that the targets were set too low in Austria. Correspondence with national stakeholders, however, suggests two other explanations. The setting of targets in Austria was influenced by the bottom-up approach where the regions (the Länder) play a central role in setting the scope of the operations. The different calls for interest were not known at the beginning of the programming period when the targets were set. The generation of outputs may have also been high relative to the targets set in Austria due to use of ESF support to social inclusion funds to address the needs of refugees entering Austria during the 2015 – this influx was not foreseen at the time when targets were set. This example demonstrates that the assessment of achievement rates requires taking into consideration a wide variety of factors including the types of TO9 operations carried out in the country, the socio-economic context where the operations were carried out, which may facilitate the generation of outputs, and even the business cycle<sup>47</sup>. In the Netherlands, the high achievement rate of 580% may be attributed in part to setting the target in relation to unique participants rather than participations. Moreover, the use of case management in social inclusion operations in the Netherlands generated budgetary efficiencies and allowed for the engagement of more participants than was initially foreseen. Another factor that could adversely affect the output-level achievement rate is delayed or underreporting of outputs – this issue may have

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<sup>47</sup> This study from the Netherlands suggests that the business cycle may affect the extent to which ESF targets are reached: Ecorys, 2011. Performance targets for ESF Operational Programmes – Final report. EC-DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

disproportionately affected Type 4 operations that focused on health care services due to collection of information on patients.

*Figure 5. Project selection rate compared with the output-level achievement rate for ESF support to social inclusion, by Member State*



Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019; NL and LU are not depicted in the figure: Programme-specific output achievement, followed by Share of planned funds that were allocated in the brackets – NL (580%, 114%), LU (234%, 97%).

**EQ 1.2 Effectiveness: How and to what extent does ESF contribute to the promotion of social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination and the social inclusion target of Europe 2020?**

Sub-question 1.2 is concerned with the results generated by TO9 operations and the achievement rate.

***ESF support to TO9 has contributed to the social inclusion target of Europe 2020 to lift 20 million people out of poverty. In total, more than 3 million common results<sup>48</sup> were recorded in terms of engagement in job search, participation in education and training as well as accessing employment including self-employment.***

The baseline assessment finds that the number of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) in the EU decreased from about 122 million in 2014 to 110 million in 2018 – a decrease of about 12 million<sup>49</sup>. The improvement in the socio-economic situation at the EU level was evident in all Member States and for all key target groups

<sup>48</sup> This figure includes recorded values for the following indicators: CR01-CR04 and CR06-CR07. CR05, CR08 and CR09 were excluded because they identify sub-groups of the other indicators.

<sup>49</sup> Annex 3 provides an overview of this indicator and other socio-economic indicators available from Eurostat for the 2014-2019 period.

(e.g. women, children, persons with low educational attainment and/or severe activity limitation).

The ESF does not monitor AROPE for programme participants, which means that the extent to which TO9 operations contributed to the EU 2020 Strategy target cannot be directly assessed. However, evidence on the scale and type of results generated by ESF support to TO9 suggests that the contribution was positive.

The ESF monitoring system includes a set of nine common result indicators that largely seek to capture engagements in the labour market and educational gains. By the end of December 2018, a total of 3.0 million positive results were recorded in the ESF monitoring system for the 2014-2020 programming period<sup>50</sup>. While the common result indicators cover distinct, non-overlapping results, it should be noted that one individual may contribute towards more than one result. In other words, one participation may generate more than one result (immediate and longer-term) over the period under consideration. The recording of common results has lagged behind compared with the recording of common outputs, but it can be expected that the level of recorded results will 'catch up' between now and the end of the programming period.

Figure 6 presents the breakdown of the results achieved by indicator (immediate and longer-term results) and type of operation. More than half of results generated were from Type 1 operations, which focussed on employment. More than a third of results were generated by Type 6 operations, which focussed on influencing attitudes and systems. Overall, fewer longer-term results were achieved, which again may reflect the delayed implementation of TO9 operations (see Section 4.1.1) and the additional time needed to generate such results (see Section 4.1.2).

While the share of recorded results for Types 2 and 3 operations were low, their perceived effectiveness is high. A large share of respondents to the public consultation noted that basic skills training (49%) and training and education (50%) were effective in the promotion of social inclusion and in combatting poverty and discrimination. Respondents also perceived high effectiveness for support to overcoming barriers to job search actions (45%)<sup>51</sup>. Opinions were generally consistent across stakeholders, despite their different levels and types of involvement with the ESF<sup>52</sup>.

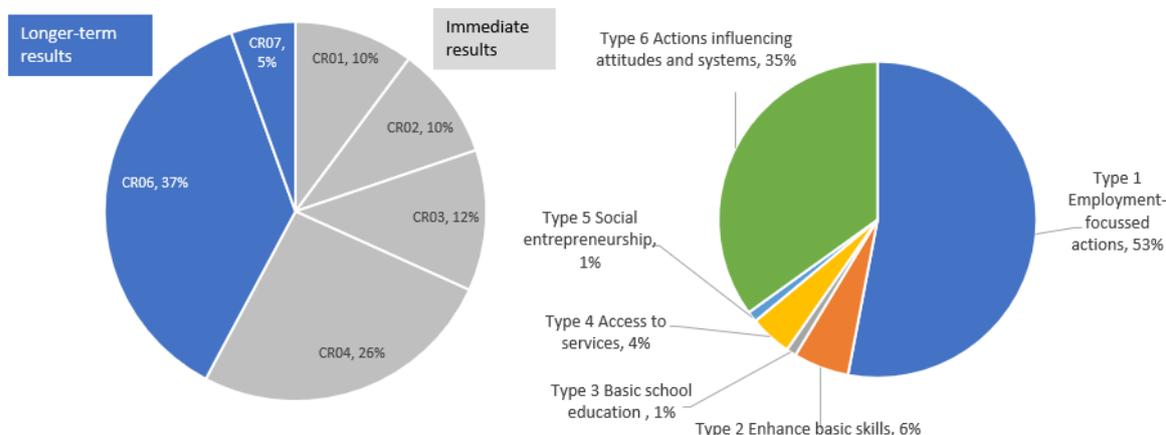
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<sup>50</sup> This figure is the sum of CR01-CR04 immediate results and CR06-CR07 for longer-term results. CR05, CR08 and CR09 were excluded because they identify sub-groups of the other indicators.

<sup>51</sup> Basic skills training corresponds with Type 2 operations. Training and education correspond with Types 2 and 3 operations. Support to overcoming barriers to job search actions corresponds with Type 1 operations.

<sup>52</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

Figure 6. Common results broken down by type of result and type of operation



Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Notes: CR01 - Inactive participants engaged in job-searching upon leaving; CR02 - Participants in education/training upon leaving; CR03 - Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving; CR04 - Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving; CR06 - Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving; CR07 - Participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving. The methodology for breaking down immediate results (CR01-CR04) and longer-term results (CR06-CR07) by type of operation is presented in Annex 4.

In addition to the common result indicators, Managing Authorities defined programme-specific indicators for each OP to capture other results of the ESF support. The recorded values could not be aggregated thematically across OPs due to the differing definitions. Some programme-specific indicators sought to capture 'soft outcomes' - a review of these outcomes is discussed as part of the response to EQ 1.4 (see Section 0).

Qualitative evidence from other sources (e.g. country-based analyses including case studies) suggest that ESF support to TO9 also had broader level impacts including enhanced access to public services, deinstitutionalisation, and cross-sectoral collaborations to promote innovative approaches.

At an institutional level, the country-based analyses suggest that TO9 operations helped to promote **access to public services**, such as health and social services (e.g. BG, CY, GR, IT, LT, LV, PL, SK) which is reflected in a rise in the number of social enterprises mandated by public authorities to provide such services, an increase in community-led local development strategies, as well as an improved capacity of institutions in addressing the needs of groups in vulnerable situations. For example, the evaluation report of OP Tuscany (2014IT05SFOP015) concluded that the operations both increased the offer of childcare services in the area and the take-up of such services on the territory<sup>53</sup>. In Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001), institutional capacity was enhanced to identify and address the needs of vulnerable groups. For example, this OP improved the system of re-socialisation and support to prisoners and ex-prisoners and their integration into society and the labour market. In the responses to the public consultation, the ESF was reported as being particularly effective in supporting the transition from institutions to family- and community-based support also known as **deinstitutionalisation**, as the

<sup>53</sup> The regional achievement rate was 36%, which exceeded the target of 33%.

ex-ante conditionality 9.1 on social inclusion triggered further efforts to develop community-based care and services<sup>54</sup>. ESF support for TO9 also promoted **scale-up and cross-sectoral collaborations** that improved access to health care<sup>55</sup>.

ESF support to TO9 also **promoted innovation approaches** (e.g. AT, DE, FR, IT, LU, NL). Examples from the country-based analyses include the following:

- In Luxembourg (OP2014LU05SFOP001), a project called Digit4all – Digital Inclusion Skills Academy - aimed to reduce the digital divide by improving the digital competences of immigrants and socially excluded individuals. The project recovered used computers, tablets, smartphones and other hardware from businesses and individuals and refurbished and reconfigured them to donate them to those who could not purchase such items.
- In the Netherlands (2014NL05SFOP001), the youth employment free zone project took an innovative approach to increase the visibility of public services and institutions for inactive youth. The project anticipated future jobs and how these could be more inclusive or “inclusion-proofed” while also effectively engaging with a vulnerable group at the margins of the labour market<sup>56</sup>.
- In France, ESF funds supported experimental and innovative schemes to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities, research and modelling initiatives, and actions for the exchange of experience and good practice<sup>57</sup>.

***The achievement rate for outputs was higher than the achievement rate for results, which may reflect the additional time needed for results to materialise.***

As noted in the reply to EQ 1.4 (see Section 0), the definition of specific result indicators varied substantially across OPs, reflecting the diversity of TO9 operations, and the indicators were often defined in terms of participations of specific target groups. The result-level achievement rate in the EU, i.e. the number of specific results generated by the end of December 2018, divided by the target values set for the end of the programming period<sup>58</sup>, was estimated to be 53%. The achievement was close to zero in three countries (HR, RO and PT), which may be due to the time needed for participations to translate into results, delays in the recording of these indicators, and challenges in the recording of participations for Type 4 operations (for Romania and Portugal only). In the case of Portugal, the specific result-level achievement is 0%, because the cumulative value has not been reported yet. Austria set as programme-specific result indicator the share of projects which completed the entire development cycle. The target for the indicator is 50%, but none of the projects so far has completed the full cycle (0%). The underachievement seems to be partially due to a shift in priorities from the

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<sup>54</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

<sup>55</sup> European Commission, 2019. ESI Funds for Health. Investing for a healthy and inclusive EU.

<sup>56</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from NL (2014NL05SFOP001).

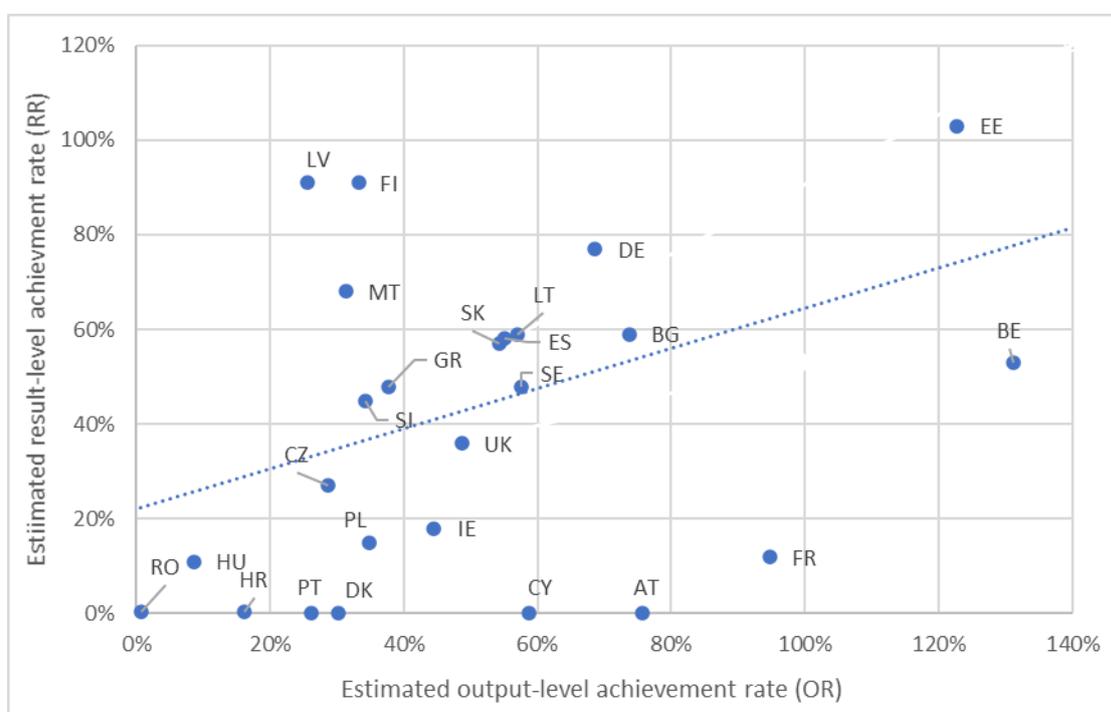
<sup>57</sup> Amnyos-Edater, 2018. Analysis of the inclusion of people with disabilities in the national ESF and YEI OPs in France.

<sup>58</sup> Targets were set for about 93% of programme-specific result indicators. For more information please refer to Annex 4.

development of novel projects to more tried-and-tested projects to address the refugee crisis, which also has implications for the assessment of Relevance<sup>59</sup>.

Figure 7 maps the result-level achievement rate and the output-level achievement rate by Member State. A positive correlation is evident where a higher output-level achievement rate is associated with a higher result-level achievement rate. This is in line with the fact that results take more time to materialise than outputs. The achievement rate may also be driven by the level at which targets are set as well as shifts in the context over time. For example, in Bulgaria (2014BG05M9OP001), the initial targets were set in 2013 when the unemployment rate was high at 12.9% - the unemployment rate decreased subsequently to 4.8% in 2019<sup>60</sup>. The targets set in 2013 may be too high considering this decrease over time. In Poland, programmes that focused on a smaller geographic area achieved results more quickly. The labour market and social situation varied substantially by region in Poland and can often explain differences in the generation of results<sup>61</sup>.

Figure 7. *Estimated specific output-level and specific result-level achievement rates, by Member State*



Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019; Note: The data is missing for AT, CY, DK due to missing reference for targets defined as a ratio in these countries. LU, IT and NL are not presented as the output-level achievement rate estimates were very large and considered to be outliers.

**Success rates provide an alternate measure to assess effectiveness, but they should be viewed cautiously. A lower success rate may suggest that the result is difficult to generate among the target group in the regional context. A higher**

<sup>59</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Austria (2014AT05SFOP001)

<sup>60</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Bulgaria (2014BG05M9OP001)

<sup>61</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Poland (2014PL05M9OP001)

**success rate may suggest higher effectiveness, but also reflect higher implementation capacity or 'creaming'.**

Success rates – which refer to the share of participations that generate a result – provide an alternate measure to assess the effectiveness of TO9 operations. The research team estimated the success rates of each common result indicator by dividing the results generated for the indicator by the overall number of common outputs recorded for the reference population for the 2014-2020 programming period until the end of the 2018 calendar year<sup>62</sup>. The estimated success rates of TO9 operations at the EU-level varied by indicator, from 6% for engagement in education/training to 22% for engagement in job searching by disadvantaged participants (see Table 3)<sup>63</sup>. The success rate of employment including self-employment in the immediate term was 15% (CR04) as compared with 21% in the longer-term (CR06).

*Table 3. Estimated success rates for immediate and longer-term common results, EU-28*

	Common result indicator	Estimated success rate
Immediate term	Inactive participants engaged in job search upon leaving (CR01)	16%
	Participants engaged in education/training upon leaving (CR02)	6%
	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving (CR03)	15%
	Participants in employment including self-employment upon leaving (CR04)	15%
	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job-searching, education/training/gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment upon leaving (CR05)	22%
Longer-term	Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving (CR06)	21%
	Participants with an improved labour market situation, six months after leaving (CR07)	18%

<sup>62</sup> The reference population was identified through the ESF guidance for the definition of output and results indicators: European Commission (2018). 2014-2020 European Growth Programme: Output and Result Indicator Definitions Guidance for the European Social Fund. In one case (for CR02), the reference population was not explicitly defined. In this case the reference population was defined based on the literal description provided.

<sup>63</sup> The calculation of success rates is explained in Annex 4. Breakdowns of success rates by IP, category of region and type of operation are also presented in this annex.

Participants above 54 years of age in employment, 14% including self-employment, six months after leaving (CR08)

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Disadvantaged participants in employment, including 13% self-employment, six months after leaving (CR09)

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Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019

Overall, the estimated success rates were consistently higher in transition regions and lower in the less developed regions. For example, the success rate for disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education, training or employment (CR05) was 32% in transition regions as compared with 22% in less developed regions (see Annex 4 for more examples). The lower success rate in less developed regions may be due to the more challenging context for implementing actions and generating results.

The review of the socio-economic context for the baseline analysis highlighted significant differences across the EU in terms of unemployment rates, the share of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, educational achievement and the rate of people suffering from material and social deprivation (see Annex 3 for more information). The lower success rate in less developed regions is consistent with a point raised in the focus group in Spain that related to the implementation of ESF in that context, but which may apply to other highly regionalised countries<sup>64</sup>. The focus group participants noted that less developed regions in Spain receive a relatively high level of ESF funds while they had lower implementation capacity through NGOs and other beneficiaries. Target groups closer to the labor market also tend to migrate to more developed areas with greater opportunities and thus their concentration in less developed regions was lower. The expected success of ESF operations in less developed regions is thus constrained both by lower implementation capacity as well as a lower concentration of the target group, especially in sparsely populated rural areas.

Table 4 presents the estimated success rates for a selection of common result indicators that were the most aligned with the intervention logics of TO9 operations that focussed on individuals (Types 1-4)<sup>65</sup>. For example, the results indicator measuring transitions into employment (CR04) was included for Type 1 operations, while the indicator related to transitions into education or training (CR02) was included for Type 3 operations. The estimated success rates by type of operation were expected to be higher than the average values presented in Table 3, due to the closer alignment with the intervention logics. This was indeed the case for all the estimated success rates except for CR01 for Type 2 (2% for Type 2 versus 16% overall), CR02 for Type 3 (2% for Type 3 versus 6% overall) and CR05 for Type 4 (7% for Type 4 versus 22% overall). While these indicators were aligned with the intervention logics for the types of TO9 operations, they were not aligned with the generated results. In the case of Type 4 operations, the low success rate may be due to a low recording of results data as noted in the reply to EQ 1.1 (see Section 0). When taking Type 1 to Type 4 operations together, the estimated success rate was of 18%. The rate was the lowest for inactive participants engaged in job searching (7%) and the highest for participants in employment (83%). The estimated success rate was comparably higher when looking exclusively at entity level type of

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<sup>64</sup> Focus group discussion in Spain. Please see Annex 6 for more information.

<sup>65</sup> Estimated success rates by type of operation and by Member State are presented in Annex 4.

operations - Type 5 and Type 6 (26%). A possible explanation for these results could be that Type 5 operations are more likely than Type 1 and Type 2 operations to cover the so-called protected employment where cooperatives or enterprises in the third sector employ participants of these operations.

*Table 4. Success rates for selected type of operation and common result indicators*

<b>Type of operation</b>	<b>Common result indicator</b>	<b>Estimated success rate</b>
Type 1 Employment-focused actions	CR04 ( <i>Participants in employment, including self-employment</i> )	89% (Immediate)
	CR06 ( <i>Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving</i> )	41% (Longer-term)
	CR07 ( <i>Participants in employment, including self-employment and/or with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving</i> )	37% (Longer-term)
Type 2 Enhance basic skills	CR01 ( <i>Inactive participants engaged in job-searching upon leaving</i> )	2% (Immediate)
	CR02 ( <i>Participants in education/training upon leaving</i> )	32% (Immediate)
	CR05 ( <i>Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, in education/training, gaining a qualification or in employment</i> )	28% (Immediate)
Type 3 Basic school education	CR02 ( <i>Participants in education/training upon leaving</i> )	56% (Immediate)
	CR03 ( <i>Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving</i> )	2% (Immediate)
Type 4 Access to services	CR05 ( <i>Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, in education/training, gaining a qualification or in employment</i> )	7% (Immediate)

*Source:* SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. Success rates that are italicised are lower than the overall values presented in Table 3.

The highest success rate was observed for Type 1 (Employment-focussed actions) operations in terms of engagement in employment (CR04). The analysis suggests that 89% of participations in Type 1 (Employment-focussed actions) operations resulted in

the generation of immediate-term employment. The sustainability of employment generation is questionable as the success rate for the immediate term greatly exceeds the success rate for the longer term (CR06). The success rate of CR06 for Type 1 (Employment-focussed actions) operations is also quite high in relation to the success rate for this indicator for all social inclusion operations (41% versus 21%). In addition to reflecting high effectiveness, these high success rates may also indicate some degree of 'creaming' effects whereby participants in these operations were very close to the labour market from the start.

Evidence from the country-based analyses suggests that the target group's proximity to the labour market can affect the success rate. For example, in Austria (2014AT05SFOP001), the success rate for engagement in employment (CR04) for Type 1 (Employment-focussed actions) operations was rather low at 9%. The low figure may be explained by the fact that newly arrived migrants were difficult to place in employment<sup>66</sup>. In Poland (2014PL05M9OP001), the monitoring of employment generation as a common result created a tendency to recruit people who were more likely to be employed rather than those in need or with complex problems<sup>67</sup>.

The differences in the estimated success rates for Type 1 (Employment-focussed actions) operations as compared with Type 2 (Enhance basic skills) operations in generating employment-related results reflect differences in their respective intervention logics - Type 1 (Employment-focussed actions) operations support people closer to the labour market as compared with Type 2 operations. The success rate for employment-related immediate results was higher for Type 1 operations (CR04 - 89%) compared with Type 2 (Enhance basic skills) operations (CR02 - 2%; CR05 - 28%)<sup>68</sup>. These findings confirm employment as a primary objective for Type 1 (Employment-focussed actions) operations while the main objective of Type 2 (Enhance basic skills) operations is to enhance the employment prospects of participants (i.e. through education and training). It is also worth noting the higher success rate for transitions into education or training (CR02) for Type 3 (Basic education) operations (56%) estimated as compared with Type 2 (Enhance basic skills) operations (32%). This is also in line with the intervention logics of these type of operations, as Type 3 (Basic education) operations are more directed towards engagement in education and training.

### **EQ 1.3 Effectiveness: How were relevant national strategies and policy contexts and challenges translated into operations?**

Sub-question 1.3 investigates how national policies on social inclusion were reflected in TO9 operations. This is central to the effectiveness of TO9 operations, as social inclusion is a competence of the Member States and the EU funds delivered through ESF may only complement or add value to the actions taken by the Member States.

The answer to this sub-question is closely interlinked with the answer to EQ 3.2 (Relevance). The analysis of EQ 3.2 identified a full alignment between relevant national strategies, policy context and ESF support to social inclusion in nearly all countries.

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<sup>66</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Austria (2014AT05SFOP001).

<sup>67</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Poland (2014PL05M9OP001).

<sup>68</sup> Immediate results refer to CR01 to CR05. For Type 1 the rate is based only on CR04, for Type 2 the rate refers to all indicators displayed in the graph (CR01, CR02, CR05).

**EQ 1.4 Effectiveness: Which changes (intended and unintended) did the ESF support bring to the target groups? How were these changes, notably soft outcomes, assessed and documented? Which types of operations are or were the most effective and most sustainable, for which groups and in which contexts?**

Sub-question 1.4 is concerned with the changes generated by social inclusion operations including soft outcomes, their documentation and their sustainability.

***The measured impacts of social inclusion operations primarily related to gains in terms of employment and education, both in the immediate and longer-term.***

The reply to EQ 1.2 reviews the recorded results of ESF support to social inclusion. Table 27 in Annex 4 presents the recorded results by common result indicator and Member State. Most of the results (78%) were related to the labour market (e.g. engagements in job searching, employment, improved labour market situation) while the remainder concerned outcomes related to education and qualifications<sup>69</sup>.

***While a wide range of 'soft' outcomes were identified for social inclusion operations, such outcomes were measured in only a few instances.***

The importance of measuring 'soft' outcomes for ESF operations has been highlighted as early as 2000, with the publication of a report entitled 'Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: A Review of Current Practice'. The report noted that the measurement of 'hard' outcomes, which was the traditional focus for ESF-funded employment programmes, was not sufficient to gain a complete picture of participants' increased employability. The study recommended 'ESF-funded projects to set up systems to monitor soft outcomes, particularly those projects delivering support under Policy Field 2 (Equal opportunities for all and promoting social inclusion)' <sup>70</sup>. As part of this study a good practice guide was developed to help projects in measuring soft outcomes<sup>71</sup>.

A 2019 study commissioned by the European Commission<sup>72</sup> found that soft skills were rarely monitored in a structured and systematic fashion<sup>73</sup>. The ESF Thematic Network

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<sup>69</sup> Common result indicators related to the labour market were CR01, CR04, CR06 and CR07.

<sup>70</sup> Dewson, S., Eccles, J., Tackey, N. D. and Jackson, A. (2000). Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: A Review of Current Practice. DfEE Research Brief No. 219. 7 August 2000. London: DFEE.

<sup>71</sup> Dewson, S., Eccles, J., Tackey, N. D. and Jackson, A. (2000b). *Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled*. Brighton: Institute for Employment Studies.

<sup>72</sup> European Commission, 2019. The feasibility of developing a methodology for measuring the distance travelled and soft outcomes for long-term unemployed people participating in Active Labour Market Programmes.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

on Inclusion also stressed the importance of incorporating 'soft indicators' into the monitoring of ESF operations to holistically assess their impacts<sup>74</sup>.

The study on the Monitoring and Evaluation systems of the ESF identified a typology of outcomes that ESF seeks to achieve<sup>75</sup>. Each area is listed below along with examples of "soft" indicators:

- Vulnerabilities and social conditions: overcoming vulnerability/ difficulty/ disadvantage; improved health/well-being (e.g. healthier habits, reduced use of drugs); improved housing conditions;
- Capacity: improvements in knowledge, competences and skills; improved attitude and behavioural changes
- School/education: increased engagement in learning; improved attitude and behavioural changes
- Employment/labour market: Increased potential for labour market engagement; Higher motivation to engage with the labour market; Improved time management; Improved job search abilities; Improved career management skills
- Use of services: Increased awareness of service availability and potential benefits; satisfaction of services received

Inputs to the EU-level Delphi survey identified a number of areas where indicators to monitor soft outcomes could be introduced. These areas included social change in families and local communities, digital literacy, behavioural changes, social roles and social valorisation<sup>76</sup>.

Managing Authorities may monitor soft outcomes generated by social inclusion operations through programme-specific indicators. A review of these indicators however found few instances where the indicators captured 'soft' outcomes. Yet, other sources suggest that ESF support to social inclusion contributed to a range of 'soft' outcomes. For example, the replies from the public consultation indicate strong agreement from all stakeholder groups that the ESF actions generates soft-skills (57%) and self-confidence (54%) for participants (54%)<sup>77</sup>.

The country-based analyses and national evaluations (see synthesis in Annex 1) shed further light on soft outcome indicators were monitored in relation to social inclusion operations. The soft outcomes identified most frequently related to **improvement of soft skills, increased self-esteem and improvement of labour market prospects** of ESF participants (e.g. BG, ES, FI, FR, IT, NL, PL, SK, UK). Examples include:

- In the Murcia region of Spain (2014ES05SFOP003), personal satisfaction, motivation, aptitude and attitudes towards job-searching are monitored in some

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<sup>74</sup> European Commission, 2018. Study on integrated delivery of social services aiming at the activation of minimum income recipients in the labour market - success factors and reform pathways, p. 2.

<sup>75</sup> European Commission, 2018. Study on the Monitoring and Evaluation Systems of the ESF.

<sup>76</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

<sup>77</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

projects<sup>78</sup>. Participants in a focus group organised in Spain highlighted the importance of measuring 'employability' of participants and of providing a common methodology as part of the common result indicators<sup>79</sup>.

- In Italy, peer support techniques in social inclusion and employment projects promoted self-esteem and interpersonal skills and sought to increase the level of awareness of knowledge among the target group of their mental health conditions<sup>80</sup>.
- In Poland (2014PL16M2OP012), improvements were noted in terms of stress management. In addition, greater independence was observed among persons with advanced mental illness (e.g. shopping and preparing meals without an assistant)<sup>81</sup>.

Participants in a focus group in Latvia noted several unintended impacts of a project targeting persons with a disability. The unintended impacts included the development of new personal relationships, going to the dentist and/or learning how to use internet banking<sup>82</sup>.

TO9 operations not only improved ESF participants' soft skills, but they also contributed to **enhanced well-being**. Examples include:

- In Wales, (2014UK05SFOP001 and 2014UK05SFOP002), an evaluation identified positive impacts on the sense of well-being and resilience among participants<sup>83</sup>. Participants in a focus group in Cyprus noted that the actions for school and social inclusion project increased the psychological and social confidence of the target groups which included immigrant and Roma children<sup>84</sup>.
- In Austria, an evaluation of the 'Youth College Vienna' project measured progress on several 'soft' outcomes - **social and cultural integration**, integration through language and education, and improvements in education and employment trajectories<sup>85</sup>.
- In Bulgaria, improvements in language skills and a greater perceived sense of being accepted was also noted among pre-school children<sup>86</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> Informe de Evaluación del Programa Operativo FSE de Región de Murcia 2014-2020. Período 2014-2016 (2017).

<sup>79</sup> Focus group discussion in Spain. Please see Annex 6 for more information.

<sup>80</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Italy (2014ITT05FOP004).

<sup>81</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Poland (2014PL16M2OP012).

<sup>82</sup> Focus group discussion in Latvia. Please see Annex 6 for more information.

<sup>83</sup> Welsh Government, 2018. Evaluation of Communities for Work - Stage 3: Emerging Outcomes and Impacts Report.

<sup>84</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from CY (2014CY05M9OP001).

<sup>85</sup> Bergmann N, Danzer L, Lechner F, Yagoub O. Zusammenfassung: Evaluierung "Start Wien - das Jugendcollege". May 2019.

<sup>86</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Bulgaria (2014BG05M20P001).

A systematic review of programme-specific indicators in the 2018 Annual Implementation Reports found that 60 OPs in 16 Member States (BG, CZ, ES, FR, GR, HR, HU, IT, LV, LT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, UK) monitored **capacity development** in the area of health/social welfare, noting that an estimated 205,293 results were generated<sup>87</sup>.

The replies to the public consultation highlight other results of the ESF support to social inclusion including 'soft' outcomes<sup>88</sup>. Beneficiaries who received ESF funding noted improved soft skills such as stronger interpersonal relations at work (57%), increased self-confidence (57%), greater awareness of issues regarding social inclusion, poverty and discrimination (49%) and better employment conditions (33%). Several case studies note that the capacity of beneficiary organisations improved thanks to the ESF intervention. For example, in Latvia, staff at the Social Integration State Agency gained expertise in providing support to people with a disability<sup>89</sup>.

***While it is too early to assess the sustainability of ESF support for social inclusion at a programme level, there is evidence to suggest that it has a sustainable impact on participants.***

Managing Authorities consider that it is still too early to assess the sustainability of ESF support to social inclusion, especially for programmes that experienced delays in the early stages of the programming period. The generation of longer-term results may have been limited by the low project selection rate.

At the same time, some evidence suggests that ESF support for social inclusion has a sustainable impact on participants. Among the national evaluations reviewed (see Annex 1), one evaluation in France (2014FR05SFOP001) investigated the sustainability of outcomes. The evaluation found that ESF support for social inclusion led to sustainable employment for participants more than a year after completing the ESF intervention. In a survey of participants to the intervention, more than half reported that they were still in employment one year afterwards (57%) and expected to continue with the same employer (53%). More than half of the jobs held by participants were indeterminate or fixed-term contracts of more than six months<sup>90</sup>.

The sustainability of ESF support to social inclusion is also evident in a project in Spain that has been supported by ESF for over 20 years<sup>91</sup>. The Acceder project has served to change the mindsets of Roma and non-Roma populations including in public administrations and the private sector. While it was unlikely that Roma would be working in a large company 20 years ago, currently many young Roma want to work in such jobs and employers are much more receptive. Moreover, it has had an important impact

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<sup>87</sup> European Commission, 2020. Final ESF Synthesis Report of Annual Implementation Reports 2018 submitted in 2019.

<sup>88</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

<sup>89</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001).

<sup>90</sup> Amnyos-Edater, 2019. Evaluation report of the National Operational Programme focussing on Axis 3 (TO9)

<sup>91</sup> Funding from ESF has been received for this project since 1997.

on gender roles, as more Roma women have entered the labour market and become active<sup>92</sup>.

**EQ 1.5 Effectiveness: Which factors facilitate or hinder the effectiveness of ESF operations under Thematic Objective 9, by type of operation?**

Sub-question 1.5 examines the factors that promoted or hindered the effectiveness of TO9 operations overall as well as by IP. The analysis focuses on factors related to the design and implementation of TO9 operations as opposed to contextual factors, which are discussed under the assessment of Relevance.

***The effectiveness of ESF support for social inclusion was promoted by a high level of cooperation, the precise definition of the target group, tailored outreach and alignment of OPs with national policy.***

A **high level of cooperation** between beneficiary organisations and other actors for the implementation of ESF support for social inclusion promoted their effectiveness. This success factor was highlighted in the public consultation as well as the country-based analyses from several Member States (e.g. BE, DE, ES, IT, NL, PL). A high level of cooperation was especially important in the delivery of integrated support through the 'one-stop-shop' approach, which was novel to some countries in this programming period. For example in Belgium, improved links between local social welfare centres and the Public Employment Service enabled the Managing Authority of the Brussels Capital Region (2014BE05M9OP002) to identify difficulties faced by people moving from a relatively protected post in the third sector to the more competitive regular labour market. In the Youth Unemployment Free Zone project in the Netherlands (2014NL05SFOP001), better cooperation within the context of existing regional partnerships united stakeholders with a shared purpose and promoted better service provision<sup>93</sup>. In the public consultation, beneficiary organisations highlighted the positive effects of partnerships for the successful delivery of ESF operations. This view was strongest among public authorities<sup>94</sup>. Cooperation was a result of ESF requirements on partnerships as described in response to EQ 3.2.

**Precise definitions of the target group and a tailored outreach** were also identified as success factors for the effective implementation of ESF interventions in several countries (e.g. DE, IT, PL). For example, in the Baden-Württemberg OP in Germany (2014DE05SFOP003), a review of the target groups and their needs within the region, carried out prior to the design and delivery of TO9 operations, was considered to enhance the effectiveness of the intervention<sup>95</sup>. In their replies to the public consultation, beneficiary organisations and Managing Authorities also underscored the importance of knowing and understanding the specific circumstances and needs of the target group to successfully deliver ESF actions<sup>96</sup>. Two organisations who replied to the

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<sup>92</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Spain (2014ES05SFOP012).

<sup>93</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from the Netherlands (2014NL05SFOP001).

<sup>94</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

<sup>95</sup> Evaluation of the implementation of the Baden-Württemberg ESF OP 2014-2020 (November 2018)

<sup>96</sup> Annex 7 Consultation report.

public consultation noted that targeting based on specific needs and circumstances may limit the risk of creating barriers to eligibility<sup>97</sup>.

More specifically, good knowledge of the target group was critical to design effective outreach measures and secure participations. For example, in Bulgaria (2014BG05M20P001), the pre-school education and training project in Burgas municipality hired mediators from the community to promote communications between teachers, parents and children. Mediators gained the trust of the target group from the beginning of the operation. Recruitment of participants for the project in the second year was easier as the target group was already sensitised and aware of the positive benefits imparted by the project in the first year<sup>98</sup>. In Spain (2014ES05SFOP012), the Acceder program, which sought to provide customised employment pathways for Roma women, used a gender-sensitive strategy to recruit participants took account of the work-life balance of the target group<sup>99</sup>. In Sweden, participants in a focus group highlighted the importance of ensuring the engagement of stakeholders who can influence the target group (for example, leading policy and decision-makers in society, employers, officials at operational departments of implementing bodies) and play a mediating role in delivery of Type 6 operations, which focus on influencing attitudes and systems<sup>100</sup>.

Effective engagement of target groups can also enhance the relevance of TO9 operations as discussed in response to EQ 3.1.

A **holistic approach and flexibility to adapt to individual needs** were also found to drive the effective implementation of TO9 operations. These factors were typically reflected in the consideration of the family members of participants and the multiple and time sensitive needs of the target group, as well as the wide range of organisations involved in the project's implementation. For example, in Spain (2014ES05SFOP012), the Acceder project takes into account the multiple dimensions shaping the employability of Roma women, which include family, health and housing. In addition to activities for the participants, the project also carried out activities to sensitise the community and labour intermediation as well as sensitisation activities for businesses<sup>101</sup>. A participant in a focus group carried out in Spain noted that this level of integration had never been done before<sup>102</sup>. In Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001), completely new training programs were developed for people with severe disability and mental disorders. The programs were designed to match the target group's abilities and interests, foster relevant social skills to facilitate labour market integration, and attract staff who could provide individualised support over the course of the training<sup>103</sup>.

The evaluation of the Communities for Work (CfW) programme in Wales (OP West Wales and the Valleys ESF 2014-2020 – 2014UK05SFOP001 – and OP East Wales ESF 2014-

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<sup>97</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

<sup>98</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Bulgaria (2014BG05M20P001).

<sup>99</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Spain (2014ES05SFOP012).

<sup>100</sup> Focus group discussion in Sweden. Please see Annex 6 for more information.

<sup>101</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Spain (2014ES05SFOP012).

<sup>102</sup> Focus group discussion in Spain. Please see Annex 6 for more information.

<sup>103</sup> Focus group discussion in Latvia. Please see Annex 6 for more information.

2020 – 2014UK05SFOP002) found that that the involvement of a wide range of programme implementers and the time they made available to support the target group was a success factor. Programme implementers included specialist youth and adult mentors, employment advisers and support workers, who all worked in community settings with individual participants. As the evaluation stressed, 'the time available and flexibility of the support provided by CfW was seen as a distinct advantage over mainstream employability provision'<sup>104</sup>.

The 'Housing First' model – in which the securing of safe and stable housing is a first priority and coupled by support to address complex needs – is an example of a holistic approach that has been found to be highly effective. Overall, across Europe, it contributed to ending homelessness among an average of 80% of project participants with high and complex needs<sup>105</sup>. ESF support to social inclusion also contributes to the implementation of Housing First in Italy, which is delivered through the Housing First Italia network, bringing together service providers, municipalities and academics operating under the federation of Italian homelessness organisations<sup>106</sup>. A project that sought to enhance services targeting homeless people in Bologna, Italy (2014IT05FOP001) introduced a wide range of actions including an expansion of outreach social and health services through mobile units, temporary and long-term housing services, day-to-day support for the development of personal and soft skills, training and counselling services, social activities and psychological support to young adults. This holistic support was reinforced by funding from the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) that was used to purchase sleeping bags, blankets, clothes, fabrics to make clothes, toiletries, personal objects and food (including food for personalised diets for people with health issues or Muslims). An evaluation found that the ability to buy personalised goods made a substantial difference for the target group<sup>107</sup>. Further analysis of the complementarity of ESF support to social inclusion with other EU funds (e.g. ERDF, FEAD, AMIF) is discussed in the assessment of Coherence. Lastly, Representatives from organisations involved in policy debates at the European level on social inclusion highlighted the importance of the alignment of programme priorities with policy goals and local and regional needs<sup>108</sup>. These issues are discussed further in the assessment of Relevance (see reply to EQ 3.1) and Coherence (see reply to EQ 4.1).

***Factors that hindered the effectiveness of social inclusion operations included delays in implementation, high administrative burden of implementing ESF projects in relation to administrative capacity of beneficiaries and low receptiveness of the community to the target group.***

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<sup>104</sup> Welsh Government, 2018. Evaluation of Communities for Work - Stage 3: Emerging Outcomes and Impacts Report Summary, 27/6/2018.

<sup>105</sup> Housing First, Europe Hub, 2019. *Housing First in Europe - An Overview of Implementation, Strategy and Fidelity*. Housing First Europe.

<sup>106</sup> Consoli, T. et al. 2016. *The Italian Network for Implementing the "Housing First" Approach*. European Journal of Homelessness.

<sup>107</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Italy (2014IT05FOP001).

<sup>108</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

**Delays in implementation** (see also Section 0) hindered the effectiveness of ESF operations in several countries (e.g. ES, EL). They were caused by, for example, the administrative complexity of tendering and procurement procedures, gold plating, the time involved to hire qualified staff, the late approval of the OP<sup>109</sup> and difficulties in implementing management and control systems. In Italy, for instance, there were significant time lapses between the selection of projects and their subsequent start. The latter was often caused by a lack of capacity and expertise of the funding beneficiaries. For example, the territorial districts (*Ambiti Territoriali*) encountered difficulties in the set-up of local networks necessary to implement their projects, and many municipalities suffered from a lack of personnel to implement projects. In other cases, delays were caused by an overall lack of expertise of beneficiaries to design, implement and manage European projects (with the additional complexity of integrated measures for TO9).

These challenges also had implications for efficiency (see Section 5.2 for more information). Respondents to the public consultation noted that delays in disbursing funds led to discontinuities in the delivery of ESF actions and adversely affected the quality of project management<sup>110</sup>.

The **high administrative burden of implementing ESF projects** in relation to the administrative capacity of national, regional and local authorities, as well as NGOs was a commonly reported challenge (e.g. BG, ES, EL, HU, IT, LT, LV, PT). The problem of low administrative capacity was exacerbated when combined with complex compliance requirements (e.g. ES, LT, EL) or the involvement of new implementing partners (e.g. ES, UK) who were not used to ESF administrative procedures. Respondents to the public consultation noted excessive requirements for record keeping, monitoring as well as collecting data on indicators that contribute to administrative burden and deter engagement with ESF. In Hungary, participants in a focus group highlighted the need for more support during the application process and the need for improvements in the IT infrastructure to mitigate the high administrative burden<sup>111</sup>. These challenges were confirmed by respondents to the EU-level Delphi survey<sup>112</sup>.

***In addition, issues related to a lack of acceptance of certain target populations by the wider community hindered the effectiveness of ESF support to social inclusion.*** The country-based analyses provided examples of how discrimination in communities hindered the effectiveness of ESF support to social inclusion. Some examples are provided below:

- In Bulgaria (2014BG05M9OP001), several protests took place in municipalities against the provision of social housing and services to children with challenging behaviours, young Roma people and adults with disabilities. There were targeted campaigns against foster care and other child protection services, which led to

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<sup>109</sup> The late approval of an OP may be related to overlaps with the previous programming period (2007-2013). In Spain for instance, the country-based analysis from Spain found that overlapping programming periods complicated the implementation of TO9 operations.

<sup>110</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

<sup>111</sup> Focus group discussion in Hungary. Please see Annex 6 for more information.

<sup>112</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

the postponed introduction of legislation on social services that promotes models of childcare systems developed with ESF support<sup>113</sup>.

- In Italy, a housing programme aimed at homeless people and members of the LGBT community (PON Metropolitan Cities IT16M2OP004) was challenged by the reluctance of homeowners to lease property to these vulnerable groups even after a guarantee of payment was agreed<sup>114</sup>.
- In Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001), low participation in a project was coupled with difficulties to find employers willing to recruit people with a disability<sup>115</sup>.

## **5.2. Question 2 – Efficiency: How efficient is the ESF in the achievement of the objectives of Thematic Objective 9?**

The assessment of efficiency examines the extent to which costs of ESF support to social inclusion varied across Member States, contexts and the type of operation. The assessment also reviews whether organisational arrangements facilitated or hindered the take-up of TO9 among potential beneficiaries, in particular for small and local organisations, and service delivery to target groups.

The assessment draws on all qualitative and quantitative information collected and analysed as part of the study including an extraction from the ESF monitoring data. The assessment was supported by answers to four sub-evaluation questions, which are presented below.

### **EQ 2.1 Efficiency: To what extent were operations cost-effective? What types of operations were more and less cost-effective? In what contexts? What were the determining factors?**

Sub-question 2.1 addresses the financial progress of TO9 operations in relation to the participations and immediate-term results generated.

#### ***The costs per participation for social inclusion operations varied substantially across IPs and Member States.***

**Error! Reference source not found.** presents estimates of declared expenditure per participation, for each of the investment priorities and for TO9 as a whole. The cost per participation varies widely, reflecting to some extent the range of contexts in which social inclusion operations are implemented and the variety in the types of operations implemented. Interventions promoting social entrepreneurship (IP9v) showed the highest cost per participation, at 3,048 euro, while those relating to community-led local development strategies (IP9vi) represented the lowest cost, at about 581 euro per

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<sup>113</sup> For more information please refer to Annex 8 – OP case study from Bulgaria (2014BG05M9OP001).

<sup>114</sup> Modelli organizzativi di Housing First per il contrasto al disagio abitativo. Il modello delle Agenzie per la casa, PON Citta' Metropolitane 2014-2020 (Analysis of measures to support housing access funded by the OP Metropolitan Cities in Italy) [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/)

<sup>115</sup> For more information please refer to Annex 8 – OP case study from Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001).

participation. For TO9 as a whole, the average cost per participation to date was 1,441 euro<sup>116</sup>. This is comparable to the average cost per participation estimated in the 2007-2013 programming period of 1,200 euro<sup>117</sup>. The estimations may have been affected by delays in the recording of outputs (see Annex 4 for more information), which could have led to higher estimated costs per participation.

*Table 5. Declared expenditures per participation in TO9 operations, by investment priority*

<b>Investment Priority</b>	<b>No of participations</b>	<b>Total Expenditure Declared (€)</b>	<b>Declared Expenditure per participation (€)</b>
9i. Active inclusion	3.3 million	4.9 billion	1 488
9ii. Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma	103 thousand	83.7 million	816
9iii. Combating all forms of discrimination	59 thousand	49.7 million	847
9iv. Enhancing access to services	352 thousand	457 million	1 296
9v. Promoting social entrepreneurship	586	1.8 million	3 048
9vi. Community-led local development strategies	7 thousand	4.0 million	581
<b>TO9 overall:</b>	<b>3.8 million</b>	<b>5.5 billion</b>	<b>1 441</b>

*Source:* SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019

Table 6 presents the declared expenditure per immediate result by IP. Interventions to enhance access to services (IP9iv) had the highest cost per result, at 52,482 euro, since they are essentially a support to systems and thus less likely to produce results for participants related to education or employment, and therefore results figure are much lower compared to costs. IP9i, which constitutes the bulk of social inclusion operations, has a cost per result of 4,732 euro. For TO9 as a whole, the average cost per short term result was estimated to be 5,069 euro. These estimates may be over-estimated due to the known delays in the recording of results (see Annex 4 for more information).

<sup>116</sup> Annex 5 – Cost benefit analysis.

<sup>117</sup> European Commission, (2016). ESF 2007-2013 Ex-post evaluation: Supporting the integration of disadvantaged groups into the labour market and society, Volumes I to V

Table 6. Cost per immediate result achieved, by investment priority

Investment Priority	Total immediate results (CR1-CR4)	Total Expenditure Declared (€)	Declared expenditure per immediate result achieved (€)
9i. Active inclusion	1.0 million	4.9 billion	4 732
9ii. Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma	22 000	83.7 million	3 741
9iii. Combating all forms of discrimination	17 000	49.7 million	3 004
9iv. Enhancing access to services	9 000	456.7 million	52 482
9v. Promoting social entrepreneurship	322	1.8 million	5 556
9vi. Community-led local development strategies	521	4.0 million	7 625
TO9 overall in the EU	1.1 million	5.5 billion	5 069

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. Note: The figures in the tables refer to operations for which financial data and output/results were matched. Figures were rounded.

Figure 8 presents the estimated expenditure on TO9 operations per immediate result by Member State. The analysis is limited to Type 1 to Type 4 operations<sup>118</sup>, which focus on individuals. The estimates were also adjusted by purchasing power parity to account for differences in the price levels across the Member States<sup>119</sup>. Yet, significant variation remains evident across the Member States. Several Member States (e.g. CZ, CY, EL, HR, HU, LT, SI) spent considerably more per inactive or unemployed participant to achieve either a similar or lower share of employed participants upon completion. Higher cost-effectiveness in some countries may be driven by factors not related to the effectiveness of the intervention itself. One factor is 'creaming', which is the recruitment of participants who are more likely to generate a result than those who the action should be targeted to<sup>120</sup>. Another factor relevant to employment-related actions is the extent

<sup>118</sup> Types 1-4 operations targeted individuals. They included: Type 1 – Employment focussed action, Type 2 - Enhance basic skills Type 3 - Basic school education, Type 4 – Access to services following the typology presented in Annex 2.

<sup>119</sup> Adjustments by purchasing power parity control for the fact that wages or the price of goods may be cheaper or more expensive in one country than another. The cross-country differences that remain after controlling for purchasing power are more likely to stem from the nature of the intervention itself and how it was implemented.

<sup>120</sup> 'Creaming' effects may also be evident in the analysis of success rates in the reply to EQ 1.2 (see Section 0).

to which relevant open positions are available for the target group. NGOs noted this concern in their replies to the public consultation. For example, in the Netherlands, the target group also included less vulnerable individuals, which may explain why the cost per immediate result (3,631 euro) falls below the EU average (5,069 euro). In Austria, the most vulnerable were not reached and the cost per immediate result (3,553 euro) falls below the EU average.

It may overall be more costly to implement social inclusion operations as they are meant to engage the hardest-to-reach groups and address their multi-dimensional needs. A relatively higher investment would thus be required to generate a result, for example because a person requires additional counselling, support and follow-up. Yet, a review of costs per participation by TO however found higher estimates for TO8 (1,410 for ESF and 2,034 for YEI), TO10 (1,170 euro) and TO11 (2,992 euro)<sup>121</sup>. The same study found that the costs per immediate result under TO9 (5,286 euro<sup>122</sup>) was higher than TO8 (4,133 euro) and lower than TO11 (7,106 euro)<sup>123</sup>. To fully assess the immediate results generated in terms of cost, the assessment should be extended to also consider the 'soft outcomes' that they are expected to achieve (see the intervention logics in Annex 2). Possibly, such an approach may also limit the 'creaming' effects, as it would recognise the additional (financial) efforts required to reach the intended target group rather than those for whom a result can be generated more easily<sup>124</sup>.

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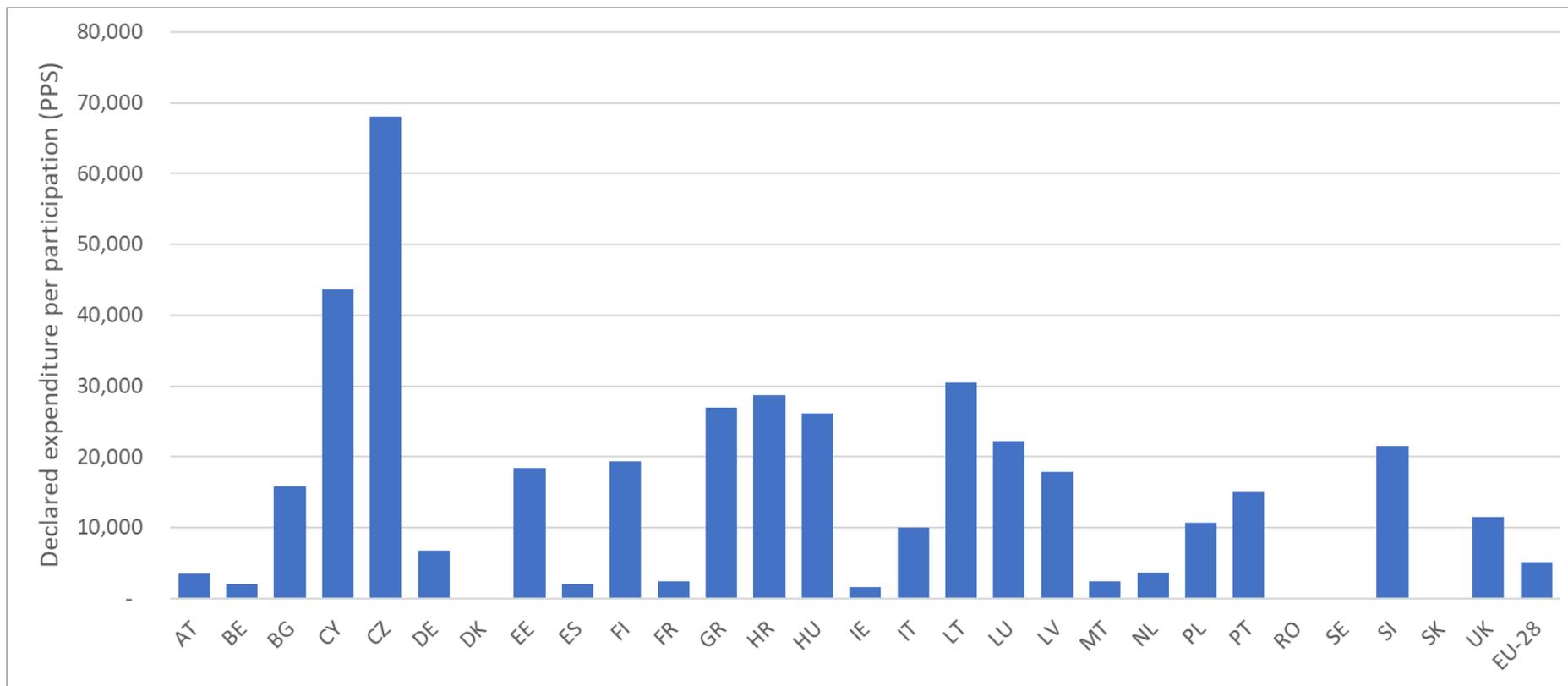
<sup>121</sup> European Commission (2020) Final ESF Synthesis Report of AIRs 2018 submitted in 2020, unpublished. Please note that the figures for TO9 diverge from those estimated for this study most likely due to different data cleaning and review techniques.

<sup>122</sup> This figure differs from the value estimated for this study. The divergence may stem from a different methodology for data cleaning and the timepoint for extraction from the SFC2014. The approach used for this study is presented in Annex 5.

<sup>123</sup> European Commission (2020) Final ESF Synthesis Report of AIRs 2018 submitted in 2020, unpublished. Please note that the figures for TO9 diverge from those estimated for this study most likely due to different data cleaning and review techniques.

<sup>124</sup> The issue of soft outcomes is discussed further in the reply to EQ 1.4 (see Section 0).

Figure 8. Declared expenditure per immediate result, by Member State 2014-2018



Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019 and Eurostat (prc\_ppp\_ind and ert\_bil\_eur\_a extracted the 10/01/2020); Note: The analysis is limited to Types 1-4 operations (those targeting individuals not entities). Figures are adjusted by purchasing power parity. The figures in the table refer to operations for which financial data and output/results were matched. Denmark and Sweden are not depicted as they did not have identified Types 1-4 operations. Slovakia, Sweden and Romania were identified as outliers due to a low number of recorded results leading to very high estimated costs per immediate result.

***A detailed cost benefit analysis identified positive returns for four of five projects investigated.***

An in-depth analysis was carried out for a selection of projects in OPs that planned for TO9 operations in five Member States (AT, ES, IT, LV, NL). The analysis sought to quantify the benefits of the intervention, drawing on data requested from the Managing Authorities and information available from published studies<sup>125</sup>.

The findings from the analysis are summarised in Table 7 while more information can be found in Annex 5. Overall, the benefits were found to exceed the costs in four of the five examples. For example, in Austria (2014AT05SFOP001), the findings suggest that each euro spent could be expected to generate 1.4 euro worth of benefits even without taking into consideration other likely outcomes such as enhanced integration of the participants into the Austrian society and the generation of benefits beyond the three years for which the modelling was carried out. The project assessed in the Netherlands (2014NL05SFOP001) was found to have a positive return of 14 euros for every 1 euro spent. The rate of return was considerable given that the project was considered innovative and carrying high risk. This finding is important to consider alongside a study that found that beneficiaries may be deterred from putting forward an innovative project due to the higher expected level of administrative burdens<sup>126</sup>. In addition to benefits for the target group, innovative approaches may generate new ways of working and simplified procedures that may be especially beneficial for small- and medium-sized beneficiaries<sup>127</sup>.

An in-depth analysis was also carried out for a project in Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001) that sought to integrate persons with severe disability and mental disorders into the labour market and society. The analysis found that the costs exceeded the estimated benefits. The findings are not surprising given the nature of the intervention and the target group. As noted in an interview:

“This project is extremely ambitious and extremely expensive, but it does deliver the results... It involves several months to a year of work with each client... The invisible part of the project has a very high added value. It should be understood, that if the problem is prolonged, recovery also takes time. This is where long-term help is needed.” *Interview with the project manager, the Social Integration State Agency*

Several other factors may drive this analysis finding. One is that not all benefits were captured, in this case the improvement in the professional team’s capability in dealing with and understanding the target group’s needs. This benefit may subsequently improve the effectiveness of the intervention leading to improved cost-effectiveness in the future<sup>128</sup>. Moreover, the benefits may have needed more time to materialise. The conceptualisation of costs may also merit review. In addition to the financial costs of a

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<sup>125</sup> Managing Authorities do not usually carry out such studies. In some Member States a third party was contracted to carry out an evaluation.

<sup>126</sup> Bureau Bartels B.V., 2016. Interim Evaluation of the implementation and execution of the initial phase of ESF Active Inclusion 2014-2020.

<sup>127</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

<sup>128</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from LV (2014LV16MAOP001).

project, other costs may be related to inefficient processes e.g. time-length of action from inception to result<sup>129</sup>.

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<sup>129</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

Table 7. Detailed cost benefit analysis of ESF support to social inclusion in five Member States

MS	Name of project	Type	Benefit cost ratio	Net benefits	Other benefits ('soft outcomes')
NL	Youth unemployment free zone 1 Midden Brabant outreach	1	4.2 to 14	EUR 1.5 to 6.3 million	Promotion links between young people and public services such as healthcare or social assistance benefits
IT	Peer support techniques in 4 social inclusion and employment	4	2 to 4	EUR 39,000 to 117,000	Improved confidence, improved ability to manage emotions and stress levels and a greater level of social interaction social networking amongst participants; positive impact of peer support workers on others recovering from mental health issues.
AT	Youth college	1	1.4	EUR 7.5 million	Social and cultural integration <sup>130</sup>
ES	Acceder	1	2-2.5	EUR 23.4 million to 37.6 million	Increased autonomy and self-esteem; Improved attitudes towards gender roles
LV	Integration of persons with 1 severe disability and persons with mental disorders into the labour market and society	1	0.4	EUR -762,000	Improvement in the professional team's capability in dealing with and understanding the target group's needs

Source: Detailed cost benefit analysis of a selection of TO9 operations. For more information please refer to Annex 5.

<sup>130</sup> Bergmann N, Danzer L, Lechner F, Yagoub O. Zusammenfassung, 2019. Evaluierung "Start Wien - das Jugendcollege".

***Other evidence reviewed suggests that the cost-effectiveness (actual and perceived) of ESF support for social inclusion is high.***

Several national evaluations investigated the cost-effectiveness of social inclusion operations (see Annex 1). The review identified the following findings:

- In France (2014FR05SFOP001) the cost for a return to employment for the target group, who were single parents of foreign origin and recipients of social benefits, was estimated to range from 1,800 euro to 4,000 euro<sup>131</sup>.
- An evaluation of a mentoring service in Ireland (Le Chéile) found that each 1 euro invested resulted in a monetised benefit of 4.35 euro<sup>132</sup>.

Respondents to the public consultation expressed favourable views on the cost-effectiveness of a wide range of ESF social inclusion operations. Figure 9 presents the share of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that the resources invested were proportionate to the results achieved. Views were most favourable for basic skills training (80%), training and education (78%), and information, guidance and tutoring to promote job search (73%). Other responses to the public consultation (primarily from NGOs) suggested that integrated measures that combined education and training with affordable housing and health promotion generated higher value for money than measures that focussed in one domain<sup>133</sup>.

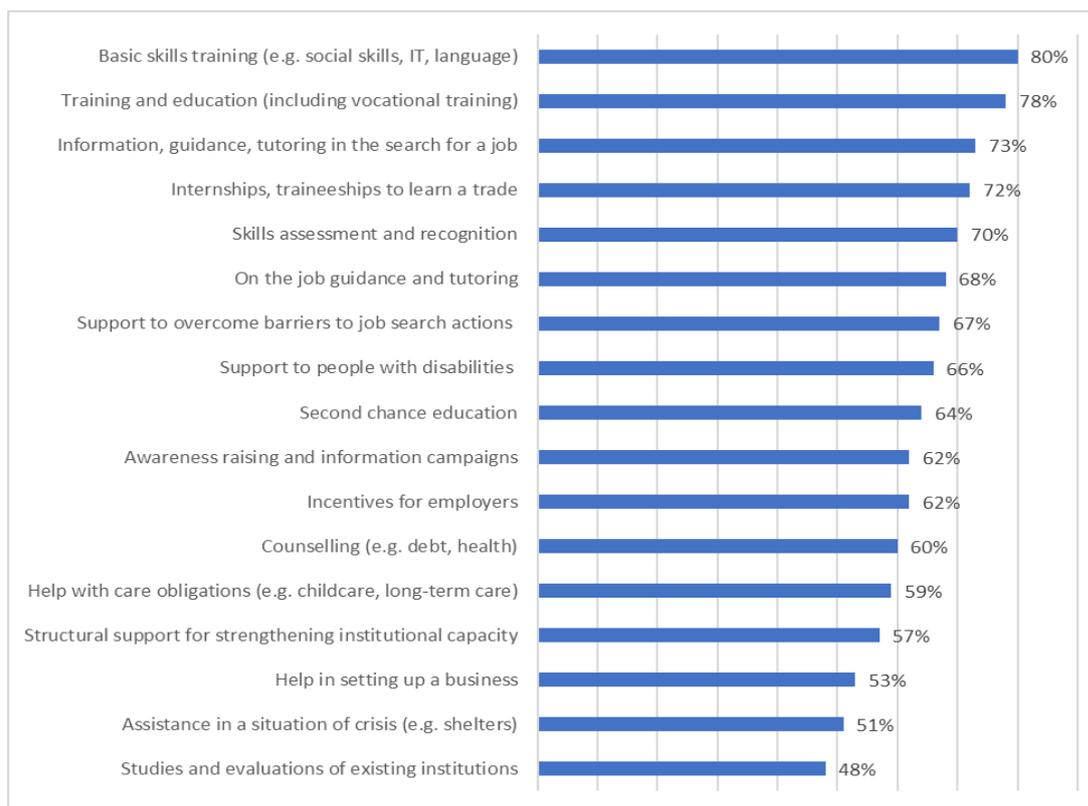
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<sup>131</sup> Amnyos-Edater, 2019. Evaluation report of the National Operational Programme focussing on Axis 3 (TO9)

<sup>132</sup> O'Dwyer, K., 2017. Reducing Youth Crime in Ireland: An Evaluation of Le Chéile Mentoring.

<sup>133</sup> Annex 7 - Consultation report.

Figure 9. Views on the cost-effectiveness of ESF support to social inclusion



Source: Annex 7 - Consultation report. The analysis is based on 354 responses. The percentages reflect the share of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that the resources invested were proportionate to the results achieved.

**The results are expected to generate macroeconomic impacts in terms of GDP and employment.**

The macroeconomic impacts of social inclusion operation that targeted individuals<sup>134</sup> were simulated using the RHOMOLO model<sup>135</sup>. Inputs to the model included declared expenditures from beneficiaries to the Managing Authorities, common outputs and common results for TO9 operations implemented until the end of 2018. As the interventions are not yet complete in many instances, the data are just an indication of progress made. The results from the model are provisional and reflect what has been generated to date – the macroeconomic impacts are subject to change and likely to be revised upwards as the programme period continues.

The model assumed that Type 2 (Enhance basic skills) and Type 3 (Basic school education) operations promoted labour productivity and boosted the economy in the medium- to long-run (after 2025). Type 1 (Employment focussed action) and Type 4 (Access to services) operations were assumed to reduce the cost of participating in the

<sup>134</sup> Types 1-4 operations targeted individuals. They included: Type 1 – Employment focussed action, Type 2 – Enhance basic skills Type 3 – Basic school education, Type 4 – Access to services following the typology presented in Annex 2.

<sup>135</sup> Joint Research Centre, 2020. Social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination (Thematic Objective 9) evaluation using RHOMOLO. Draft Final Report.

labour market. The recorded results translated to an estimated increase of 0.039% in 2023 EU GDP (approximately 4 billion euro) and an additional 110,000 jobs after taking into account the expenditure on ESF support for social inclusion. That these estimates are positive suggests that ESF support for social inclusion has provided a macro-level economic return to society. The GDP effects would be sustained beyond 2023 to an estimated 0.049% in 2033 relative to the baseline. The greatest effects would be expected in the transition regions while it would be lowest in the less developed regions. The analysis found that ESF support to TO9 generated more benefits in terms of GDP than costs in 150 regions out of the 268 regions in the EU. The higher costs than benefit in the remaining regions, which concentrated in the south of Italy, Greece and Italy, may be due to delays in the recording of results.

**EQ 2.2 Efficiency: How do organisational arrangements influence service delivery by beneficiaries or, eventually, lead to non-take up by potential beneficiaries? To what extent is non-take up a choice or due to non-awareness of the instrument?**

***Non-take up among potential beneficiaries is driven by low awareness and limited administrative capacity particularly with respect to taking on large financial advances without assurance of reimbursement.***

The country-based analyses identified three drivers of non-take up of ESF funds among potential beneficiaries, namely limited engagement with potential beneficiaries (e.g. CZ, FR, PL), the administrative burden of complying with administrative procedures (e.g. BE, EL, ES, IT, LV) and delays in the publication of calls for proposals (e.g. BE, IT)<sup>136</sup>. For example, in the Czech Republic (2014CZ05M9OP001), an evaluation noted that the Managing Authority should intensify communication with potential beneficiaries in this area so as to increase the number of projects and fulfil targets<sup>137</sup>. In Latvia (OP 2014LV16MAOP001), the municipality of Riga chose to not participate in EU funded projects for the delivery of support services to persons with mental illnesses for several reasons including the view that the financial support was not considered sufficient in relation to the administrative burden, obligatory activities such as needs assessments and the fact that community-based services had already been developed to a relatively high standard. In addition, the delayed disbursement of funds may also have acted as a deterrent, in particular for those organisations without prior experience with ESF. Responses to the public consultation noted that delays may extend up to two years<sup>138</sup>.

The drivers of non-take up were felt more among small beneficiaries or enterprises including grassroots organisations. For example in France, (2014FR05SFOP001; 2014FR05M9OP001) an evaluation found that key constraints faced by grassroots organisations included the requirement for a stable legal status and the need to have a high cash flow<sup>139</sup>. Participants in the Polish focus group highlighted the importance of

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<sup>136</sup> The latter issue was identified as a factor that hindered effectiveness in the reply to EQ 1.5 (see Section 0)

<sup>137</sup> Hope Group, 2017. Strategic evaluation of the relevance of OP Employment in the Czech Republic.

<sup>138</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

<sup>139</sup> Amnyos-Edater, 2018. Analysis of the inclusion of people with disabilities in the national ESF and YEI OPs in France.

raising awareness of the ESF among grassroots organisations<sup>140</sup>. The limited communication between NGOs, small organisations and local government administrations and Managing Authorities implied a low awareness about funding opportunities and reporting requirements<sup>141</sup>.

Respondents to the EU-level Delphi survey underscored the significance of administrative requirements for small and local organisations. The application forms and criteria are the same for all potential beneficiaries and the number of requirements is perceived as being vast and incomprehensible. Small and local organisations struggle to meet the financial requirement of minimal turnover and are more averse to risks related to the eligibility of expenditure and delays in payments, which can lead to severe cash-flow issues and risk of bankruptcy<sup>142</sup>. Small organisation may also have low capacity to monitor projects. This issue was also identified to be present in some public administrations (e.g. HR, RO and SI)<sup>143</sup>. Respondents to the EU-level Delphi survey noted that small and local organisations struggle to achieve 'hard' results and that this discourages them from applying for ESF funds. Being "local" is not a factor that is systematically taken into consideration in access to the ESF and it is not necessarily promoted by Managing Authorities, who are mainly concerned with being able to deliver on programme targets<sup>144</sup>.

Several respondents to the public consultation noted that administrative burdens associated with implementing TO9 operations should be reduced to allow third sector organisations and municipalities greater access to ESF funds<sup>145</sup>. Comprehensive support in the form of clear and practical guidelines may also improve the access of small and local organisations to ESF. More interactive forms of communication (e.g. chat bots, collaborative tools) may also promote engagement. In the case of social enterprises, a study found that the take-up of ESF support for social entrepreneurship was higher in Member States with systems and institutions that provide more comprehensive support (e.g. AT, FR, DE, NL, UK)<sup>146</sup>.

***Several Member States offer good practices in terms of promoting information-sharing and enhancing the technical and organisational capacity of potential beneficiaries.***

Good practices in information-sharing were evident in several Member States (e.g. AT, BE, IT, LT).

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<sup>140</sup> Focus group discussion in Poland. Please see Annex 6 for more information.

<sup>141</sup> European Parliament, 2018. The European Social Fund: Beneficiaries' experience in the current funding period

<sup>142</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

<sup>143</sup> European Commission, 2020. Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe: Comparative synthesis report.

<sup>144</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

<sup>145</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

<sup>146</sup> European Commission, 2020. Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe: Comparative synthesis report.

- In Austria, for example, the Managing Authorities have a system in place to ensure awareness and understanding of the procedures for ESF funding. The Managing Authorities organise trainings for intermediate bodies, which then organise information-sharing events with potential beneficiaries. All calls for proposals are announced via a newsletter disseminated by the Managing Authorities.
- In Belgium (Flanders), small organisations can receive direct communications about funding opportunities from the Managing Authority as well as coaching on project development and implementation<sup>147</sup>.
- In Lithuania (2014LT16MAOP001), information is consistently published on the website of the Managing Authority, as well as on the websites of intermediate bodies. These bodies also organise training sessions and information meetings for potential applicants.
- In Italy, regional task forces (North West, North East, Centre) of technical assistance were set up to support beneficiaries primarily with respect to financial monitoring and reporting. In addition, an online helpdesk was set up to answer questions and to enhance the technical skills of potential project beneficiaries to respond to calls for proposals. The Ministry has also activated a partnership with the World Bank to provide technical assistance through central and regional task forces<sup>148</sup>. A partnership was set up with the University of Padova to administer training sessions for beneficiaries on case management and programme design.

**EQ 2.3 Efficiency: To what extent were the organisational arrangements, including management and control systems at all levels, conducive to the effectiveness of operations? Is there gold plating? Were the procedures for reporting and monitoring timely and efficient?**

Sub-question 2.3 addresses the contribution of organisational arrangements in promoting effectiveness. This is a key issue as management and control systems were reported to be burdensome by 41% of respondents to the public consultation who were directly involved in the delivery of ESF (see Figure 10). Reporting and monitoring, project follow-up and implementation and audit were also reported as burdensome, albeit to a lesser extent<sup>149</sup>.

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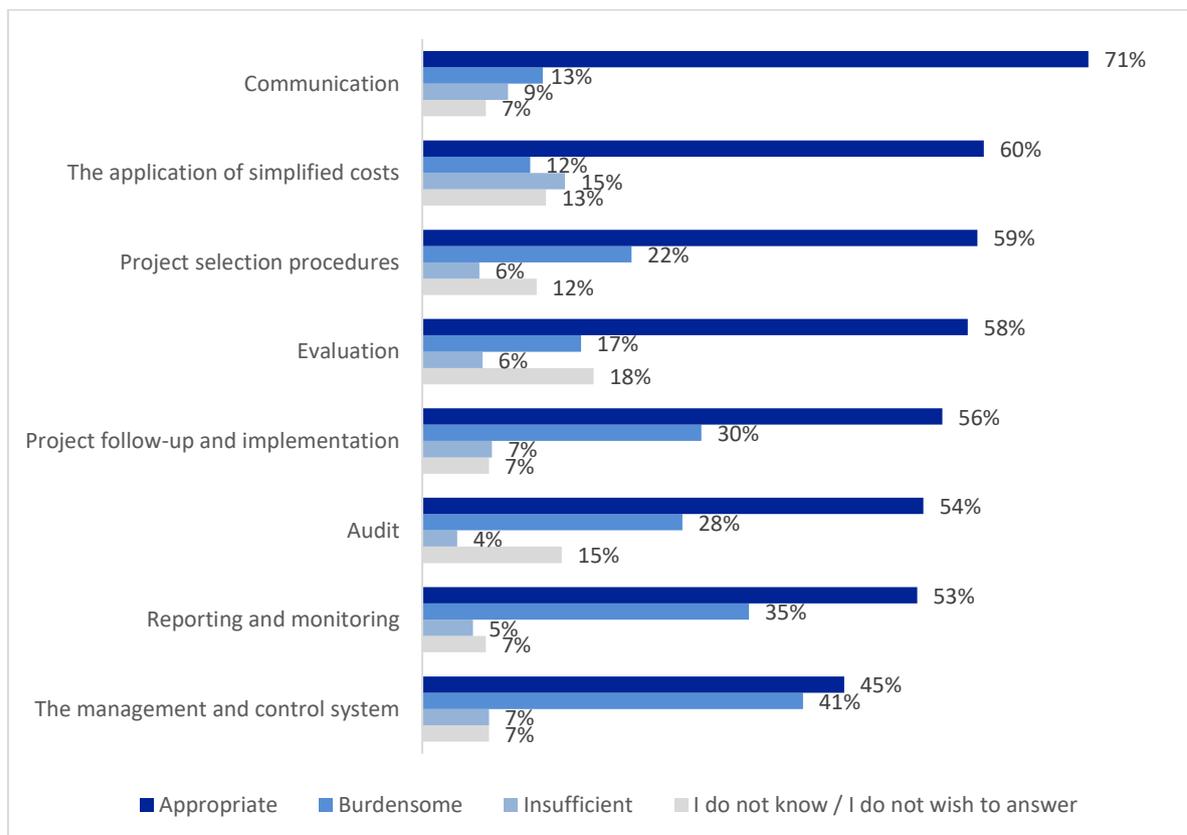
<sup>147</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

<sup>148</sup> Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali Task Force:

<http://poninclusionelavoro.gov.it/progetti/gestione-progetti/avviso3/Pagine/TASK-FORCE.aspx>

<sup>149</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

Figure 10. Views on the administrative arrangements to implement social inclusion operations



Source: Annex 7 – Consultation report. N= 295.

In Austria (2014AT05SFOP001), concerns mostly related to the perception of stakeholders that reporting requirements were excessive and that was a lack of legal certainty on how spending rules would be applied. At a more operational level, coordination with multiple funding institutions was challenging and time-consuming, in particular because roles and responsibilities were not clearly delineated, for example which organisation would be in charge of monitoring<sup>150</sup>. In Sweden, (2014SE05M90P001), it was challenging to keep the different work packages integrated and to build direct partnerships with regional organisations<sup>151</sup>. In Latvia, (2014LV16MAOP001) the capacity of state and municipal organisations as well as NGOs was not adequate in relation to procurement procedures<sup>152</sup>.

**Overall, Simplified Cost Options appear to have reduced administrative burden although negative views were also identified especially in relation to the initial period of adoption.**

Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) were introduced into the legislative framework for the ESF 2014-2020 programming to reduce the administrative burden associated with

<sup>150</sup> Annex 8 – Case study in Austria (2014AT05SFOP001).

<sup>151</sup> Annex 8 – Case study in Sweden (2014SE05M90P001).

<sup>152</sup> Annex 8 – Case study in Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001).

programme implementation<sup>153</sup>. Under the SCOs, Managing Authorities can report costs in terms of flat rates, lump sums, and standard scales of unit costs. A majority (about 95%) of OPs use SCOs<sup>154</sup>. Simplification measures could potentially reduce administration burden by 9% to 15%<sup>155</sup>.

Some sources suggest that the SCOs had a positive impact on reducing administrative burden. For example, the analysis of the replies to the public consultation from some organisations directly involved in ESF delivery found that SCOs significantly reduced their administrative costs and risk of error when submitting project expenses<sup>156</sup>. Positive views on Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) were also identified in Cyprus (2014CY05M9OP001), where SCOs reduced the management costs in terms of administrative work and time spent<sup>157</sup>, and Austria (2014AT05SFOP001), where SCOs were seen to reduce reporting requirements and improve legal certainty<sup>158</sup>. In the Netherlands (2014NL05SFOP001), SCOs allowed for easier administration of activities that can reach a large number of participants, such as case management<sup>159</sup>. It did not promote efficiency in all projects particularly for those with multiple components, unpredictable caseloads and difficulties in linking activities with outcomes<sup>160</sup>. According to the Managing Authority of Croatia, there is an increased awareness that SCOs can simplify reporting procedures.

Negative views of SCOs were also identified, especially in relation to the initial take-up period. The uptake of simplification measures entails costs that may be especially felt by small organisations. For example, the introduction of simplification measures may involve adjustments to administrative procedures and trainings to familiarise staff with the measures (see also Section 0)<sup>161</sup>. In Italy (2014ITT05FOP004), the definition of unit costs in the current programming period has been a complex process, while the checks and approval procedure from the auditing authority was perceived to be burdensome and stringent<sup>162</sup>. In Spain (2014ES05SFOP012), the application of SCOs was found to

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<sup>153</sup> European Commission (2013): Simplification and gold-plating in the European Social Fund

<sup>154</sup> European Commission, 2017. Use of new provisions on simplification during the early implementation phase of ESIF. Final report.

<sup>155</sup> European Commission, 2017. Use of new provisions on simplification during the early implementation phase of ESIF. Final report.

<sup>156</sup> See Annex 7 – Consultation report, page 31.

<sup>157</sup> Annex 8 – Case study in Cyprus (2014CY05M9OP001).

<sup>158</sup> Annex 8 – Case study in Austria (2014AT05SFOP001).

<sup>159</sup> Simplified Cost Options in the Netherlands is called Simplified Caseload Accounting or Vereenvoudigde Caseload Verantwoording (VCV) in Dutch.

<sup>160</sup> Annex 8 – Case study in the Netherlands (2014NL05SFOP001).

<sup>161</sup> European Parliament, 2018. The European Social Fund: Beneficiaries' experience in the current funding period

<sup>162</sup> Annex 8 – Case study in Italy (2014ITT05FOP004).

be non-transparent and unnecessarily complex generating uncertainty and confusion for the Managing Authority, intermediate bodies and beneficiaries<sup>163</sup>.

The EU-level Delphi survey identified advantages and disadvantages of SCOs for small and local organisations. On the positive side, a well-developed and simple framework for SCOs can allow small organisations to use them without additional administrative burden. On the negative side, not applying SCOs correctly could have serious financial consequences, which is a risk that small and local organisations may not be able to absorb<sup>164</sup>.

**1. The implementation of mono-fund OPs may be more efficient than multi-fund OPs.**

As noted in Section 4.1, 71 OPs were financed with ESF and other EU funds (e.g. ERDF, CF) while the remaining 74 OPs were exclusively financed by the ESF. The former is referred to multi-fund OPs while the latter is referred to mono-fund OPs.

Table 8 presents an overview of the financial implementation of multi-fund OPs and mono-fund OPs. The level of ESF funds planned for multi-fund OPs was higher than the level of ESF funds planned for mono-fund OPs. Similarly, the level of allocated funds for multi-fund OPs was higher (11.4 billion euro as compared to 10.9 billion euro). The estimated project selection rate was, however, higher for mono-fund OPs (73%) as compared with multi-fund OPs (70%). The achievement rate and estimated success rates for mono-fund OPs were also higher<sup>165</sup>. These findings suggest that mono-fund OPs were more advanced in their implementation than multi-fund OPs under TO9. The additional complexity of administering an OP with multiple funds may have led to delayed implementation and generation of results.

*Table 8. Financial implementation of Multi-fund and Mono-fund OPs with ESF funds under TO9*

	Multi-fund under TO9	OPs Mono-fund OPs under TO9
Number of OPs	71	74
Planned funds (EUR)	16.4 billion	14.9 billion
Funds allocated to projects (EUR)	11.4 billion	10.9 billion
Declared expenditures by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities (EUR)	3.8 billion	4.9 billion
Project selection rate (%)	70 %	73 %
Share of planned funds that were declared expenditures (%)	23%	33%
Specific output-level achievement rate	84%	100%

<sup>163</sup> Annex 8 – Case study in Spain (2014ES05SFOP012).

<sup>164</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

<sup>165</sup> Success rates for mono- and multi-fund OPs can be found in Annex 4.

*Source:* SFC2014, based on AIR2018 (data extracted on December 10, 2019) and OP2018 (data extracted on July 1, 2019). Allocated funds include both EU and national amounts. Figures were rounded; *Note:* Multi-fund OPs are OPs that are financed by ESF and other EU funds (e.g. ERDF, CF); Mono-fund OPs under TO9 are financed exclusively by ESF.

**Gold plating and administrative burden was identified in 13 Member States.**

About 12% of respondents to the public consultation from organisations directly involved in the delivery of social inclusion operations could provide an example of gold plating and excessive administrative burden. These examples<sup>166</sup> could be classified into four broad categories:

- Exigent monitoring and reporting requirements that go beyond ESF regulations (e.g. DE, LV, SI, SE);
- Complex and inconsistent methods of record-keeping (e.g. FR, DE, HU, PL, IT);
- Demanding proof of compliance requirements for procurement (e.g. HR, DE); and
- Excessive eligibility requirements for the recruitment of project participants (e.g. IE, PL, RO, UK).

Some respondents agreed that audit authority checks were disproportionately stringent and going beyond the requirements of ESF regulations<sup>167</sup>. Participants in the Spanish focus group reported the auditing procedures as 'excessive'<sup>168</sup>.

**EQ 2.4 Efficiency: How visible are ESF funded operations under TO9?**

Sub-question 2.4 addresses the extent to which beneficiaries, target groups and the general population has awareness and knowledge about TO9 operations.

**Member States invested efforts to raise awareness of ESF among beneficiaries, target groups and the general population.**

Respondents to the public consultation highlighted the perceived effectiveness of administrative arrangements concerning communication - 71% of the respondents rated it as appropriate (see Figure 10). Other evidence suggests that activities to increase the visibility of ESF funded operations were successful overall. For example, in Luxembourg (2014LU05SFOP001), an evaluation of the ESF-related communication strategy in Luxembourg found a high level of satisfaction among with the way that ESF related information. Over 80% of beneficiaries became aware of ESF funding through calls for proposals<sup>169</sup>. In Spain (2014ES05SFOP012), an evaluation identified an increased use of the internet and social media for ESF-related dissemination purposes. The official website was used by more than 70% of intermediate bodies and beneficiaries, followed by digital media and social networks used by 53% of stakeholders. Among the direct beneficiaries and social enterprises, the use of social networks as a dissemination tool

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<sup>166</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

<sup>167</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

<sup>168</sup> Focus group discussion in Spain. Please see Annex 6 for more information.

<sup>169</sup> Clement & Weyer Consulting S.à.r.l. (2017). Communication activities of the ESF from 2015 until 2017. Prepared for the European Commission.

stands out<sup>170</sup>. In the Lombardy region of Italy (2014IT05SFOP007), an evaluation reported increased activity in relation to information campaigns targeted at citizens, employers and other stakeholders as potential partners and participants, as well as wider dissemination of the results of ESF projects to the public<sup>171</sup>.

Prizes and award schemes for social enterprises have also been used in different countries across the EU (e.g. the "Social Impact Award" in CZ and SK, the "Social Economy Prize" and "ESF Ambassadors" nomination in BE) to increase the visibility of the Fund<sup>172</sup>.

Replies to the public consultation suggest that the ESF is visible to citizens. Among respondents who did not receive support, 77% were aware of the ESF, and more specifically of TO9 to promote social inclusion<sup>173</sup>. A much older Eurobarometer (2013) on social climate indicated that around 36% of citizens had heard of the ESF<sup>174</sup>.

Some studies suggest that awareness of ESF among beneficiary organisations and the general population was low (e.g. EE, IT). For example, in Estonia (2014EE16M3OP001), beneficiary organisations serving newly arrived immigrants and less integrated disadvantaged groups had a lower knowledge of ESF activities and were less inclined to seek support from the ESF as a result<sup>175</sup>. A study from the Tuscany region of Italy (2014IT05SFOP015) pointed to a rather limited knowledge of ESF among the region's population<sup>176</sup>.

***The visual identity requirements for receiving ESF funding generally considered to be appropriate although more dissemination activities may be needed.***

Respondents to the public consultation from organisations involved in the delivery of ESF shared their opinions on the appropriateness and level of burden due to a range of administrative arrangements for implementing TO9 operations. About 71% of the respondents noted that regulatory requirements in terms of communications (e.g. ESF logos on dissemination materials) were appropriate<sup>177</sup>. An evaluation from the Tuscany region of Italy suggests that the visual identity requirements were not sufficient for raising the visibility of ESF and that more dissemination activities through traditional

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<sup>170</sup> KPMG, 2017. Mid-term Evaluation of the ESF Social inclusion and social economy OP 2014-2020 in Spain. European Commission.

<sup>171</sup> IRS- COGEA, 2018. Annual Evaluation report on the Lombardia ESF OP for 2017.

<sup>172</sup> European Commission, 2020. Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe: Comparative synthesis report.

<sup>173</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

<sup>174</sup> European Commission 2013. Social Climate. Special Eurobarometer 408.

<sup>175</sup> CIVITTA, 2019. Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the ESF adaptation and integration. European Commission. Nonetheless, the output-level achievement rate was high as shown in Figure 6. Possible explanations are that specific output indicators may not reflect total participations or the targets may have been set low.

<sup>176</sup> IRPET, 2017. Knowledge of the European Social Fund by the Tuscan citizens.

<sup>177</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

channels (press, TV and radio) and social media were needed. The evaluation recommended enhancing dissemination and information activities for the general public as well as awareness raising activities among target groups<sup>178</sup>.

### **5.3. Question 3 - Relevance: How relevant are the ESF operations under Thematic Objective 9?**

The assessment of relevance considers the extent to which ESF support to social inclusion was directed to regions with a poorer socio-economic context and prioritised different target groups. It also reviews the extent to which the design and implementation of TO9 operations were flexible to shifts in the socio-economic context and target group needs.

The assessment draws on all qualitative and quantitative information collected and analysed as part of the study, including the analysis of the ESF monitoring data. The assessment was supported by answers to three sub-evaluation questions, which are presented below.

- **EQ 3.1 Were the objectives and the operations funded by the ESF relevant to the needs of target groups? How were the different target groups prioritised and the actions tailored to their specific needs? Were the most important needs of these groups addressed?**

Sub-question 3.1 is concerned with the alignment of the objectives of TO9 operations with the needs of target groups at both the planning and the implementation stages.

***Target groups of ESF support to social inclusion were typically identified through needs assessments and consultative processes. These consultations promote buy-in among local stakeholders and help ensure that objectives are realistic.***

At the planning stage, target groups for TO9 operations were typically identified through consultative processes that also drew on recent studies and evaluations. Consultations that consider the evidence, needs and socio-economic context can promote relevance. The involvement of a wide spectrum of stakeholders in the design and implementation of a project improves buy-in and ensure that the objectives are realistic<sup>179</sup>.

For instance in Austria (2014AT05SFOP001), target groups were identified through consultations between the Managing Authority, the intermediate bodies at the federal and regional level, the social partners, NGOs, and other stakeholders. In some countries (e.g. EL, ES) central decisions were informed by regional evaluations, consultations and needs assessments. In Greece for example, a "National Mechanism for Monitoring, Coordinating and Evaluating Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion Policies" was used; all bodies participating in it are linked through a Unified Geographic Information System registering beneficiaries, social programmes and public and private social service providers at the central and local levels. In Spain, targeting was largely based on the National Plan for Social Inclusion 2013-2016 (PNAIN) and a study by the European Anti-Poverty Network<sup>180</sup>. In Germany (2014DE05SFOP003 - Baden-Württemberg), ESF

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<sup>178</sup> IRPET, 2017. Knowledge of the European Social Fund by the Tuscan citizens.

<sup>179</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

<sup>180</sup> Plan Nacional de Acción para la Inclusión Social del Reino de España 2013-2016: <https://www.mscbs.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/docs/PlanNacionalA>

support to social inclusion was targeted to children under the age of 15 years, as studies and evaluations showed that they experienced a higher risk of poverty. In Italy (2014IT05SFOP001)<sup>181</sup>, target groups were identified through a needs assessment conducted by the Managing Authority in collaboration with the Social Protection Network of the Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC). The needs assessment involved the analysis of national and regional data provided by the National Institute for Statistics (ISTAT) as well as discussions with national and regional stakeholders. In Lithuania (2014LT16MAOP001), the specific needs of the ageing population were reviewed during the planning stage through workshops with local stakeholders; TO9 actions were tailored accordingly. The correct identification of the target group is a success factor for the effectiveness of TO9 operations (see reply to EQ 1.4, Section 0).

Delphi survey respondents<sup>182</sup> also underscored the importance of identifying the target groups in the early stages of the project to promote relevance.

***The objectives and operations for planned TO9 operations were aligned with the needs of identified target groups in 72% of OPs (105 out of 145 OPs). The share of ESF funds for TO9 that was relevant for the identified target groups increased during implementation.***

The country-based analyses found that most OPs identified specific target groups (133 out of the 145 OPs). An estimated 85% of ESF funds for TO9 were planned for these 133 OPs (see Table 9). Among the remaining 12 OPs that planned for TO9 operations, the reference to target groups was broad. For example, in France (2014FR05M9OP002) and the Netherlands (2014NL05SFOP001), a non-exhaustive list of possible target groups was noted, and in the UK (2014UK05SFOP001 and 2014UK05SFOP002) a non-exhaustive list of groups facing barriers to employment was presented. The broad definition of the target group may have allowed for flexibility in implementation (see reply to E.Q 3.3).

Actions were tailored to the target groups by taking a holistic approach and adapting to their multiple needs. For example in Italy, (2014IT05FOP001), the Services to tackle extreme social exclusion amongst adults' project sought to address the following needs of persons experiencing housing exclusion: emergency and long-term health issues, basic needs such as clothing and sanitation, temporary and/or long-term shelter, self-care skills, and basic communication and interpersonal skills. For more information and examples, please see the reply to EQ 1.5 (see Section 0). Respondents to the public consultation also included persons who had participated in ESF activities (51 persons in total). Of these, 82% agreed<sup>183</sup> that their expectations had been partially or fully met.

The country-based analyses found that 105 of the 145 OPs had objectives that were **fully relevant** to the needs of these target groups. Two of these OPs broadly defined the target group. In the case of Guadeloupe and Saint-Martin (2014FR05M2OP001) the broad definition of the target group was appropriate given the diverse needs while in the UK (2014UK05SFOP002) the employment objectives were considered relevant for the target group although the target group itself was not well-defined, being broadly

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[ccionInclusionSocial\\_2013\\_2016.pdf](#); EAPN, 2019. El Estado de la Pobreza: <https://www.eapn.es/estadodepobreza/>

<sup>181</sup> The Mutual Information System on Social Protection - <https://www.missoc.org/>

<sup>182</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

<sup>183</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

defined as people facing barriers to employment, suggesting a potential overlap with TO8 (see Coherence – EQ 4.2). An estimated 57% of ESF funds for TO9 were planned for these 105 OPs, with as shown in Table 9, relevance increased from planning to implementation stage, which in most cases reflected further definitions of target groups whilst operations were being shaped further through implementation.

Table 9. Relevance of OPs to target groups and their needs

	Target group identified?		Objectives and operations in relation to the needs identified for the target group		
	Yes	No	Fully relevant	Mostly relevant	Partially relevant
Number of OPs	133 OPs	12 OPs	105 OPs	36 OPs	4 OPs
Share of planned amounts	85%	15%	57%	43%	0%
Share of allocated funds	90%	10%	76%	24%	1%
Share of declared expenditures	88%	12%	76%	24%	1%

Source: Expert assessments of OPs combined with SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. There were 145 OPs that planned for TO9 operations. The three-level scale of measurement provides a qualitative assessment of national expert. Fully: the target groups and the objectives are entirely relevant to the needs identified. Mostly: the target groups and the objectives are relevant 'to a great extent' to the needs identified. Partially: the target groups and the objectives are relevant 'to some extent' to the needs identified.

In OPs where the objectives and operations were assessed as **mostly or partially relevant**, the country-based analyses suggest that the objectives were often too broad in relation to the specific needs of the identified target groups. For example, in Austria (2014AT05SFOP001), ESF support aimed to promote innovative approaches and close policy gaps for people who were far from the labour market, but it did not identify the specific challenges and needs that should be addressed during the programming stage. Similarly, in Estonia (2014EE16M3OP001), the planned actions were not tailored to identified barriers to labour market integration to support social inclusion.

**Most of the recorded participations for ESF support to social inclusion involved persons who were unemployed and had a low level of education (primary or secondary level). A large share of participations was from persons a foreign background or from minority groups including communities such as the Roma (28%), persons with a disability (17%) and persons living in rural areas (16%).**

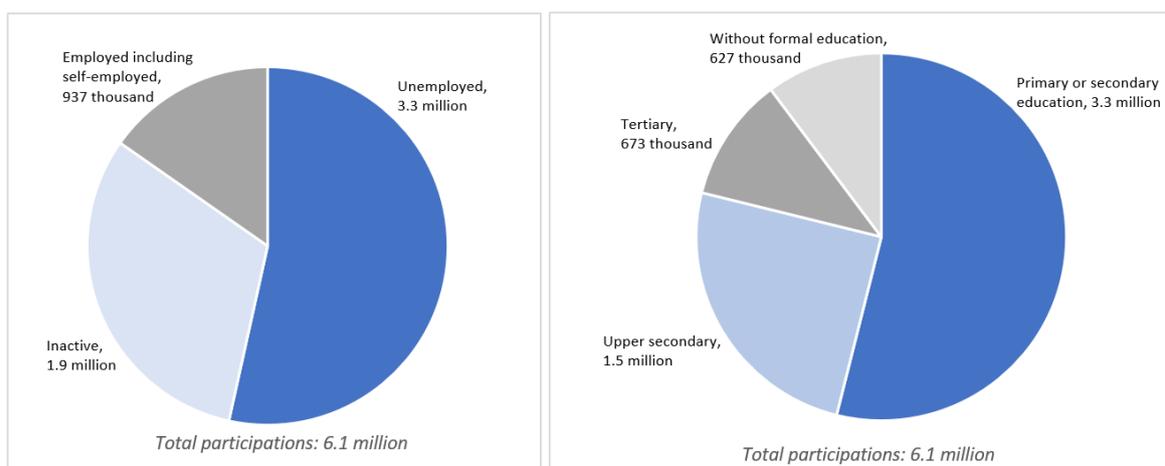
TO9 operations reached an estimated 6.15 million participations by the end of December 2018. The analysis of common output indicators provides more information about the types of persons reached:

- Most of these participations (53%) were by unemployed people and their highest educational attainment was primary or lower secondary education (54%) (see Figure 11).
- An estimated 52% of participations were women, and an estimated 1.7 million participations (28% of total participations) were migrants or other persons with

a foreign background, including marginalised communities such as the Roma <sup>184</sup>. Several OPs carried out gender-based targeting, for example in Ireland ESF support for social inclusion targeted women not engaged in the labour market (2014IE05M90P001). In Finland, lone immigrant women were targeted (2014FI05M20P001) while in Spain Roma women were targeted (2014ES05SFOP012)<sup>185</sup>.

- An estimated one million participations were recorded for persons living in rural areas and 1.01 million for persons with disabilities (17% of total participations).

Figure 11. Socio-economic characteristics of participations to ESF support to social inclusion – employment and education



Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018 (data extracted on December 10, 2019). Analysis of common output indicators.

The structure of the data extracted from the ESF monitoring system did not allow for an investigation into overlaps between two indicators (e.g. participations who are unemployed (CO01) could not be cross-tabulated with participations with disabilities (CO16) to estimate the number of participations with disabilities were also unemployed).

A comparison of some indicators with EU-level indicators suggest that ESF support to social inclusion disproportionately reached Roma and ethnic minorities, as to be expected, while it reached a comparable share of persons with a disability and a substantively lower share of persons living in rural areas (see Table 10). However, the review of AIRs suggests that the coverage of persons with a disability and Roma and ethnic minorities is quite high (see reply to EQ 4.1). The mismatch between the AIRs and the recorded data suggest an under-reporting for these two indicators. It is also important to note that outputs are recorded in the ESF monitoring system as participations rather than participants – thus, shares of participations may not be directly comparable with shares of populations.

<sup>184</sup> This indicator (CO15) could not be disaggregated to separate persons with a foreign background, ethnic minorities and Roma.

<sup>185</sup> Annex 8 – Case study in Spain (2014ES05SFOP012).

Table 10. Socio-economic characteristics of participations to ESF support to social inclusion as compared with the EU

ESF support for social inclusion – Share of total participations by target group:		Share of EU population:		Source:
Rural areas (CO19)	16%	Rural areas	29%	Eurostat, 2018 <sup>186</sup>
Persons with a disability (CO16)	17%	At least one basic activity difficulty, ages 15-64 years	14%	Eurostat, 2018 <sup>187</sup>
Roma and ethnic minorities (CO15)	26%	Roma	1.3%	An estimated 6 million live in the EU <sup>188</sup>

Source: ESF figures obtained from the analysis of common output indicators from the extraction from the SFC2014, based on AIR2018 (data extracted on December 10, 2019).

Another reference point is provided by other Thematic Objectives of the ESF. As shown in Table 11, ESF support for social inclusion reaches a substantially higher share of persons with a disability, migrants, people with a foreign background and minorities, as well as persons with low education as compared with TO8 and TO10. ESF support for social inclusion reached a lower share of persons in rural areas than TO8 and TO10.

Table 11. Common output indicators by Thematic Objective

	TO8	TO9	TO10
Total recorded participations	8.1 million	6.1 million	9.1 million
Long-term unemployed (CO02)	22%	24%	3%
With primary or lower secondary education (CO09)	35%	54%	61%
Migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (CO15)	13%	28%	9%
Participants with disabilities (CO16)	7%	17%	3%
Other disadvantaged (CO17)	11%	37%	11%
Homeless or affected by housing exclusion (CO18)	1%	4%	0%
Participants from rural areas (CO19)	22%	16%	23%

<sup>186</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20200207-1>

<sup>187</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Functional\\_and\\_activity\\_limitations\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Functional_and_activity_limitations_statistics)

<sup>188</sup> FRA, 2016. Survey on Minorities and Discrimination in EU.

	<b>TO8</b>	<b>TO9</b>	<b>TO10</b>
Women	a	52%	51%
Men	a	48%	49%

*Source:* SCF2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019. *Note:* the figures could not be estimated for the gender dimension for TO8 due to the structure of the data extraction file used for the study.

When respondents to the public consultation were asked to select the target groups that they thought were being supported by the ESF, notable differences were identified in the replies between respondents from EU-15 and EU-13 countries (i.e. Member States that joined the EU in or after 2004), which in addition also strongly diverged from the real values of similar common outputs recorded in the ESF monitoring data (see 0).

For example, in the public consultation, more respondents in the EU-13 considered that persons with a disability (53%) had been supported by ESF than respondents in the EU-15 (21%), while the ESF monitoring data showed a lower but similar pattern (21% in EU-13 versus 16% in EU-15). This finding may be linked to the high emphasis on deinstitutionalisation in ESF support to social inclusion in the EU-13. A similar pattern emerged for persons with low-skills or qualifications whereby both the replies to the public consultation as well as recorded participations suggest that this group was reached more in the EU-15. The higher perception of ESF targeting Roma and ethnic minorities in the EU-13 is consistent with the greater concentration of this target group in these countries<sup>189</sup>.

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<sup>189</sup> JRC, 2019. A meta-evaluation of interventions for Roma inclusion.

Table 12. Differences between EU-13 and EU-15 in perceived and actual target groups reached

Target group	Public consultation <sup>a</sup> , % of replies		Common output indicator	ESF monitoring data <sup>b</sup> , % of recorded participations	
	EU-13	EU-15		EU-13	EU-15
Persons with a disability	53%	21%	CO16 (Participants with disabilities)	21%	16%
Unemployed for 12 months or more	53%	46%	CO02 (Long-term unemployed)	11%	25%
Roma and ethnic minorities	26%	8%	CO15 (Migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	16%	29%
Low skills or qualification	27%	46%	CO09 (With primary or lower secondary education)	42%	55%

Sources: <sup>a</sup> Consultation report – please see Annex 7; <sup>b</sup> SFC2014, based on AIR2018 (data extracted on December 10, 2019). Analysis of common output indicators.

Respondents to the public consultation also provided their views on which target groups should be prioritised under ESF. More than half of respondents considered that persons who were unemployed for 12 months or more (62%) and persons with low skills or qualifications (59%) should be prioritised. These figures are in line with the composition of recorded participations presented in Figure 11<sup>190</sup>. Persons with a disability were also highly prioritised by respondents to the public consultation (61%) although this target group represented a smaller share of recorded participations. The following target groups received less support for prioritisation from the respondents to the public consultation: the part-time employed (16%) and the self-employed (10%)<sup>191</sup>.

### **EQ 3.2 Were the most relevant groups, in the different socio-economic contexts, targeted starting from the design stage? How was the partnership and multi-level governance implemented?**

As highlighted in Section 4.1, the evaluation identified 14 different categories of target groups. Sub-question 3.2 is concerned with the alignment of the target groups of TO9 operations with the socio-economic context at the planning and implementation stages.

***The identified target groups for planned TO9 operations were largely relevant to the context and the needs.***

<sup>190</sup> As noted in Figure 11, the share of recorded participations that were unemployed including long-term employed is greater than 50%. The share of recorded participations with primary or lower secondary education is also greater than 50%.

<sup>191</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

The country-based analyses found that the identified target groups in most OPs (113 out of 145 OPs) were fully relevant based on the assessment of the context and the needs (see Table 13). An estimated 79% of ESF funds were planned for these OPs. Declared expenditures by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities was also concentrated in these OPs (86%). An additional 25 OPs were found to be mostly relevant to the context or needs assessment, while the remaining 7 OPs were considered to only have partial relevance.

Table 13. Relevance of OPs in relation to financial indicators

	Identified target groups relevant to the context/needs assessment		
	Full	Mostly	Partially
Number of OPs	113	25	7
Share of planned funds	79%	19%	1%
Share of allocated funds	90%	9%	1%
Share of declared expenditures	86%	13%	1%

Source: Expert assessments of OPs combined with SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. There were 145 OPs that planned for TO9 operations. The three-level scale of measurement provides a qualitative assessment of national expert. Fully: the target groups and the objectives are entirely relevant to the needs identified. Mostly: the target groups and the objectives are relevant 'to a great extent' to the needs identified. Partially: the target groups and the objectives are relevant 'to some extent' to the needs identified.

In particular in Member States with high numbers of regional OPs (e.g. DE, ES, FR, IT, PL), the design of ESF support to social inclusion had to ensure alignment with the both the national context as well as the specific needs at the regional level. It seems that this balance was achieved, although with differences across countries. For example, in two OPs in Spain (2014ES05SFOP009 and 2014ES05SFOP016), the country-based analysis confirmed the relevance of identified target groups, but highlighted that more attention could have been given to older people given that the ageing population was mentioned across the socio-economic assessment. Similarly, in Greece, two OPs (2014GR16M2OP011 and 2014GR16M2OP010) were considered to be mostly (i.e. not fully) relevant because the identified target groups was not clearly aligned with the socio-economic context. In both cases, the OP planning documents did not present a clear link with the context.

**TO9 funds are mostly allocated to less economically favourable regions, thus addressing those geographic areas in which most persons in need are living.**

A regional analysis was carried out to assess the extent to which TO9 reached the populations in greatest need (e.g. those living in the least economically favourable areas in the EU). The analysis built on the baseline assessment (see Annex 3), which uncovered substantial differences in the socio-economic context across and within Member States at the beginning of the 2014-2020 programming period. An economic favourability index at the NUTS-2 region level was constructed using a selection of indicators from the baseline assessment<sup>192</sup>. Regions were classified into four clusters

<sup>192</sup> The index was defined by three indicators: share of the population with a low educational achievement; the prevalence of long-term unemployment, and the

based on the index ranging from the least economically favourable to the most economically favourable. While this index did not include an indicator for rural population, the index would be expected to correlate with the share of the population in rural areas. Yet, as noted earlier, the share of participations in rural areas was low. This finding suggests that the populations reached were more concentrated in urban areas.

Following the rationale and specific aims of TO9 interventions as presented in the intervention logics (see Annex 2), ESF support to social inclusion would be expected to have greater relevance for less economically favourable regions. At the same time, it would be expected that the project selection rate (i.e. the share of planned funds that were allocated) would be greater in the most economically favourable regions that would have the systems in place to operationalise the funds. As highlighted by replies to the EU-level Delphi survey, less economically favourable areas may not have a more limited NGO sector and the local authorities may be less active in applying for financial support from ESF (because of many different reasons e.g. will, capacity, ESF rules etc.)<sup>193</sup>. Therefore, the analysis started with the hypothesis that the distribution of ESF funds for social inclusion would be largely concentrated in the cluster of the least economically favourable regions while the project selection rate would be the highest in the most economically favourable regions.

As part of the analysis, the recorded values for planned and allocated funds for TO9 were broken down to NUTS-2 level<sup>194</sup>. These values were then aggregated into the four clusters defined by the economic favourability index. The number of persons at risk of poverty and social exclusion (AROPE) were also estimated for each cluster of regions to reflect the population in need.

As shown in Table 14, the distribution of planned funds overall steered towards regions with a lower socio-economic context, with an estimated 58% of planned funds for TO9 (10.7 billion and 7.5 billion euro) going to the least economically favourable regions. More than 60% of the estimated AROPE population in the EU lives in these regions. This suggests that in terms of initial allocations, ESF operations were indeed directed more to those areas in which most persons at risk of social exclusion and those most in need of support were living. However, another large share of planned funds for TO9 (42%) were also targeted to more economically favourable regions. A clear pattern in the project selection rate was not evident across the clusters of regions. Participants in a focus group carried out in Spain noted that ESF programming should be adapted to regional imbalances in Spain in particular the specific needs of sparsely populated areas<sup>195</sup>.

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share of the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion. These indicators were available at the NUTS-2 level from Eurostat in 2014 and 2018. For more information, please see Annex 3.3.

<sup>193</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings. This point was also raised in the focus group in Spain. See Annex 6 for more information about the focus group.

<sup>194</sup> The methodology for this decomposition and the assumptions it involved are detailed in Section 1 of Annex 4.

<sup>195</sup> Focus group discussion in Spain. Please see Annex 6 for more information.

Table 14. Planned and allocated amounts for ESF support to social inclusion and AROPE population by cluster of region in 2014

Cluster	Planned amounts (€)	Allocated amounts (€)	Project selection rate	AROPE population in 2014
<b>I Economically most favourable regions</b>	- 5.0 billion (16.1%)	2.6 billion (16.7%)	53.4%	21.3 million (17.5%)
<b>II</b>	8.1 billion (25.9%)	4.6 billion (29.1%)	58.5%	26.6 million (21.8%)
<b>III</b>	7.5 billion (24.0%)	4.4 billion (28.1%)	65.0%	29.9 million (24.5%)
<b>IV Economically least favourable regions</b>	- 10.7 billion (34.0%)	4.1 billion (26.1%)	44.9%	44.2 million (36.2%)

Note: ICF NUTS-2 level analysis based on extraction from SFC2014, based on OP2018. The four clusters of regions (economically least favourable to economically most favourable) were defined based on an index developed by ICF. The population at risk of poverty and social inclusion (AROPE) was estimated for each cluster. The methodology is presented in Annex 3.

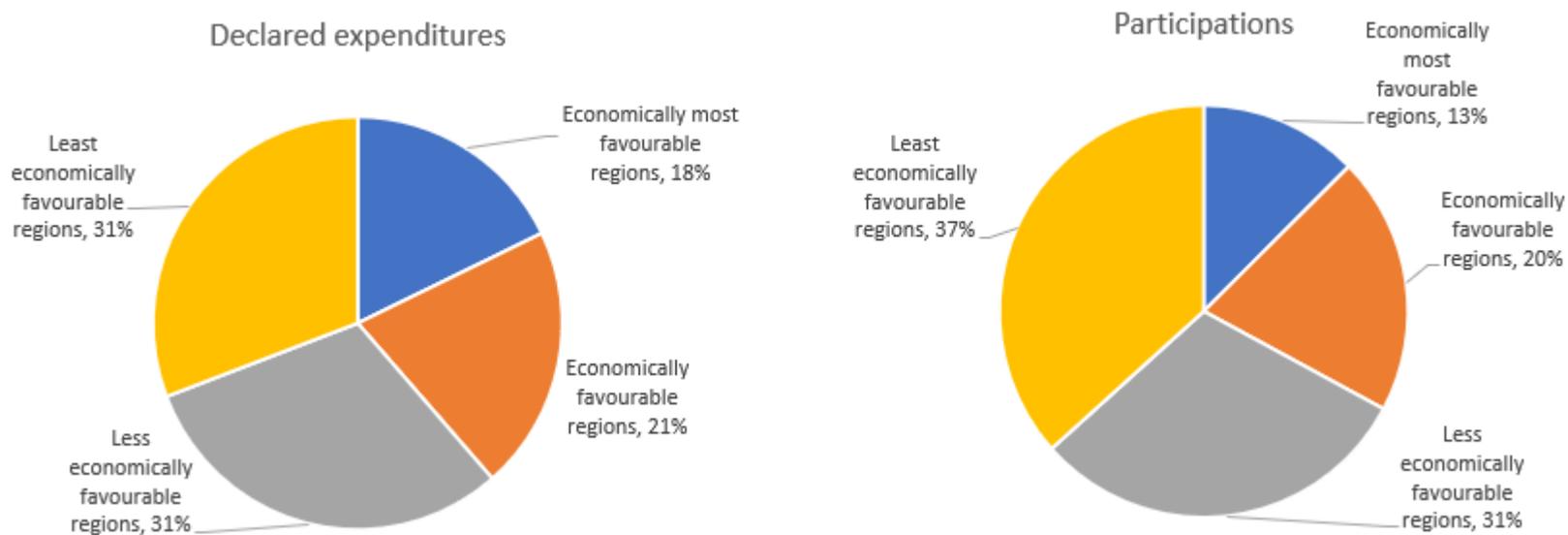
**About 68% of recorded participations were in less economically favourable regions or the least economically favourable regions.**

The 2018 values of the regional economic favourability index were used to assess the distribution of declared expenditures from beneficiaries to Managing Authorities and recorded participations across the regions in the EU. Figure 12 presents the distribution of declared expenditures and recorded participations for TO9 operations across the four clusters. About 62% of declared expenditures were made in regions that were less economically favourable or the least economically favourable. More importantly, about two-thirds (68%) of recorded participations were in less economically favourable and the least economically favourable regions. Success rates were also estimated for all common result indicators with respect to each cluster of regions<sup>196</sup>. No clear pattern emerged and some of the differences identified were not considered robust<sup>197</sup>.

<sup>196</sup> The findings are presented in Annex 4.

<sup>197</sup> The estimated success rates did not increase or decrease consistently in relation to the four clusters of regions. In some cases where differences arose (an increase or decrease), the change was not large enough to conclude with confidence that it was in fact a change rather than simply a statistical artifact.

Figure 12. Declared expenditures and participations for all TO9 operations – distribution across the socio-economic context in 2018



Note: ICF NUTS-2 level analysis based on extraction from SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019. The four clusters of regions (least economically favourable to the most economically favourable) were defined based on an index developed by ICF. The percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding. For more information about the index please see Annex 3.

***There is mixed evidence to suggest that ESF support to social inclusion reaches the most vulnerable populations.***

Evidence as to whether ESF support to social inclusion reached the most vulnerable populations with the greatest needs is mixed. In the replies to the public consultation, 39% of respondents considered that the target groups who should be prioritised were in effect being reached while 35% believed that they had not<sup>198</sup>. Over one quarter (26%) did not know or did not wish to answer. Respondents to the EU-level Delphi survey noted that reaching target groups outside the scope of social services, employment services, health care and education is a key challenge<sup>199</sup>.

The assessment of effectiveness identified the risk of 'creaming' in TO9 operations, which is the targeting of less vulnerable persons with less complex needs (see reply to EQ 1.2, Section 0). The reporting on common result indicators may encourage this effect. For example, in Poland (2014PL05M9OP001), the Managing Authority believed that the focus on monitoring employment generation created a tendency to recruit participants who were more likely to become employed rather than those persons furthest away from the labour market<sup>200</sup>. The country-based analyses on the other hand identified several examples where ESF support to social inclusion reached those most in need. For example, in Italy (2014IT05FOP001), the 'Services to tackle extreme social exclusion amongst adults' project was particularly effective in convincing 'resolute' groups to move into residencies. These groups included couples who lived in the streets to avoid communal dormitories where they would be separated, but who accepted to move to small modules supported by the project<sup>201</sup>.

Possibly the best available indicator for the reach of ESF support to the most vulnerable populations is the identification of "other" groups in the mapping of TO9 operations (see Section 4.1), as this group includes homeless persons and persons suffering from substance abuse. "Other groups" were identified in more than half of the OPs (94 of the 145 OPs) for ESF support to social inclusion, suggesting that the most vulnerable groups were indeed reached<sup>202</sup>.

***Partners have been highly involved in the programming and implementation phases in line with the "partnership principle", which has further favoured the relevance and effectiveness of TO9 operations. This was exhibited to a lesser extent for multi-fund programmes.***

Article 5 of the Common Provision Regulation (CPR) requires Member State to organise for each ESIF fund programme a partnership with the competent regional, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders, at all programming and implementation stages and at all levels, in line with its institutional and legal framework. More

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<sup>198</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report. Respondents were from strands I (not aware of ESF), II (those aware of ESF but not involved in its delivery), V (persons aware of ESF but not having received support), and VI (persons not aware of ESF and not having received ESF support).

<sup>199</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

<sup>200</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Poland (2014PL05M9OP001).

<sup>201</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Italy (2014IT05FOP001).

<sup>202</sup> Annex 2 – Types of operations and target groups reached by ESF support to social inclusion.

specifically, this partnership must include the following partners: (a) competent urban and other public authorities; (b) economic and social partners; and (c) relevant bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, non-governmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination.

An assessment carried out in 2016 concluded that, overall, the partnership principle was 'satisfactorily respected' across Member States and programmes. The composition of the partnerships varies between Member States and programmes, in line with their respective institutional and legal frameworks, as well as their multi-level governance arrangements. Overall, the different partners have been highly involved in the programming phase and there is also a certain level of involvement during implementation, mainly through participation in Monitoring Committees. Among multi-fund programmes, however, the implementation of the partnerships and mobilisation of partners was identified as a challenge, which may be due to their complexity<sup>203</sup>. The greater complexity of multi-fund OPs is reflected in a lower project selection rate as compared with mono-fund OPs (see Table 8).

EU-level Delphi survey respondents highlighted the value that participation of local community stakeholders can bring to ESF projects and noted that Managing Authorities could do more to facilitate their involvement through a transparent and systematic approach. Small, local organisations could also be involved in the working groups during the planning of Operational Programmes<sup>204</sup>.

Responses to the public consultation noted that more inclusive partnerships could lead both to greater relevance of projects and greater effectiveness in the targeted recruitment of participants. The responses highlighted the value of participation from specialist organisations such as carers' organisations and other civil society organisations in funding opportunities or the preparation of OPs and calls for projects<sup>205</sup>.

***The successful implementation of complex, integrated measures which are characteristic of ESF support to social inclusion hinges closely on effective partnerships and multi-level governance. The value of partnerships was especially evident for Type 4 operations (access to services).***

Effective partnerships and multi-level governance supported the implementation of integrated approaches to address the multiple and complex needs of TO9 target groups. Their value was especially evident for Type 4 (Access to services) operations, where new partnerships were created between healthcare providers, social services and employment services. This need for effective partnerships and multi-level governance was evident in the design and implementation of ESF support to social inclusion, the identification of target groups and the assessment of needs. This finding was supported by views shared through the public consultation from organisations directly involved in the ESF. A majority of these organisations, which commented further on the factors that promoted the effectiveness of ESF support to social inclusion, held positive views about the collaborative efforts and partnership present in the delivery of ESF.

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<sup>203</sup> European Commission (2016). Implementation of the partnership principle and multi-level governance in 2014-2020 ESI Funds.

<sup>204</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

<sup>205</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

Respondents to the EU-level Delphi survey noted that collaboration through cross-sectoral networks could promote the development of integrated solutions to promote ESF objectives<sup>206</sup>. Strong cooperation across institutions and sectors was highlighted as a key factor promoting effectiveness (see reply to EQ 1.5, Section 0).

For example, in the 'Haz Solar' project from Spain (2014ES05SFOP021), the cooperation between organisations with different skills and expertise was a key success factor to effectively implement the project and ensure the successful labour market integration of participants. The partnership included two social enterprises with the objective of employing persons in vulnerable situations – the first, an NGO specialised in supporting asylum seekers and the second, an SME specialised in design and installation of photovoltaic projects<sup>207</sup>. While the project was small, it supported the testing of the partnership, which could be scaled up. This value can also be understood as a role effect, which is explored further in the assessment of EU added value.

The required level of cooperation was, however, not always achieved: in another project from Spain (2014ES05SFOP022), challenges in changing the mentality of social service staff were encountered. It was critical for them to consider active social inclusion and employment as relevant for the delivery of social services and to increase their knowledge of the public employment services. Establishing effective coordination mechanisms between the regional public employment service and local social services departments was difficult to the divergent mindsets in staff between these two types of organisations<sup>208</sup>. Similar challenges were encountered in Italy (2014IT05FOP001) to set up local networks and partnerships across institutions that had not previously worked together. These challenges were overcome by setting up a Task Force which provided technical assistance and ad-hoc support to the partners<sup>209</sup>.

In the 'Peer support techniques in social inclusion and employment' project in Italy (2014ITO5SFOP004), participants were also involved in the design of the project and family members of participants were informally engaged throughout the project. The Managing Authority reported that the ESF had significantly contributed to both the reinforcement of social services and the implementation of partnerships at the local level (e.g. between social services and health services) to implement integrated measures targeting adults with mental illness.

ESF support to social inclusion also catalysed new partnerships and collaborative arrangements. This is discussed in the reply to EQ 5.3.

### **EQ 3.3 To what extent were OPs flexible and able to adapt to changes in the implementation context or political priorities?**

Sub-question 3.3 builds on sub-question 3.2 to review how TO9 operations changed over the course of the programming period.

***Managing Authorities considered that TO9 allowed for sufficient flexibility to adapt to changes in the context, including the migration crisis that started around 2015.***

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<sup>206</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

<sup>207</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Spain (2014ES05SFOP021).

<sup>208</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Spain (2014ES05SFOP022).

<sup>209</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Italy (2014IT05FOP001).

Managing Authorities confirmed that the ESF was sufficiently flexible to permit OP adaptations in response to changing socio-economic contexts and changing policy priorities (e.g. IT – 2014ITT05FOP004; DE – 2014DE05SFOP010; 2014DE05SFOP003 LV - 2014LV16MAOP001). This flexibility ranged from shifting funding between TOs and IPs and expanding target groups or focusing on a sub-set of target groups, to shifting activities in line with the changes of the socio-economic context. This flexibility may stem in part from the broad definitions adopted at the planning stage in relation to target groups and type of planned operations. The need for adjustments was either identified ad hoc, or through a more systematic review. OP modifications made to adapt to the socio-economic context were identified in four Member States (BE, PT, IT, and LT). For example, in Lithuania, an additional 25 million euro was transferred to TO9. The OP Centro in Portugal was originally designed within a context of high unemployment rates; however, improvements in the economic context and employment trends over time led to shifting priorities and target groups. In Italy, the Managing Authority of the OP in Friuli-Venezia Giulia (2014IT05SFOP004) adapted its activities to the changing regional context through a yearly planning document ("*Documento di pianificazione periodica*") in cooperation with regional social partners, which reviewed and updated the planning and further set out the activities on the ground. The national OP Social Inclusion (2014IT05SFOP001) was adapted to several changes introduced to the national anti-poverty strategy (Support to Active Inclusion and Citizenship Income), the implementation of which was supported by the OP through integrated measures. Changes to the Flanders OP (2014BE05SFOP002) were also required as - at the time of formulation of the programme - the effects of the economic crisis were still strong. The Managing Authority suggested that OPs could be made more flexible by conceiving them more as 'strategic plans'.

Some countries (e.g. AT, IT, LV, DE) made use of this flexibility during the migration crisis of 2015<sup>210</sup> by introducing shifts in target groups and operations under TO9. In Latvia, migrants were introduced as a new target group. In Italy, an additional EUR 220 million was allocated to the reception of refugees by 2017 through a revised Partnership Agreement. In the OP Sachsen-Anhalt (Germany), re-adjustments were made to reflect a decline of youth unemployment and a rise in the number of refugees. As a result, funds were shifted from Priority Axis 1 to Priority Axes 2 and 3. The Priority Axis 2 which relates to social inclusion and poverty, therefore, received more funding to respond to these new socio-economic challenges.

***Changes in the types of operations that were implemented as compared with the planned operations occurred in at least 10 Member States.***

A systematic review of planned and implemented TO9 operations identified shifts in the type of operations in ten Member States (AT, BE, DE, ES, FI, FR, GR, IT, PT, and UK)<sup>211</sup>. These changes mainly stemmed from a refocussing of the OPs (AT, BE, FI, IT, PT), or because of administrative or financial obstacles were encountered during implementation (DE, FR, GR).

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<sup>210</sup> See timeline of asylum applications in the EU:

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics)

<sup>211</sup> Country experts reviewed the classification of implemented TO9 operations drawing from the AIRs (the last download of the 2018 AIRs was made on 7 November 2019), interviews and other country-based analysis.

Shifts in the focus of the OP were reflected in the addition or modification of actions. For example, in Austria, several projects for refugees that were not originally planned were implemented, including language classes (2014AT05SFOP001). These actions can be classified as Type 2 (Enhance basic skills) actions that enhance basic skills for people with a migrant or foreign background. In Belgium, planned operations originally meant to stimulate the outflow of social economy workers to employment in the regular labour market were changed to improve the qualifications of social economy workers and enhance the productivity of social enterprises (2014BE05SFOP002) instead. Finally, in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region of Italy (2014IT05SFOP004), operations relating to IP9iv (*Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services*) changed as training was delivered to vulnerable groups (the only specific group indicated was people in detention) that were not indicated at the planning stage.

Some changes were also made due to administrative obstacles during implementation (FR, GR). In France, two major operations relating to IP9i (*Active inclusion*) were delayed because of administrative changes in the local authority, which had an adverse effect on other implemented operations as well (2014FR05SFOP003). The analysis found that Greece experienced the most changes, which were evident across all the eight OPs. Some OPs in Greece removed investment priorities during implementation (2014GR16M2OP009) and others did not report the implementation of active inclusion measures (2014GR16M2OP005 and 2014GR16M2OP006) under IP9i, nor interventions with regards to local health centres (2014GR16M2OP006) under IP9iv (*Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services*).

***Shifts in the target groups reached by TO9 operations were identified in 13 Member States.***

During implementation, thirteen Member States reported a notable shift in target groups (AT, BE, DE, FI, GR, IT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, SE, and UK), which mostly concerned adding or putting more emphasis on refugees as a result of the 2015 refugee crisis<sup>212</sup>. Some of these shifts were inter-linked with changes in the types of operations implemented as highlighted earlier. For example, in Austria (2014AT05SFOP001), the provision of language classes and other activities for refugees implied the addition of a target group (people with a migrant or foreign background) not mentioned at the planning stage. In Italy (2014IT05SFOP006), ESF support for social inclusion expanded their reach to also include unemployed people (both for less than 12 months and more than 12 months), people with a disability and people with a migrant or foreign background. As only Type 4 (Access to services) and Type 5 (social entrepreneurship) operations were identified under this OP, the expansion of target groups to unemployed people did not promote overlaps with TO8 -employment objectives (for more information, please see Coherence EQ 4.2 – Section □).

In some countries, refugees and migrants were added as a new target group. For example, in the Lombardy region of Italy (2014IT05SFOP007), changes were made to Priority Axis 2 activities to reach the refugee population. In the Netherlands (2014NL05SFOP001), TO9 activities were expanded to support the integration of refugees who had received a positive decision on their asylum application. In other countries, the refugee crisis also led to an increased focus on the target group, but this need was however already identified at planning stage. In Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001),

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<sup>212</sup> Country experts reviewed the target groups reached by implemented TO9 operations drawing from the AIRs (the last download of the 2018 AIRs was made on 7 November 2019), interviews and other country-based research.

TO9 operations provided funds for social workers and mentors for asylum seekers and persons with refugee status. At least 786 persons were reached through this new activity. In the Campania region of Italy (2014IT05SFOP020), the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion shifted its focus to the reception of refugees as well as promoting the systems promoting their social and labour market integration.

***The level of planned funds for TO9 shifted in 20 Member States over the evaluation period, going up in most of them for an overall increase of 163 million euro.***

Shifts in planned amounts between the TO9 and other Thematic Objectives were reviewed between the first and the last approved versions of OPs covering the period from 2014 to 2018. The full table by Member State can be found in Annex 4.

The overall total budget allocated for the ESF rose by 1.7 billion euro in comparison to the first approved versions of OPs over the 2014-2018 period. When looking at TO9 specifically, a net increase of 163 million euro in the total budget allocated was identified, which is relatively small compared with shifts in the other TOs<sup>213</sup>. The planned amount for ESF support to social inclusion increased in 13 Member States (EL, UK, ES, BG, CZ, CY, LT, IT, SI, EE, NL, DK, FI) by 614 million euro and decreased in seven Member States (DE, PT, IE, PL, FR, BE, SE) by 451 million euro. The greatest increase was recorded in Greece (by 168 million euro), whereas the largest decrease was observed in Germany (by 157 million euro). In Greece, the increase of planned amounts for TO9 was in part due to the expansion of Community Centres, a shift that was deemed necessary to achieve the overall goals of the OPs<sup>214</sup>. The decrease in Germany reflects the amendment of the OP Bayern (2014DE05SFOP004) and is not representative for the whole country. Reprogrammation was necessary to avoid unspent funds. The long-term unemployed rate reached a very low level making it difficult to fill courses for this target group. Following a low take-up rate, the managing authority tried to lower the pre-conditions for funding, made the administration of projects easier and changed for the possibility of small classes or groups. This did not have the expected results.

Funding allocations for TO9 did not change in eight Member States (AT, HR, HU, LU, LV, MT, RO, SK). Some increased funding allocations for TO9 seem to be associated with a re-allocation of money from other TOs in the same country. For example, Bulgaria and Czech Republic reallocated the funds from TO8 employment objectives - to TO9 (68.9 million euro and 34.2 million euro respectively) suggesting shift in focus from employment to social inclusion.

***Less precision in the definition of the target groups may have helped to reach more target groups in practice, including key target groups, than those initially planned.***

Overall, 65 OPs specified target groups broadly while the others provided a more precise definition (see Annex 2 for more information on the typology of target groups). It appears that some Member States (e.g. AT, BE, ES, NL) deliberately provided a broad

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<sup>213</sup> The most significant increase occurred in TO8 – employment objectives – with allocations rising by 1.6 billion euro. Funding allocations also rose in all other TOs, except for TO10 which dropped by 124 million euro due to a re-allocation of its funding to other TOs

<sup>214</sup> Interviews carried out as part of the country-based analysis.

definition of their target groups initially, which may have consisted of a long list of target groups. This was often because Member States wanted to stay flexible and exhaustive, as the exact groups to be addressed were further defined at implementation stage, with greater precision at the regional and local levels. For example, in the Netherlands (2014NL05SFOP001), a broad definition allowed for the accommodation of diverse needs across different local authorities<sup>215</sup>. In Austria (2014AT05SFOP001) a broad definition of target groups promoted the OP's relevance for the entire programming period and limited the need for amendments to permit changes in target groups. Specific target groups can be addressed in calls for interest that are issued subsequently. For example, Austria's definition of target groups in general terms allowed for regions to draw immediately on ESF support to respond to the refugee crisis. Defining target groups more precisely also offered advantage as highlighted in the assessment of Effectiveness (see reply to EQ 1.5, Section 0).

#### **5.4. Question 4 - Coherence: How coherent are the operations funded by Thematic Objective 9 among themselves and with other actions in the same field?**

The assessment of coherence has several components. It reviews the alignment of ESF support to social inclusion with EU with national and regional policies on social inclusion and Country Specific Recommendations 2014-2019. It also reviews internal coherence between different types of social inclusion operations, as well as external coherence between ESF support to social inclusion (TO9) and other strands of ESF support. The complementarities and synergies of ESF support to social inclusion with other EU funding instruments (e.g. ERDF and AMIF) are also assessed.

The assessment was supported by answers to five sub-evaluation questions, which are presented below.

- **EQ 4.1 Were ESF interventions in line with EU policies on social inclusion?**

Sub-question 4.1 reviews the alignment of ESF support to social inclusion with wider EU strategies and instruments on social inclusion and national strategies at the planning stage. The alignment in the implementation stages is reviewed in the answers to EQ 1.3 (see Section 0).

***In all Member States, ESF support to social inclusion was aligned with the European policy framework on social inclusion at the design and planning stage, also taking into account reprogramming and modifications of the OPs.***

The European policy framework on social protection and social inclusion encompasses a range of policies that are specific to and cut across sectors and target groups. Table 15 presents an overview of the of EU policies mentioned in planning documents for TO9

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<sup>215</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from the Netherlands (2014NL05SFOP001).

operations. The EU 2020 Strategy<sup>216</sup> and the European Pillar of Social Rights<sup>217</sup> were the most cited policies in planning documents – the former was cited in planning documents in 16 Member States (AT, DE, ES, FI, GR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, SI, UK ) while the latter was cited in planning documents in seven Member States (BE, ES, HR, IE, IT, RO, SI). The Social Investment Package (SIP)<sup>218</sup> as ‘umbrella programme’ was only referenced in planning documents for TO9 operations in Romania. The SIP’s three pillars: adequate income support, inclusive labour markets and access to quality services, were in addition covered and / or mentioned in a range of national strategies and policies<sup>219</sup>.

An evaluation of the OP in Cyprus (2014CY05M9OP001) concluded that the actions implemented to achieve specific objectives of Priority Axis 3 were in strong synergy with the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) 2014-2020 Priority 2 Financing Strategy, which supports the corresponding Thematic Goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy<sup>220</sup>. In Poland, ESF support was deemed consistent with EU and national policies<sup>221</sup>. Actions to increase the availability of development services were aligned with strategic documents at EU and national level, namely the 2020 Strategy, Strategy for Responsible Development, Program for New Skills and Employment, and the Enterprise Development Program until 2020.

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<sup>216</sup> European 2020 – A European Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

<sup>217</sup> European Pillar of Social Rights – Building a more inclusive and fairer European Union: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights_en) . This policy was introduced in 2017. It appears that planning documents were updated during the programming period to reflect it.

<sup>218</sup> European Commission, 2015. Policy Roadmap for the implementation of the Social Investment Package:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1044&newsId=1807&furtherNews=yes>

<sup>219</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 2013. Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion including implementing the European Social Fund 2014 – 2020. SWD(2013) 39 final.

<sup>220</sup> Remaco SA, Etam SA, 2018. Evaluation Report 2017 on the Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion OP in Cyprus.

<sup>221</sup> Metaanaliza wyników badań ewaluacyjnych dotyczących oceny wsparcia z EFS – raport cząstkowy 2017 [Meta-analysis of evaluations assessing ESF support in Poland – 2017 edition], Evalu for Ministry of Investments and Development, Warsaw 2017

Table 15. EU policies mentioned in TO9 planning documents and by Managing Authorities

	<b>OPs / MAs referring to EU in relation to TO9:</b>
EU 2020 Strategy	AT, DE, ES, FI, GR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, SI, UK
European Pillar of Social Rights	BE, ES, HR, IE, IT, RO, SI
Social Investment Package <sup>222</sup>	RO
Commission Recommendation of 3 October 2008 on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market	BE, LT
EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 <sup>223</sup>	BG, DE, RO
European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 <sup>224</sup>	LT
United Nations Convention on the Rights of DE Persons with Disabilities <sup>225</sup>	
Council Recommendation on the integration of IT the long-term unemployed <sup>226</sup>	
Directive 2000/43/EC <sup>227</sup>	ES
Directive 2000/78/EC <sup>228</sup>	ES

<sup>222</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 2013. Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion including implementing the European Social Fund 2014 – 2020. SWD(2013) 39 final.

<sup>223</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 2011. An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. COM(2011) 173 final

<sup>224</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 2010. European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe. COM(2010) 636 final

<sup>225</sup> The United Nations, 2006. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>226</sup> Council Recommendation of 15 February 2016 on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market (2016/C 67/01).

<sup>227</sup> Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.

<sup>228</sup> Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

	OPs / MAs referring to EU in relation to TO9:
Directive 2006/54/EC <sup>229</sup>	ES
EU Health Programme 2014-2020 <sup>230</sup>	RO
Digital Single Market Strategy <sup>231</sup>	RO

Source: Expert assessments of OPs followed by interviews with Managing Authorities.

***Few references are made to EU policies for specific target groups (e.g. Roma and persons with a disability) while in practice these target groups were frequently addressed by social inclusion operations.***

EU policies on social inclusion focus on certain target groups for example, people with disabilities and Roma people, to a limited extent. Table 15 shows that the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies was cited in three countries (BG, DE, RO), the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 was cited only in Lithuania and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was cited only in Germany. In contrast, the review of AIRs found that 22 Member States targeted Roma people and other minorities (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, UK) and 25 Member States targeted people with disabilities (AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK). The number of recorded participations for these two groups, however, was low relative to the total number of recorded participations in the country. The reason for this inconsistency is not clear and may be due to manner in which participants reported their characteristics to beneficiary organisations – for example, a participant could have reported their employment status and education level, but not whether they were from a Roma community or other minority group. Such reporting was not compulsory. Respondents to the EU-level Delphi survey also highlighted the value of considering the bigger picture and linking social inclusion to innovation, environmental and digital policies, among others<sup>232</sup>. As noted in Table 15 only one Member State (RO) made reference to the Digital Single Market Strategy. Synergies between ESF and EU funding instruments for research and innovation (e.g. Horizon 2020) could also be better exploited.

<sup>229</sup> Council Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast).

<sup>230</sup> Regulation (EU) No 282/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on the establishment of a third Programme for the Union's action in the field of health (2014-2020) and repealing Decision No 1350/2007/EC.

<sup>231</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 2015. A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe. COM/2015/0192 final.

<sup>232</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

- **EQ 4.2 Were the ESF operations of TO9 complementary with each other and with interventions under other Thematic Objectives (TOs)? What were the main factors in this regard?**

On the basis of the intervention logics of the different social inclusion operations (see Annex 2), there are strong similarities between most types of social inclusion operations and with those under other TOs suggesting that there may be overlaps. The areas of potential overlap are outlined in the Table 16. For example, Type 1 (employed-focussed actions) and Type 2 (enhance basic skills) have potential overlaps with TO8 – Employment Objective.

Table 16. Possible overlaps of TO9 operations with other Thematic Objectives of the ESF

Type of Objectives operation		Other ESF Thematic Objectives
Type 1 Employment-focussed actions	Reduce barriers to employment; help people in vulnerable situations to enter or (re-enter) employment and those already in employment to enhance their job prospects, upgrade their skills and/or help them stay in the labour market.	TO8 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility
Type 2 basic skills	Enhance the employment prospects of people in vulnerable situations by equipping them with the basic skills (e.g. social skills, IT, language skills) needed to 'move closer' to or enter the labour market.	TO8 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility
Type 3 Basic school education	Improve the conditions for equal access to and inclusiveness of education, prevent early school leaving and marginalisation, increase parental engagement in their children's education and enhance integration in schools.	TO10 - Investment in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning
Type 4 Access to services	Enhance access to quality services. Services of general interests (health and education), mainstream social services (childcare and long-term care), personal targeted social services aimed predominantly at social and eventual labour market inclusion (needs-based).	None.
Type 5 Social entrepreneurship	Support the labour market integration of people in vulnerable situations through social enterprises; and Support social enterprises and their ecosystems, as well as the third sector overall, to ultimately develop the sector as engine of growth	None.
Type 6 Actions influencing attitudes and systems	(i) Raise awareness and inform about specific topics of interest with the aim of increasing the knowledge of the targeted population, fighting stereotypes, and changing attitudes and behaviour (e.g. gender equality, antidiscrimination, health awareness); (ii) Strengthen and enhance the capacity of organisations with the aim of improving the design and delivery of services (e.g. social services, health care services, employment services).	TO11- Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration

***By addressing the multiple drivers of social exclusion and discrimination, ESF support can be complementary in promoting the overall journey of vulnerable groups towards social inclusion.***

ESF support for social inclusion can promote a holistic approach by addressing the different drivers of social exclusion and discrimination. Types 1-4 operations focus on the groups of individuals facing social exclusion and discrimination. Types 5 and 6 operations focus on the demand side, namely the receptiveness and capacity of organisations to adequately support socially excluded and discriminated populations. 70 of the 145 OPs with planned social inclusion operations focused exclusively on individuals (Types 1-4 operations). 75 of these 145 OPs (52%) included operations that focussed on both individuals (Types 1-4 operations) and entities (Types 5-6 operations) – in sum, about two-thirds of social inclusion OPs targeted both individual and entities<sup>233</sup>.

The case studies generated some insights into the complementarities between OPs that targeted individuals and entities. In Sweden (2014SE05M9OP001), for example, ESF support to social inclusion included Types 1, 4 and 6 operations. A Type 6 (actions influencing attitudes and systems) project within this OP - the 'Employment Through Procurement' project – sought to introduce changes to the procurement system to address the socio-economic needs of the people in vulnerable conditions that were far from the labour market. Other projects within the same OP provided direct support to persons with diverse and multiple needs affecting their labour market status<sup>234</sup>. In Madrid, Spain (2014ES05SFOP021), ESF support to social inclusion included Types 1, 4, 5 and 6 operations. In the 'Haz Solar' project (Type 5 – social entrepreneurship), partnerships were built between organisations supporting the supply of workers (an NGO specialising in supporting asylum seekers) and organisations supporting their demand (social enterprises and an SME specialised in photovoltaic projects)<sup>235</sup>.

***Up to 79% of declared expenditures by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities for ESF support to social inclusion could have overlapped with other Thematic Objectives.***

Actions that could have been programmed under other TOs may have been programmed under TO9 to meet the requirement that Member States allocate at least 20% of ESF funds to TO9 (see Section 4.1.2). The potential overlaps were reviewed by type of operation (see Annex 2). The implications of the potential overlaps in terms of declared expenditures, participations and results are presented in Table 17.

More than half of declared expenditures by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities (55%) and recorded participations (55%) for TO9 had possible overlaps with TO8 – Employment objective. A high share of immediate results (63%) and longer-term results (55%) generated by TO9 operations also had possible overlaps with TO8 – Employment objective. The possible overlaps with TO11 – Institutional capacity - were less, but still substantial – it could account for up to 24% of declared expenditures. The possible

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<sup>233</sup> 66% of planned funds, 67% of allocated funds and 67% of declared expenditures.

<sup>234</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Sweden (2014BG05M9OP001).

<sup>235</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Spain (2014ES05SFOP021). This example was also mentioned in the reply to EQ 3.2.

overlap with TO10 – Education and training - was small mainly because of the limited presence of Type 3 operations under TO9<sup>236</sup>.

Of the six types of operations, Type 4 (access to service) and Type 5 (social entrepreneurship) operations remained unique among with respect to other TOs. As suggested by the findings in Table 17, these two types of operations account for just 19% of declared expenditures and 25% of participations of social inclusion operations. The share of declared expenditures and participations recorded under TO9 that can clearly be attributed to social inclusion is therefore quite small.

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<sup>236</sup> It is important to stress in the context of these findings that the breakdown of ESF monitoring data by type of operation is an approximation – as noted in Annex 4, the breakdowns assumed an equal split across the types of operation evident in the OP. In reality, more funds may have been spent on certain types of operations while more participations may have been generated on other types of operations.

Table 17. Declared expenditures, participations and results of TO9 operations that have possible overlaps with other Thematic Objectives

Possible overlaps of TO9 with:	Type of TO9 operations	Share of: Declared expenditures	Participations	Immediate results	Long-term results
TO8 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	Types 1 and 2	55%	55%	63%	55%
TO10 - Investment in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning	Type 3	2%	2%	1%	1%
TO11 - Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration	Type 6	24%	18%	32%	40%
Total possible overlaps	Types 1, 2, 3 and 6	81%	75%	97%	95%

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018 (data extracted on December 10, 2018) and OP2018 (data extracted on July 1, 2019). Recorded expenditures include both EU and national amounts. ICF mapping exercise of OPs with planned TO9 operations. The sum exceeds the total number of OPs as an OP may cover multiple types of operations. For more information, please see Annex 2; Note: The IPs include: IP9i) Active inclusion, IP9ii) Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities, IP9iii) Non-discrimination and equal opportunities, IP9iv) Access to services, IP9v) Social entrepreneurship and IP9vi) Community-led local development strategy. The types of operation include: Type 1 – Employment focussed action, Type 2 - Enhance basic skills Type 3 - Basic school education, Type 6 - Actions influencing attitudes and systems. The methodology for estimating expenditures by type of operation is presented in Annex 4.

***Actual overlaps between social inclusion operations and other Thematic Objectives of the ESF are likely to be low due to the target groups addressed and the holistic approach taken.***

TO9 operations often focussed on the most vulnerable and the most distant from the labour market (or from education and training), and in that sense they were different - and also complementary - to TO8 and TO10 operations, which covered a much broader target group. The holistic approach to social inclusion - a key feature of TO9 operations - addresses a range of factors whilst having a strong labour market integration focus.

The analysis of common output indicators by Thematic Objective indicates that ESF support for social inclusion focussed its support more on persons with a disability, migrants, people with a foreign background and minorities, as well as persons with low education as compared with TO8 and TO10 (see Table 11).

The evaluation identified several examples where TO9 operations were distinguishable from TO8 operations, primarily with respect to Type 1 and 2 operations. In Spain, TO9 operations differed from operations under other TOs in relation to their content and target groups. Examples from the country-based analyses include the following:

- The project Acceder (2014ES05SFOP012) in Spain provided services tailored to a specific group in a vulnerable situation. Outreach activities were performed by intermediaries who were of Roma origin in neighbourhoods with a high density of Roma population. They performed dissemination, awareness raising and recruitment activities. These tailored outreach activities (which would not be provided by regular public employment services) were deemed as particularly important by the Managing Authority to break stereotypes, self-imposed barriers, or barriers imposed by the family or the community, such as culture and habits, that limit individuals to fulfil their aspirations and potential. Another distinctive element as part of these tailored pathways are motivational groups sessions with participants of a similar age and profile.
- In Italy (2014IT05SFOP004) participants for TO9 operations were recruited from social services or mental health services, while participants in operations under TO8 and TO9 were recruited through PES or training providers. For example, in the project 'Peer support techniques in social inclusion and employment', participants were patients of mental health services and were recruited through such services<sup>237</sup>.
- In Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001), the primary objective of the project 'Integration of persons with disability or mental disorders in labour market and society' was to provide persons with severe disabilities or persons with mental health issues with the necessary skills to enter the labour market. Other labour market-oriented operations in Latvia were not considered to be suitable for this target group because they required more comprehensive and tailored support<sup>238</sup>.

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<sup>237</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Italy (2014IT05SFOP004).

<sup>238</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001).

#### **EQ 4.3 To what extent were ESF operations of TO9 complementary and coherent with other EU funding instruments such as ERDF, EARDF, EaSi, FEAD or AMIF?**

Sub-question 4.3 investigates elements of complementarity and coherence between ESF support to social inclusion and other European funding instruments. About half of OPs with TO9 operations were financed through a combination of ESF and other EU funding (71 OPs were multi-fund OPs while 74 OPs were exclusively financed by the ESF).

The use of ESF funds with other funds to implement projects under TO9 was identified in 10 Member States. The use of funds was reported mainly in relation to ERDF funds (BE, BG, ES, FR HU, IT, LT, LU, PT, SK), FEAD (BG, ES, IT, LU), EARDF (BG, FR LU) and AMIF (BE, ES, IT). A study specifically on financial support for Roma people notes financial support from ERDF and the ESF<sup>239</sup>. More than 40% of the replies to the public consultation noted coherence between ESF and ERDF, while a somewhat lower share (34%) noted coherence between ESF and FEAD<sup>240</sup>.

Although the concurrent use of different EU funding instruments was not commonly identified, there are positive examples, which are highlighted below.

#### ***ERDF funds for infrastructure such as housing and social structures were complementary to ESF support for social inclusion.***

The evaluation identified examples of TO9 operations where ERDF provided funds for physical capital measures such as infrastructure while ESF provided funds for human capital measures including staff and activities (e.g. training courses, counselling etc). For example, in Spain, an ESF-ERDF plan was developed to support the eradication of shanty towns. ERDF funds supported the provision of housing shelter for families who live in slums and in deprived homes while ESF supported for TO9 (OP 2014ES05SFOP003) financed social integration activities targeting families that had recently moved from slums to homes. In Lithuania, the ERDF financed the creation and development of social services infrastructure needed to implement a reform aiming at the transition from institutional to more community-based care (deinstitutionalisation); ESF support to social inclusion (2014LT16MAOP001) supported the development of new methodological approaches in social, health and other services to support persons in need of care (in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and the assessment of staff competences and motivation during and after the transition from institutional care. In Slovakia, ESF actions under TO9 (2014SK05M0OP001) were complemented by ERDF resources, which were used to finance technical facilities in municipalities with the presence of marginalised Roma communities. In Slovakia, TO9 operations included a wide range of investments, co-funded by ERDF, to improve housing conditions (access to drinking water, completion of basic technical infrastructure, elimination of illegal dumping sites, etc.), access to pre-school education (construction of new and reconstruction of existing pre-school facilities) and access to social infrastructure (e.g. construction of new community centres, reconstruction of existing buildings for the purpose of community centres).

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<sup>239</sup> European Court of Auditors, 2016. EU policy initiatives and financial support for Roma integration: significant progress made over the last decade, but additional efforts needed on the ground. Special report

<sup>240</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

***Food, clothing and other goods purchased with FEAD funds were used to support social inclusion measures funded by ESF.***

Several country examples highlight the complementarity in the coordinated implementation of FEAD in coordination with ESF:

- In Italy (2014IT05SFOP001), a project that aimed to support people experiencing homelessness drew on both ESF support to social inclusion and FEAD funding in a complementary manner. For example, FEAD funds were used to buy personal items such as toiletries and new cloths (rather than second-hand clothes) while TO9 funded a range of outreach activities, including mobile services, day-to-day support and counselling aimed at the development of soft-skills (e.g. self-care skills, interpersonal and communication skills), as well as psychological support and various social activities with residents in the neighbourhoods (e.g. language workshops, crafting).
- In Bulgaria (2014BG05M2OP001, 2014BG05M9OP001), complementarities were noted between TO9 operations and FEAD where the latter allowed for the procurement of goods (e.g. food, clothing) needed for certain social inclusion measures (e.g. training, counselling).

The open replies to the public consultation noted complementarities between ESF support to social inclusion and FEAD specifically in terms of support for deinstitutionalisation in care. Replies from representatives of organisations directly involved in ESF delivery also noted high complementarity between ESF and FEAD activities, specifically in supporting the deinstitutionalisation of children and adults<sup>241</sup>.

***Coordination in the implementation of AMIF with ESF was less common despite the potential benefits to doing so following the 2015 crisis.***

In their response to the public consultation, organisations directly involved in the delivery of ESF noted complementarities between ESF support, AMIF and the European Globalization Adjustment Fund (EGF). The country-based analyses provide several examples:

- In Italy (2014IT05SFOP001), the social inclusion and labour market integration of migrants was promoted through the integrated use of ESF and AMIF funds. The ESF funded an internship programme in private companies, while AMIF provided resources for actions needed before the internship, such as skills profiling and assessment, job orientation and career guidance and tutoring.
- In Belgium (2014BE05SFOP002), ESF and AMIF funds supported the Flemish labour market and integration policies. The management of the funds by the same agency promoted coherence.

The targeting of ESF support to social inclusion focussed more on refugees following the 2015 crisis (see reply to EQ 3.3). The country-based analyses did not identify examples where coordination with AMIF increased to ensure more effective and comprehensive support for the target group.

***Challenges to pursuing integrated use of EU funds were identified in several Member States.***

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<sup>241</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report, page 36.

Challenges in pursuing the integrated use of EU funds were identified in several Member States (e.g. ES, FR, LT, PL). For example, in France (2014FR05SFOP001), the evaluation of the impact of the National ESF Programme on the fight against poverty and promoting inclusion found a lack of coordination between the national OP and the ERDF-ESF OPs managed by the Regions. According to the survey realised in the framework of the national evaluation, 20% of the intermediary bodies<sup>242</sup> attempted to coordinate their actions<sup>243</sup>. The evaluation of an OP in the Czech Republic (2014CZ05M9OP001) found that better communication between public administrators of national funds would be needed to set up complementary linkages in integrated actions<sup>244</sup>.

The challenges associated with the integrated use of funds may have contributed to delays in the financial implementation of social inclusion operations in some Member States, for example, Bulgaria (see Section 0) consequently leading to a lower absorption rate as compared with mono-fund OPs that planned for TO9 operations (see Table 8).

- **EQ 4.4 To which extent are the investments under TO9 consistent with the analyses and priorities identified in the context of the European Semester notably in the Country Reports, the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) and the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs)?**

Sub-question 4.4 reviews the alignment between the priorities identified in the context of the Country-Specific Recommendations 2014-2019 and the types of TO9 operations implemented in the Member States.

***Almost all OPs that planned for TO9 operations were found to be fully aligned with the Country Specific Recommendations.***

At a general level, 143 of the 145 OPs that planned for TO9 operations (except (2014ES05SFOP007 and 2014IT16M2OP006) were found to be consistent with the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs). The alignment of the OP in Spain fell short with respect to CSR 2014 n.1 because the OP did not detail the measures related to health services under IP9iv. In Italy, the OP did not make any specific reference to the CSRs.

The CSRs from 2014 to 2019 were reviewed more closely to identify relevant recommendations for ESF support to social inclusion. These recommendations were then reviewed against the types of TO9 operations implemented in the country during the 2014-2020 programming period. Relevant CSRs for each type of TO9 operation were identified except for Type 5 operations. An overview of the CSRs by type of operation (except Type 5) is presented below.

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<sup>242</sup> To implement the Axis 3 there are 120 intermediary bodies and managing bodies that organise calls for proposals to award the specific beneficiary. These intermediary bodies are known as PLIE – Plans Locaux pour l'Insertion et l'Emploi (Local Plans for Integration and Employment) and CDs – Conseils Départementaux (Departmental Council).

<sup>243</sup> Amnyos-Edater, 2019. Evaluation report of the National Operational Programme focussing on Axis 3 (TO9).

<sup>244</sup> Hope Group, 2017. Strategic evaluation of the relevance of OP Employment in the Czech Republic.

**Type 1 operations:** In many Member States (AT, BE, CZ, DK, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, MT, NL, PT, SE), CSRs directly addressed the need to strengthen measures to increase labour market participation, reduce barriers to accessing the labour market and improve outreach and targeting of vulnerable people (e.g. migrants, people with a migrant or ethnic background, low-skilled people, older workers, NEETs, disabled people, women, long-term unemployed, people at the margin of the labour market). Another set of recommendations focused on improving synergies between active and passive labour market policy measures by linking welfare benefit systems and social services to activation measures and individualised pathways for those further from the labour market (BG, CY, EE, EL, ES, IT, LT, LV, RO, PT, SK).

**Type 2 operations:** Some CSRs specifically referred to the need to increase the employability of vulnerable people by improving their educational outcomes (e.g. young people with a migrant background, Roma people); upskilling/re-training low-skilled people; and improving outreach measures (AT, BG, DE, DK, FR, HU, LT, LV).

**Type 3 operations:** Some CSRs emphasised the need to improve access and quality of inclusive pre-school and school education of vulnerable children (e.g. Roma children and marginalised communities). This was closely linked to the need to prevent (or reduce) early school leaving, reduce educational segregation and fight poverty experienced during childhood (BG, CZ, HU, SK, RO).

**Type 4 operations:** Some CSRs pointed to the need to implement and/or enhance the adequacy of national minimum income schemes (BG, CY, EL, IT, PT, RO, ES) as well as to improve access and availability of services. Access to services is key to combating and preventing poverty. As a result, in some countries CSRs exhorted Member States to provide affordable and high-quality childcare services to tackle poverty since childhood and to increase the labour market participation of women (AT, CZ, DE, EE, ES, IE, IT, PL, SK, UK). In some countries, the CSRs also address the need to implement structural reforms of the health care system and/or improve its quality and increase access for vulnerable people (BG, CY, EL, LT, MT, RO, SI).

**Type 5 operations:** No relevant CSRs for Type 5 operations were identified.

**Type 6 operations:** A number of CSRs focussed on the need to expand and enhance institutional capacity. For example, in some Member States, CSRs recommended strengthening the capacity, efficiency, effectiveness and coordination of employment services to ensure better outreach of and provide individualised services to vulnerable people (BG, CY, ES, HR, IT, PT, RO, SI, SK).

The CSRs were subsequently mapped against the different types of TO9 operations identified in each Member State. For example, Germany had CSRs related to Type 2 and Type 4 operations. In the review of OPs, ESF support to social inclusion was found to support Types 1, 2, 4 and 6 operations in Germany. As the types of operations covered by ESF support to social inclusion include the types identified in the CSRs, we conclude that there is full alignment. Table 18 presents the results of the review. Overall, 21 Member States were found to have TO9 operations that were aligned with TO9-relevant CSRs. Gaps in alignment were identified in the remaining countries with respect to Types 2, 3 and 4 operations.

*Table 18. Alignment of CSR recommendations with types of TO9 operations identified*

## Member States

TO9-relevant CSRs align AT, BE, CY, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, IT, LT, LU, NL, with types of TO9 operations PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK implemented in the country:

*Gaps in alignment with CSRs with respect to:*

Type 2 operations BG, DK, LV

Type 3 operations CZ, HU

Type 4 operations IE, MT

*Source:* Expert assessments of OPs and CSRs 2014-2019. Type 2 - Enhance basic skills; Type 3 - Basic school education; Type 4 - Access to services.

- **EQ 4.5 To what extent were TO9 actions complementary and coherent with other activities supporting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination at national/regional level?**

Sub-question 4.5 reflects on the coherence between TO9 operations and national/regional operations.

***Overall ESF support to social inclusion was found to be coherent with national and regional policies and programmes.***

ESF support to social inclusion was generally found to be aligned with national and regional policies and programmes and to reinforced these. For example, in Greece, ESF support to social inclusion complemented and reinforced a number of means-tested policies targeted at people in vulnerable situations (minimum income guarantee, child benefits, rent subsidy, heating benefits, ad hoc transfers to the poorest households and ad hoc measures to facilitate access of the most vulnerable to public health care services). In Lithuania, the alignment of ESF actions under TO9 with national or regional policy measures is ensured through the requirement of having a direct link between planned measures with EU and national funds and national/regional strategic documents. In line with this example, respondents to the EU-level Delphi survey highlighted the importance of clear linkages between the objectives of interviews and strategic policy documents<sup>245</sup>.

Replies to the public consultation suggest that coherence could be somewhat improved, or at least made more explicit. While a majority (58%) of respondents to the public consultation considered that ESF actions were coherent with national, regional or local programmes, just over a third (34%) did not know. Persons who were aware of ESF but had never received ESF support considered that more alignment could be achieved between national and regional schemes and EU support for TO9. Respondents from several Member States (e.g. DE, HU, IT) noted that ESF funds broadened the scope of national measures through the integration of national and EU-level priorities. Respondents to the public consultation from Managing Authorities and members of ESF monitoring committees noted that national measures that were more aligned with ESF actions included support measures for persons with disabilities<sup>246</sup>.

<sup>245</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

<sup>246</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

**5.5. Question 5 - EU-added value: What is the EU added value of the ESF-funded operations in the field of social inclusion, combating poverty and anti-discrimination?**

The overall objective of TO9 – the promotion of social inclusion – is a competence of Member States. Therefore, EU funds delivered through the ESF may only complement or add value to the actions taken by the Member States. EU-added value can be reflected in four dimensions – volume effect, scope effect, role effect and process effect<sup>247</sup>. Table 19 presents an overview of the assessment.

Each of the four dimensions was identified in at least 17 Member States in the ESF support to social inclusion. The most common dimension of EU-added value identified was the role effect (24 Member States) followed by volume effect (22 Member States), process effect (18 Member States) and scope effect (17 Member States).

*Table 19. Overview of EU added value in Member States*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Type of EU-added value (MS)</b>
Volume effect (22 MS)	<i>Complementary to national efforts (17 MS):</i> AT, BE, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, GR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, NL, PT, RO, SK <i>Primary role in social inclusion funding (5 MS):</i> FI, HU, LV, PL, SE
Scope effect (17 MS)	<i>Support to specific target group (17 MS):</i> AT, BE, BG, DE, DK, GR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL, RO, SE, SI, SK
Role effect (24 MS)	<i>Pilot innovative actions (13 MS):</i> AT, BG, DE, ES, FR, HU, IT, LU, PL, SE, SI, SK, UK <i>Enhance national framework for social inclusion (12 MS):</i> BE, CY, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV <i>Test new ways of collaboration (9 MS):</i> AT, ES, FI, LV, NL, PL, RO, SK, UK <i>Develop national standards (2 MS):</i> BG, MT
Process effect (18 MS)	<i>Cooperation in design and delivery of services (16 MS):</i> BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, ES, FR, GR, IE, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, RO, SK <i>Simplified procedures (2 MS):</i> LV, SI

*Source:* Summarised from country-based analyses. *Notes:* Volume effect - ESF support to social inclusion played a primary role in funding social inclusion policies and complementing national efforts; Scope effect - ESF support to social inclusion allowed for reach to target groups that would not have been covered with other funds; Role effect - ESF support to social inclusion enhanced existing national frameworks, tested new collaborations and partnerships, developed new standards and piloted innovative actions; Process effect - ESF support to social inclusion

<sup>247</sup> Volume effect - ESF support to social inclusion played a primary role in funding social inclusion policies and complementing national efforts; Scope effect - ESF support to social inclusion allowed for reach to target groups that would not have been covered with other funds; Role effect - ESF support to social inclusion enhanced existing national frameworks, tested new collaborations and partnerships, developed new standards and piloted innovative actions; Process effect - ESF support to social inclusion improved the administrative capacity and knowledge in the design and delivery of services promoting social inclusion.

improved the administrative capacity and knowledge in the design and delivery of services promoting social inclusion.

This finding was reinforced by the replies to the public consultation in which 80% considered that ESF allowed for more to be done than with national or local resources only (volume effect). A higher share of replies (56%) considered that ESF allowed for coverage of new issues (scope effect), and new ways of delivering services (role effect). These views were generally consistent across stakeholder groups - some notable differences were likely to stem from a low number of replies from the group rather than a substantive difference of opinion<sup>248</sup>.

Respondents to the EU-level Delphi survey noted that the role effect of ESF support to social inclusion could have been greater in terms of catalysing national reforms that could be cross-border in nature. Rather than simply reinforce existing national (or sub-national) frameworks, ESF could enable critical reforms and innovation through pilots at a local level that could be later scaled up <sup>249</sup>.

- **EQ 5.1 Volume effects: Have the operations added to existing actions or directly produced beneficial effects that can be measured in terms of volume?**

Sub-question 5.1 investigates whether ESF support to social inclusion generated added value through operations that mirrored or boosted national or regional policies.

***ESF support to social inclusion played a significant role in funding measures fighting social exclusion and poverty, complementing national policies.***

A volume effect was identified in 22 Member States (AT, BE, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK). This effect was primarily observed in terms of complementarity with national efforts (17 MS). It was also identified in terms of boosting funding for social inclusion (5 MS). The analysis below provides some examples for each type of volume effect.

*Complementary to national efforts:* In Spain the Special Employment Centres (Centros Especiales de Empleo) focus on labour market integration of workers with disabilities. This is a widespread national policy co-funded by ESF several OPs. For example, one OP (2014ES05SFOP019) provides a partial subsidy of the wage costs of workers with disabilities in Special Employment Centres. In Lithuania (2014LT16MAOP001), funds under TO9 support activation measures for elderly people, thus complementing and boosting national policies. In Italy (2014IT05FOP001), ESF support to social inclusion boosted national measures to support the implementation of the national anti-poverty strategy and allowed the implementation of innovative services<sup>250</sup>

*Primary role in social inclusion funding:* In Hungary, most measures aimed at supporting social inclusion of people in vulnerable situations are funded by ESF. Similarly, in Poland ESF support to social inclusion promoted the development of the social economy. The primary role of ESF support raises some concerns about the longer-term sustainability of these interventions. In Sweden (2014SE05M90P001) evaluation data suggests that

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<sup>248</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

<sup>249</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

<sup>250</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from the Italy (2014IT05FOP001).

the project would not have been implemented without the ESF funding<sup>251</sup>. Similarly in Latvia, (2014LV16MAOP001) some of necessary measures, for example, creation and provision of community based services to persons with mental disorders for independent life in the community, social care and rehabilitation services for disabled children and their family members, would not be likely possible at all without ESF support<sup>252</sup>.

- **EQ 5.2 Scope effects: Have the operations broadened existing actions by addressing groups or policy areas that would otherwise not have been addressed?**

Sub-question 5.2 investigates whether ESF support to social inclusion funded measures in policy areas or for groups that would have not been supported by national funds.

***ESF support to social inclusion benefited target groups that would have not been reached by other national/regional funds.***

The scope effect for ESF support to social inclusion was identified in 17 Member States (AT, BE, BG, DE, DK, GR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL, RO, SE, SI, SK).

ESF provided support for specific target groups that were not covered or that received less coverage by nationally funded interventions. For example ESF support to social inclusion covered Roma children and children with special educational needs (BG), people with 'limited attachment' to the labour market (DK), people with disabilities (HR), refugees (NL), and LGBT facing housing exclusion (IT). In Austria the 'Youth College Vienna' project (2014AT05SFOP001) provided education and counselling to young refugees that would have not received support from other sources. The programme supports young refugees who are less likely to have the skills needed to enter training or the labour market<sup>253</sup>.

- **EQ 5.3 Role effects: Have the operations supported innovation and the transfer of ideas that have been subsequently rolled out in different contexts? To what extent has the ESF contributed to structural changes in national systems promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination?**

Sub-question 5.3 investigates whether ESF support to social inclusion contributed to structural changes in national systems with regards to poverty and social exclusion.

***ESF support to social inclusion enhanced existing national frameworks, tested new collaborations and partnerships, and piloted innovative actions.***

ESF support to social inclusion had a role effect in 24 Member States (AT, BE, BG, CY, DE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK). This effect was primarily observed in terms of piloting innovative actions (13 MS). It was also identified in terms of enhancing national frameworks for social inclusion (12 MS) and to a lesser extent for testing new ways of collaboration (9 MS). The analysis below provides some examples for each type of role effect.

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<sup>251</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from the Sweden (2014SE05M90P001).

<sup>252</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from the Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001).

<sup>253</sup> For more information please refer to Annex 8 – OP case study from Austria (2014AT05SFOP001).

*Piloting innovative actions:* In Bulgaria, ESF support to social inclusion (2014BG05M9OP001) funded the piloting of foster care provisions and approaches to social services for long-term care of people with disabilities. Participants in a focus group reported that not all successful pilots and practices had been scaled up at national level and/or used to input the national policy and regulatory framework<sup>254</sup>. As noted in a case study from Italy (2014IT05FOP004), the possibility to implement experimental approaches is where the ESF makes the difference. ESF funds allowed for experimentation with innovative projects - without ESF support, the target group would have received more standard and less tailored training courses, which were less relevant for their needs and with lower potential effectiveness<sup>255</sup>.

Another example of the pilot projects under ESF is the PaCE (financed from 2014UK05SFOP001 and 2014UK05SFOP00) programme in Wales. This programme was effective in addressing a gap in the provision of childcare in the UK. Although around 80% of childcare costs are reimbursable in the UK for those in need, the reimbursement may take weeks to be made effective. The upfront instalment to nurseries can therefore be unaffordable for a parent.

*Enhancing national frameworks for social inclusion:* One type related to the enhancement of existing national frameworks through the establishment of monitoring and coordination mechanisms (GR), design and implementation of integrated approaches to combat poverty and social exclusion (ES, IT, LT). In Spain, ESF support to social inclusion influenced the reforms of social and employment policies towards an active inclusion and customised approach. In Italy, the 'new philosophy' of TO9 influenced the Italian overall policy strategy which is moving from ad hoc interventions and small pilots (due to the lack of resources) to a more structured integrated approach based on assessing needs and the identification of innovative solutions. In Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001), the 'Research and monitoring of inclusive labour market and poverty risks' project funded the design and implementation of a system to monitor the situation of poverty and social exclusion and develop inclusive labour market policies and support systems for persons with disabilities.

*Testing new ways of collaboration:* In Slovakia (2014SK05M0OP001), ESF supported the introduction of teachers' assistants in primary schools with a high proportion of children from a socially vulnerable environment. This practice has been scaled up at the national level. In Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001) new partnerships were developed between state, municipal, health care institutions and private social service providers or NGOs to deliver support services to persons with severe disability and mental disorders to live outside institutions, and to provide health support and health prevention activities<sup>256</sup>. In Finland (2014FI05M2OP001 and 2014FI16M2OP001) the alignment of ESF support to social inclusion with activities at the national and regional level promoted cross-sectoral cooperation between NGOs, private and the public sectors. Adding the "social perspective" marked a significant shift for employment-related actions.

Participants in the Spanish focus group reported that the ESF requirements in relation to partnerships had triggered new collaborative arrangements, bringing together organisations with different perspectives and operating in a range of domains. Similarly,

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<sup>254</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Bulgaria (2014BG05M9OP001).

<sup>255</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Italy (2014IT05FOP004).

<sup>256</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001).

the transnational projects triggered a learning process and helped organisations to improve their practices<sup>257</sup>.

*Development of national standards:* In Bulgaria, ESF funded the development of methodologies for working with children with special educational needs (2014BG05M2OP001). Since the project was managed by the Ministry of Education, these methodologies were further developed into national standards<sup>258</sup>.

- **EQ 5.4 Process effects: Have Member State administrations and participating organisations derived benefits from being involved in the operations?**

Sub-question 6.5 investigates whether administrations benefitted from their involvement in ESF support to social inclusion.

***Social inclusion operations generated process effects by improving the administrative capacity and knowledge in the design and delivery of services.***

Process effects were found in 18 Member States (BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, ES, FR, GR, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, RO, SK, SI). This effect was primarily observed in terms of cooperation in the design and delivery of services (16 MS). It was also identified in the simplification of administrative procedures in two Member States (e.g. use of SCOs). The analysis below provides some examples for each type of process effect.

*Cooperation in the design and delivery of services:* In Malta (2014MT05SFOP001) the ESF 2.54 INK project resulted in a new method of delivery. The INK project resulted in the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Malta Employers Association, thus stressing a shared responsibility to address social inclusion. To ensure effective delivery and shared responsibility for the project, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the Malta Employers Association (MEA). This approach also enabled more effective outreach with employers to provide training relating to the inclusion of persons with disabilities and to identify potential placements.

In Lithuania (2014LT16MAOP001), TO9 funded measures to promote the involvement of municipalities and local NGOs in carrying out needs' assessments of case-based services and designing comprehensive measures. In the public consultation it was noted that greater involvement of NGOs in the provision of labour market integration services should be pursued systematically to improve the effectiveness of such actions while greater cooperation between social services and housing providers would improve the effectiveness of activities targeting people at risk of homelessness<sup>259</sup>.

In Spain, (2014ES05SFOP021) rigorous ESF working methodologies were found to influence other non-ESF policies and programmes since knowledge is transferred among the staff. With respect to TO9, the measures taken to meet the ESF requirement to address gender equality and discrimination is followed by other programs and projects<sup>260</sup>.

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<sup>257</sup> Focus group discussion in Austria. Please see Annex 6 for more information.

<sup>258</sup> Participants in a focus group carried out in Bulgaria confirmed that the ESF supported the development of national standards and financed the implementation of innovative social services. Please see Annex 6 for more information.

<sup>259</sup> Annex 7 – Consultation report.

<sup>260</sup> Annex 8 – OP case study from Spain (2014ES05SFOP021).

*Simplified procedures:* In Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001), all ESF funding available to national beneficiaries is channelled through a single liaison body, and use is made of Simplified Cost Options. This has promoted the standardisation of monitoring procedures for the beneficiaries, regardless of the area in which they operate. The need to keep a record of the participants' data in the framework of the ESF support to social inclusion has contributed to the implementation of the principles of good governance in public administration.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The findings from the evaluation generated four overarching conclusions (see Section 6.1) as well as 20 conclusions spanning the five evaluation criteria (see Section 6.2).

### 6.1. Overarching conclusions

***ESF support for social inclusion was less about supporting distinct interventions than supporting the adaptation of interventions for specific target groups.***

The mapping of TO9 operations identified several types of operations that have potential overlaps with other Thematic Objectives of the ESF. Type 1 operations - Employment-focussed actions - have potential overlaps with TO8 while Type 3 operations - basic education - have potential overlaps with TO10. The difference offered by ESF support to social inclusion lies in its holistic approach and tailoring to the target groups that were being addressed. For example, the Acceder project in Spain engaged intermediaries of Roma origin to carry out outreach activities rather than the public employment services. In Latvia, training materials for a labour market integration training were developed for persons with disabilities rather than drawing from existing materials for other target groups.

***Different approaches to defining the target groups at the planning stage reflect a trade-off between relevance and effectiveness.***

Some TO9 operations clearly defined target groups at the planning stage while others used a broader definition, which was refined during implementation. Each approach offers advantages and disadvantages that reflect a trade-off between relevance and effectiveness. Precise definitions of target groups in planning documents allow for the early tailoring of the intervention to the specific needs of these groups, and facilitate effective outreach and engagement, which can promote effectiveness (see reply to EQ 1.5, Section 0). A broad definition of the target group can allow for greater flexibility in the implementation of the OPs and adaptation to changes in the socio-economic context, which can promote relevance (see reply to EQ 3.3).

***Greater engagement with small and local organisations improves the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of TO9 operations.***

Small and local organisations face multiple barriers to take-up ESF which include low levels of awareness, high administrative burden, difficulties to meet (financial) eligibility requirements and limited capacity to monitor and report on project activities (see reply to EQ 2.2). Yet, the involvement of small and local organisations can be very effective for identifying and engaging with target groups at the local level. While their value is evident, the current ESF framework may insufficiently incentivise their involvement (e.g. the same administrative requirements are applied regardless of organisation size).

***The monitoring system may incentivise beneficiaries to 'cream' and set targets too low, leading to lower relevance but higher effectiveness in terms of the results measured.***

While important to measure results, the exclusive use of 'hard' result indicators within the set of common monitoring indicators may distort the behaviour of Managing Authorities and beneficiaries. The evaluation found that there is a perception that projects which cannot guarantee achievement of 'hard' result indicators are less likely to be selected even if they are essential to bring certain target groups closer to accessing education, training and employment. Beneficiaries may feel an incentive to recruit participants who are more likely to achieve the results reflected in the indicators rather

recruit participants who should be targeted and who are in most need of the intervention. The measurement of soft outcomes that can be expected to shift in the more immediate term for the target group in relation to the intervention may limit the incentive to 'cream'.

## **6.2. Conclusions by evaluation criterion**

### **Question 1 – Effectiveness: How effective was the ESF in achieving the objectives of Thematic Objective 9?**

**Conclusion 1 EQ 1.1**<sup>261</sup>: The output-level achievement rate to date is high despite the low level of financial implementation at this advanced stage of the programming period. This points to targets being set rather conservatively by Managing Authorities.

**Conclusion 2 EQ 1.2**<sup>262</sup>: More than half of results generated for ESF support to social inclusion were for Type 1 operations (employment-focussed actions). An additional 35% of results were generated for Type 6 operations (action influencing attitudes and systems). At an institutional level, ESF support to social inclusion promoted access to public services, deinstitutionalisation and scale-up and cross-sectoral collaborations to improve access to health care. The result-level achievement rate was more moderate than that for outputs, which is in line with the fact that results take more time to materialise than outputs. The monitoring of results itself may have encouraged the recruitment of participants who are more likely to generate a result.

**Conclusion 3 EQ 1.4**<sup>263</sup>: Most of the recorded results generated by ESF support to social inclusion related to the labour market. ESF support to social inclusion contributed to reducing discrimination, improved integration of marginalised communities, changed attitudes towards education, increased soft-skills (e.g. self-care skills, interpersonal and communication skills) and self-confidence. However, the available evidence on soft outcomes is limited and mostly qualitative, as only a few Managing Authorities have attempted to measure them.

**Conclusion 3 EQ 1.5**<sup>264</sup>: A high level of cooperation, a precise definition of the target groups in the planning documents, tailored outreach, and alignment of OPs with national policy promoted the effectiveness of ESF support for TO9. Delays in implementation, high administrative burden of implementing ESF projects in relation to administrative

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<sup>261</sup> EQ 1.1: To what extent did the financial implementation and the achievement of the expected outputs progress according to the targets set in the programmes? What were the main factors involved (delays in implementation, ESF absorption...)?

<sup>262</sup> EQ 1.2: How and to what extent does ESF contribute to the promotion of social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination and the social inclusion target of Europe 2020?

<sup>263</sup> EQ 1.4: Which changes (intended and unintended) did the ESF support bring to the target groups? How were these changes, notably soft outcomes, assessed and documented? Which types of operations are or were the most effective and most sustainable, for which groups and in which contexts?

<sup>264</sup> EQ 1.5: Which factors facilitate or hinder the effectiveness of ESF operations under Thematic Objective 9, by type of operation?

capacity of beneficiaries, and low receptivity of the community to the target group hindered effectiveness. The latter could be mitigated with tailored outreach approaches.

**Question 2 – Efficiency: How efficient is the ESF in the achievement of the objectives of Thematic Objective 9?**

**Conclusion 4 EQ 2.1**<sup>265</sup>: There was a high level of variation across IPs and Member States in the cost-effectiveness of the different types of operations. The large variance in the cost per participation and the cost per short-term result reflects the wide range of types of operations, as well as the different costs levels in the Member States.

**Conclusion 5 EQ 2.2**<sup>266</sup>: Non-take up among potential beneficiaries is driven by low awareness and limited administrative capacity, in particular to take on taking on large financial advances without assurance of timely reimbursement. These challenges are especially felt by small and local organisations. More communication from Managing Authorities with potential beneficiaries and activities to enhance their capacity and understanding of ESF procedures can promote take-up.

**Conclusion 6 EQ 2.3**<sup>267</sup>: The introduction of SCOs may lead to an initial increase administrative burden for some beneficiaries that need to adjust procedures and train their staff. Over time, however, the use of SCOs can promote the take-up of ESF and lower administrative burden. Other key factors that limit the efficiency of ESF support for TO9 include gold plating and drawing on other EU funds (e.g. ERDF, CF) to support the OP. The additional complexity of administering an OP with multiple funds may have led to delayed implementation and generation of results.

**Conclusion 7 EQ 2.4**<sup>268</sup>: Awareness of ESF support to social inclusion was raised through calls for proposals, use of the internet, social media and social networks. Despite efforts made in many Member States, the level of awareness that potential beneficiaries, target groups and the general population have of ESF support to social inclusion remains rather low. More dissemination activities through traditional channels (e.g. television and print media) and social media could promote the visibility of the ESF.

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<sup>265</sup> EQ 2.1: To what extent were operations cost-effective? What types of operations were more and less cost-effective? In what contexts? What were the determining factors?

<sup>266</sup> EQ 2.2: How do organisational arrangements influence service delivery by beneficiaries or, eventually, lead to non-take up by potential beneficiaries? To what extent is non-take up a choice or due to non-awareness of the instrument?

<sup>267</sup> EQ 2.3: To what extent were the organisational arrangements, including management and control systems at all levels, conducive to the effectiveness of operations? Is there gold plating? Were the procedures for reporting and monitoring timely and efficient?

<sup>268</sup> EQ 2.4: How visible are ESF funded operations under TO9?

### **Question 3 - Relevance: How relevant are the ESF operations under Thematic Objective 9?**

**Conclusion 8 EQ 3.1**<sup>269</sup>: ESF support to social inclusion were aligned with the needs of target groups in most OPs at the planning stage. Relevance often increased from planning to implementation, which in most cases reflects a further definition of target groups whilst operations were being shaped further through implementation. In terms of target groups reached, ESF support to social inclusion reached a high share of Roma and ethnic minorities as compared with the general population and other Thematic Objectives of the ESF. ESF support to social inclusion also reached a high share of persons with a disability as compared with other Thematic Objectives. However, ESF support to social inclusion performed less well as compared with other Thematic Objectives in reaching disadvantaged populations in rural areas.

**Conclusion 9 EQ 3.2 (EQ 1.3)**<sup>270</sup>: The OPs overall identified the most relevant target groups at the design stage, given the socio-economic context. The highest levels of funding were allocated to economically less favourable regions, although these regions may have had a somewhat lower absorption capacity. Evidence as to whether ESF support to social inclusion reached the most vulnerable populations with the greatest needs is mixed due to the challenges in identifying these groups with the existing monitoring indicators. **Conclusion 10 EQ 3.2**<sup>271</sup>: The high level of involvement of different partners in the programming and implementation phases was in line with the "partnership principle" and helped to further enhance the relevance and effectiveness of TO9.

**Conclusion 11 EQ 3.3**<sup>272</sup>: The OPs were sufficiently flexible to be adapted to socio-economic and policy changes. Operations financed under TO9 addressing social inclusion and anti-discrimination issues were relevant in 2014 and are still relevant in the current socio-economic context. The flexibility of OPs allowed Member States to deal with unexpected shifts in the socio-economic context, such as the 2015 refugee crisis.

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<sup>269</sup> EQ 3.1: Were the objectives and the operations funded by the ESF relevant to the needs of target groups? How were the different target groups prioritised and the actions tailored to their specific needs? Were the most important needs of these groups addressed?

<sup>270</sup> EQ 1.3 Effectiveness: How were relevant national strategies and policy contexts and challenges translated into operations?; EQ 3.2: Were the most relevant groups, in the different socio-economic contexts, targeted starting from the design stage? How was the partnership and multi-level governance implemented?

<sup>271</sup> EQ 3.2: Were the most relevant groups, in the different socio-economic contexts, targeted starting from the design stage? How was the partnership and multi-level governance implemented?

<sup>272</sup> EQ 3.3: To what extent were OPs flexible and able to adapt to changes in the implementation context or political priorities?

**Question 4 - Coherence: How coherent are the operations funded by Thematic Objective 9 among themselves and with other actions in the same field?**

**Conclusion 12 EQ 4.1<sup>273</sup>:** ESF support to social inclusion in the Member States was found to be aligned with the overall EU policy framework on social inclusion. However, few references were made to EU policies for specific target groups (e.g. Roma and persons with a disability) while in practice these target groups were frequently addressed by TO9 operations.

**Conclusion 13 EQ 4.2<sup>274</sup>:** ESF support to social inclusion has a high potential overlap with TO8 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility (up to 55% of recorded participations) and TO11 - Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration (up to 18% of recorded participations). Actions that could have been programmed under other TOs may have been programmed under TO9 to meet the requirement that Member States allocate at least 20% of ESF funds to TO9.

**Conclusion 14 EQ 4.2<sup>275</sup>:** Actual overlaps between TO9 operations and other TOs of the ESF are likely to be lower due to the different target groups addressed and the more holistic approach taken under TO9. A larger share of participations for ESF support to social inclusion were for persons with a disability, Roma and ethnic minorities as well as persons with low education as compared with TO8 and TO10.

**Conclusion 15 EQ 4.3<sup>276</sup>:** The use of ESF with other EU funds was identified in 10 Member States, the most common EU fund being the ERDF. While strong complementarities are evident between examples of OPs that draw on ESF and other EU funds, the complexities involved in the implementation of multi-fund OPs imply delays in implementation.

**Conclusion 16 EQ 4.4<sup>277</sup>:** ESF support to social inclusion was responsive to the Country-Specific Recommendations that were relevant for social inclusion. A full alignment between the Country Specific Recommendations and the types of operations carried out with the support of ESF support to social inclusion was noted in 21 Member States. Gaps in alignment between the Country Specific Recommendations and the types of social inclusion operations were noted in the remaining seven Member States.

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<sup>273</sup> EQ 4.1: Were ESF interventions in line with EU policies on social inclusion?

<sup>274</sup> EQ 4.2: Were the ESF operations of TO9 complementary with each other and with interventions under other Thematic Objectives (TOs)? What were the main factors in this regard?

<sup>275</sup> EQ 4.2: Were the ESF operations of TO9 complementary with each other and with interventions under other Thematic Objectives (TOs)? What were the main factors in this regard?

<sup>276</sup> EQ 4.3: To what extent were ESF operations of TO9 complementary and coherent with other EU funding instruments such as ERDF, EARD, EaSI, FEAD or AMIF?

<sup>277</sup> EQ 4.4: To which extent are the investments under TO9 consistent with the analyses and priorities identified in the context of the European Semester notably in the Country Reports, the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) and the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs)?

**Question 5 - EU-added value: What is the EU added value of the ESF-funded operations in the field of social inclusion, combating poverty and anti-discrimination?**

**Conclusion 17 EQ 5.1**<sup>278</sup>: ESF support to social inclusion played a pivotal role in funding social inclusion policies that complement national efforts in 22 Member States. Other areas of EU added value were identified in the remaining six Member States. There are concerns about the long-term sustainability of operations when funded primarily through ESF. E

**Conclusion 18 EQ 5.2**<sup>279</sup>: ESF support to social inclusion widened the support to target groups that would have not been supported otherwise in 17 Member States such as Roma children and children with special educational needs, people with disabilities, persons facing housing exclusion and refugees.

**Conclusion 19 EQ 5.3**<sup>280</sup>: ESF support to social inclusion supported the enhancement of existing national frameworks (e.g. through the establishment of monitoring and coordination mechanisms, design and implementation of integrated approaches to combat social exclusion), and allowed for testing of new partnerships and piloting innovative actions in 24 Member States.

**Conclusion 20 EQ 5.4**<sup>281</sup>: ESF support to social inclusion improved the administrative capacity and knowledge in the design and delivery of services promoting social inclusion in 18 Member States.

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<sup>278</sup> EQ 5.1: Volume effects: Have the operations added to existing actions or directly produced beneficial effects that can be measured in terms of volume?

<sup>279</sup> EQ 5.2: Scope effects: Have the operations broadened existing actions by addressing groups or policy areas that would otherwise not have been addressed?

<sup>280</sup> EQ 5.3: Role effects: Have the operations supported innovation and the transfer of ideas that have been subsequently rolled out in different contexts? To what extent has the ESF contributed to structural changes in national systems promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination?

<sup>281</sup> EQ 5.4: Process effects: Have Member State administrations and participating organisations derived benefits from being involved in the operations?

## 7. GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The evaluation identified a number of good practices and lessons learned concerning the design and implementation of ESF support to social inclusion. These are organised in relation to the evaluation criteria below.

### 7.1. Effectiveness

Good practices were identified in the review of success factors that promoted the effectiveness of TO9 operations (see reply to EQ 1.5, Section 0) and the review of soft outcomes (see reply to EQ 1.4, see Section 0).

**Partnerships and engagement at the local level.** A high level of cross-sectoral cooperation at regional and local level was especially important in the delivery of integrated support through the 'one-stop-shop' approach. For example, in the Netherlands (2014NL05SFOP001), partnerships united stakeholders with a common shared purpose and led to better service provision. In Spain (2014ES05SFOP012), the participation of large and medium-sized NGOs promoted the effective outreach to the target group.

*Lesson learned: Building cross-sectoral partnerships can facilitate effective engagement with the target group.*

**'Hard' outcomes and creaming.** The monitoring of 'hard' outcomes, in particular when targets are set, may incentivise beneficiaries to select participants who are more likely to generate the desired result rather than the participants who are most need the intervention (an effect known as 'creaming'). Monitoring of soft outcomes is critical to be able to identify and reflect the important results generated by ESF support to social inclusion (or social inclusion operations in general). Those few Managing Authorities which examined and evaluated the soft outcomes of their OPs were able to identify important effects such as increases in self-confidence and inter-personal skills, which are fundamental first steps to get vulnerable groups closer to the labour market.

*Lesson learned: If possible, the assessment of soft outcomes should be built into the monitoring and evaluation framework of social inclusion operations.*

**Individualised, continuous support.** ESF support to social inclusion that is individualised and follows the programme participant over time is likely to have a greater impact. For example, in Austria (2014AT05SFOP001), participants found it useful to have a dedicated person to turn to at any time. This hands-on approach also helped the project to realise at an early stage that the level of competencies of participants in core areas like literacy was initially overestimated, while the speed of integration as underestimated. In Italy (2014IT05FOP004) the commitment and availability of the tutors throughout the course helped participants to overcome personal challenges they faced during the course. However, the lack of support and follow-up after the course hampered the effectiveness of the intervention. In Hungary (2014HU05M20P001, the educational requirements of personnel were reduced to increase the ratio of social workers to clients, but this had the unintended effect of limiting the capacity of personnel to support clients in a sufficiently personalised way. In Italy (2014IT05FOP004), an intervention was co-designed with participants and tailored to their needs.

*Lessons learned: Providing sufficient time and personalised support for the target group is crucial to ensure their needs are met and to generate the desired results. The provision of personalised support is costly and requires more intense training and*

*capacity building of providers. A participatory approach to designing and implementing social inclusion interventions can also promote individualised support.*

**Multi-level partnerships in implementing integrated actions.** Although the governance of multi-partner relationships can be challenging due to different interests and higher transaction costs, the cooperation between different actors had a positive effect on effectiveness of ESF operations, in particular for Type 4 operations that seek to promote access to services. In the Spanish 'Haz Solar' project (2014ES05SFOP021), the cooperation between organisations with different skills and expertise was a key success factor to effectively implement the project and ensure the successful labour market integration of participants. The partnership included two social enterprises with the objective of employing persons in vulnerable situations: El Zaguan and IMENA; the NGO CEAR specialised in supporting asylum seekers; and ECOOO, an SME specialised in design and installation of photovoltaic projects.

*Lesson learned: Cross-sectoral partnerships that address the multiple drivers of social exclusion and discrimination can promote the overall journey of vulnerable groups towards social inclusion.*

## **7.2. Efficiency**

Good practices were identified in the review of organisational arrangements in ESF support to social inclusion in the replies to EQ 2.2 and 2.3 (see Sections 0 and 0).

**Promoting information-sharing and building the technical and organisational capacity of potential beneficiaries.** Managing Authorities should invest efforts into engaging new beneficiaries, for example through information sessions, awareness-raising campaigns, information platforms, helpdesks or other forms of technical support, and promoting the publications of calls for proposals as has been done in several Member States including Austria, Belgium, Lithuania and Italy<sup>282</sup>. They should also seek to limit, where possible, the administrative burden. These efforts should be intensified for small and local organisations.

Awareness raising and building capacity can promote the take-up of ESF support to social inclusion, in particular among small and local organisations. It is important to plan and implement ad-hoc technical support and training for local authorities and beneficiaries in general in the early stages of the programme. Various good practices in terms of training sessions, task forces, and hoc support and helpdesks to support beneficiaries were identified in the evaluation.

*Lesson learned: Clear and practical guidelines for potential beneficiaries as well as direct communications through interactive platforms can promote awareness and take-up of ESF support to social inclusion.*

**Raising the visibility of ESF.** The visual identity requirements for the ESF may not be sufficient to promote awareness of ESF among target groups and the general public. An evaluation from the Tuscany region of Italy found that more dissemination activities through traditional channels (press, television and radio) and social media were needed<sup>283</sup>.

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<sup>282</sup> For specific examples, please see the reply to EQ 2.2.

<sup>283</sup> IRPET, 2017. Knowledge of the European Social Fund by the Tuscan citizens.

*Lesson learned:* Enhancing dissemination and information activities for the general public as well as awareness raising activities among target groups in the Member States can promote the visibility of the ESF.

**Implementing streamlined and simplified procedures.** The use of Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) helps to reduce reporting requirements and improve legal certainty. In the Netherlands (2014NL05SFOP001), SCOs allowed for easier administration of activities that could reach a large number of participants, such as case management. However, SCOs did not improve efficiency in all projects, in particular when projects consisted of multiple components, dealt with unpredictable caseloads or experienced difficulties in linking activities with outcomes.

*Lesson learned:* Simplified Cost Options have the potential to increase take-up of ESF funds and lower administrative burden for beneficiaries. They can be more challenging to implement for more complex interventions.

### **7.3. Relevance**

Good practices were identified in the review of targeting and partnerships in the in the reply to EQ 3.2 (see Sections 0 and 0). The EU-level Delphi survey also identified lessons learned in relation to COVID-19 pandemic: while the pandemic did not fall within the reference period of the evaluation, it has important implications for the ESF and social policy in the EU.

**Identification of and outreach to intended target groups.** In Bulgaria (2014BG05M20P001), the project hired mediators from the neighbourhood community to smoothen the communication between the teachers, parents and children. They had the trust of the ethnic minority group and managed to address the concerns of the parents. In the second year of implementation of the project, the recruitment of the participants from the vulnerable groups was easier as the parents from ethnic communities were already acquainted with the process and were satisfied with the results their children were achieving.

“The final concert in the Opera house was very moving, you could see how proud the parents were of their children. The children were citing or singing in Bulgarian – something that most of the parents did not believe could happen with their children. So, from parents who initially were reluctant to take their child to a pre-school, they started recommending the project to others in the neighbourhood. They also participated in the parents’ meetings. One could see their parental capacity increasing.”

Interview with a Managing Authority Regional coordinator, Bulgaria

In Italy (2014IT05FOP001) the outreach activities (i.e. the mobile units, social services and health services, mailbox open to citizens) were particularly effective in identifying and reaching people in extreme marginalised conditions and in need of either urgent or more long-term support. The mailbox was also particularly effective in engaging the citizens and involve them in the project.

*Lesson learned:* More inclusive partnerships and outreach strategies could lead to greater relevance of projects and more effective recruitment of participants.

**The COVID-19 pandemic reinforces the critical importance of EU support vulnerable persons.** Participants to the EU-level Delphi survey<sup>284</sup> noted that ESF funds for social inclusion should not be diverted away when the economic recession sets in. More people are expected to be marginalised and in a vulnerable situation. Locality has become increasingly important and for the local delivery of social, health and educational services. Participants identified several lessons learned to inform the next programming period.

*Lesson learned: Social economy and social entrepreneurship interventions should be supported more intensively to ensure an effective response to social needs at the local level. ESF support to social inclusion should be strengthened to meet target group needs in terms of mental health, social protection, resilience against increasing poverty, inequalities and lack of opportunities for social mobility. The flexibility of shared management under ESF should also be reinforced.*

#### **7.4. Coherence**

Good practices were identified in the review of complementarity of ESF support to social inclusion with other TOs (reply to EQ 4.2, Section □) and with other EU funds (reply to EQ 4.3).

**Supporting new target groups.** ESF support to social inclusion can be distinguished from other TOs primarily in terms of the target groups reached. For example, in Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001), the primary objective of the project 'Integration of persons with disability or mental disorders in labour market and society' was to provide persons with severe disabilities or persons with mental health issues with the necessary skills to enter the labour market. Other labour market-oriented operations in Latvia were not considered to be suitable for this target group because they required more comprehensive and tailored support.

*Lesson learned: ESF support to social inclusion has the potential to successfully engage with target groups which may not be addressed otherwise, and can help them get closer to the labour market.*

**Integrating support with other EU funds.** ESF support to social inclusion has strong complementarities with ERDF and FEAD. For example, in Italy (2014IT05SFOP001), a project that aimed to support people experiencing homelessness drew on both ESF support to social inclusion and FEAD funding in a complementary manner. FEAD funding was for instance used to buy personal items such as toiletries and new cloths (rather than second-hand clothes) while TO9 funded a range of outreach activities, including mobile services, day-to-day support and counselling aimed at the development of soft-skills (e.g. self-care skills, interpersonal and communication skills), as well as psychological support and various social activities with residents in the neighbourhoods (e.g. language workshops, crafting).

*Lesson learned: Other EU funds can complement ESF support to social inclusion and enhance synergies, but this requires strong coordination and clear roles and responsibilities to promote the 'simultaneous' implementation of multiple funding streams.*

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<sup>284</sup> Annex 6.1 – EU-level Delphi survey findings.

## **ANNEXES**

## ANNEX 1 – SYNTHESIS OF NATIONAL EVALUATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY OF LITERATURE REVIEWED

This section presents a synthesis of key findings from national evaluations of ESF TO9 operations. It presents the methodology to identify key findings from relevant national ESF evaluations. It then presents the key findings by evaluation criterion.

### Methodology

The sample of national evaluations was mainly drawn from an evaluation library of the European Commission.<sup>285</sup> The study team applied several search criteria to identify published evaluations from the library that were relevant for the evaluation. The search criteria included:

- European Social Fund;
- 2014-2020 programming period; and
- Thematic Objective 9.

In total, 125 national evaluations were identified by the research team that met the three criteria above. Each was reviewed more closely (by reviewing the country and OP name) to determine if the evaluation was of an OP that fell either solely or partly under Thematic Objective 9. This review was conducted in an Excel spreadsheet which included several criteria to determine the relevance of each national evaluation. These criteria included reference to an OP that planned for TO9 operations (the list of the 145 OPs is presented in Annex 4) and/or social inclusion. Several evaluations that were not relevant for TO9 were discarded, which reduced the number of evaluations to 114. These evaluations included impact/result orientated evaluations, monitoring/ progress-oriented evaluations and process/ implementation-oriented evaluations.

The reports for these 114 evaluations were distributed to the country experts who reviewed them as part of their desk research that concluded by November 2019. The country experts identified six additional evaluations through their research that had not been published in the European Commission portal in July 2019. Country experts reviewed the relevance of each evaluation from their country and, for those deemed relevant, extracted and summarised key findings for their country-based analyses. Specifically, country experts searched within each evaluation from their respective country for information that could be used to answer the evaluation questions for assessing the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and added value of ESF TO9. Findings from each relevant evaluation were shared with the study team, who then developed a synthesis by evaluation criterion, drawing on the information provided by the national experts.

In total, 40 national evaluations from 16 Member States were identified as being relevant by the national experts for the overall study and are reflected in the synthesis. The countries covered by these evaluations include: CY, CZ, DK, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, NL, PL, SI, UK.

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<sup>285</sup>Commission website where national evaluations are uploaded:

[https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/)

## Key findings from national evaluations by evaluation criterion

The findings of the identified national evaluations were summarised by five evaluation criteria of the Better Regulation guidelines (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value).

### Effectiveness

A number of evaluations from Member States pointed at a high level of effectiveness of ESF T09 related operations.

**Several evaluations drew attention to result targets being met or being exceeded, also noting positive soft outcomes.** For example, the evaluation of the Communities for Work (CfW) programme in OP West Wales & the Valley ESF 2014-2020 and OP East Wales ESF 2014-2020 (2014UK05SFOP001 and 2014UK05SFOP002 respectively) has shown positive results, including soft outcomes.<sup>286</sup> The CfW was designed to respond to the Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Action Plan. This specifically targets long-term unemployed and economically inactive adults, young people between 16 to 24 years old, who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs). The Communities for Work (CfW) programme seeks to increase employability of the target groups or guide them closer to employment.<sup>287</sup> According to the evaluation, the proportion of participants progressing into jobs exceeded the programme's benchmark level, across participants from nearly every target group by a considerable margin, e.g. those aged 55 or over, those with no or low qualifications and individuals with an ethnic minority background. The evaluation also point to positive effects upon wider aspects of participants' lives in terms of their sense of well-being and resilience in addressing their barriers to employment.<sup>288</sup> In addition, the evaluation point to 'the time available and flexibility of the support provided by CfW as a distinct advantage over mainstream employability provision.'<sup>289</sup> Specifically, this refers to the time input of the

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<sup>286</sup> Welsh Government (2018). *Evaluation of Communities for Work - Stage 3: Emerging Outcomes and Impacts Report*. [online] Welsh Government. Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-06/evaluation-of-communities-for-work-stage-3-emerging-outcomes-and-impacts-report.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>287</sup> Welsh Government (2018). *Evaluation of Communities for Work - Stage 3: Emerging Outcomes and Impacts Report*. [online] Welsh Government. Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-06/evaluation-of-communities-for-work-stage-3-emerging-outcomes-and-impacts-report.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>288</sup> Welsh Government (2018). *Evaluation of Communities for Work - Stage 3: Emerging Outcomes and Impacts Report Summary*. [online] Welsh Government. Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-06/evaluation-of-communities-for-work-stage-3-emerging-outcomes-and-impacts-report-summary.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>289</sup> Welsh Government (2018). *Evaluation of Communities for Work - Stage 3: Emerging Outcomes and Impacts Report Summary*. [online] Welsh Government. Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-06/evaluation-of-communities-for-work-stage-3-emerging-outcomes-and-impacts-report-summary.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

programme's specialist youth and adult mentors, employment advisers and social workers, who all work in community settings with individual participants.

The 'Parents, Childcare and Employment' (PaCE) is another project implemented in Wales under OP West Wales & the Valleys ESF 2014-2020 and OP East Wales ESF 2014-2020 (2014UK05SFOP001 and 2014UK05SFOP002 respectively), designed to tackle poverty through sustainable employment.<sup>290</sup> Specifically, the aim of PaCE is to provide individual support to unemployed parents for whom lack of childcare has been identified as a main barrier to employment and/or training.<sup>291</sup> The evaluation suggests, the project has substantially exceeded its target in terms of helping participants progress into work—helping 34% of all participants compared to the target of 20%.<sup>292</sup> It identified a correlation 'between the engagements achieved per adviser in a month and the outcomes per adviser delivered within a month', reflecting the critical role of advisers in engaging, motivating and supporting participants.<sup>293</sup> PaCE also had wider effects on participants, which included: (i) increased confidence; (ii) feeling a greater sense of purpose and fulfilment and associated self-reported improved mental health; (iii) reduction in their sense of isolation and improved social life; (iv) feeling that they are a good role model for their children and able to instil in them a strong work ethic.<sup>294</sup>

The independent evaluation of Le Chéile, a project funded under ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020 (2014IE05M9OP001) has shown a range of positive impacts for young people and parents who engage with the service. Specifically, for young people engagement with Le Chéile mentoring programme resulted in 'reduction in alcohol and substance misuse, improved self-confidence,

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<sup>290</sup> Welsh Government, (2018). *Evaluation of the Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) Project: process and outputs evaluation*. [online] Welsh Government. Available at: <https://gov.wales/evaluation-parents-childcare-and-employment-pace-project-process-and-outputs-evaluation> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>291</sup> Welsh Government (2018). *Evaluation of Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) Report Summary*. [online] Welsh Government. Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-01/evaluation-of-the-parents-childcare-and-employment-project-process-and-outputs-evaluation-summary.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>292</sup> Welsh Government (2018). *Evaluation of Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE)*. [online] Welsh Government. Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-01/evaluation-of-the-parents-childcare-and-employment-project-process-and-outputs-evaluation.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>293</sup> Welsh Government (2018). *Evaluation of Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE)*. [online] Welsh Government. Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-01/evaluation-of-the-parents-childcare-and-employment-project-process-and-outputs-evaluation.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>294</sup> Welsh Government (2018). *Evaluation of Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE)*. [online] Welsh Government. Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-01/evaluation-of-the-parents-childcare-and-employment-project-process-and-outputs-evaluation.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

greater hopefulness and happiness, greater participation in structured activities, outside the home, greater participation in work, education and training, improved interpersonal relationships and communication skills, reduced association with negative peers, and reduced offending behaviour'.<sup>295</sup> Specifically, participation in the programme resulted in young people reducing their offending behaviour by an average of 28%, with positive social and economic impact implications. At the same time, the programme yielded positive outcomes for the participants' parents, by improving their self-confidence, self-esteem, and emotional well-being. The project also enhanced their parenting skills and the child-parent relationship, as well as increasing their involvement in activities outside the home.<sup>296</sup> Overall, the evaluation of Le Chéile concluded that 'the programme generated a substantial social return on investment, with the returns spanning improved family and peer relations, increased involvement in activities, greater engagement in work, education and training, reduced offending and re-offending, reduced detention and reduced health costs'.<sup>297</sup>

In Slovenia the PUM-O programme, financed under the social inclusions and poverty reduction axis (OP 2014SI16MAOP001) targeted young people aged 15-26 with the aim of supporting their labour market integration. The programme yielded positive results in terms of hard and soft outcomes– 25% of participants entered employment after the programme. In addition, increased self-esteem and self-image were considered the most beneficial impact of the programme.<sup>298</sup>

Within the OP ESF Nordrhein-Westfalen 2014-2020 (2014DE05SFOP010), the evaluation report for the *Schritt für Schritt – Brücken bauen* pilot project, points to success in reaching and engaging its target population, i.e. recipients of 'basic security benefits for jobseekers'<sup>299</sup> (so-called SGB II households) furthest from the labour

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<sup>295</sup> O'Dwyer, K. (2017). *Reducing Youth Crime in Ireland: An Evaluation of Le Chéile Mentoring*. [online] Le Cheile. Available at: <https://www.lecheile.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Reducing-Youth-Crime-in-Ireland-An-Evaluation-of-Le-Cheile-Mentoring-Full-Report.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>296</sup> O'Dwyer, K. (2017). *Reducing Youth Crime in Ireland: An Evaluation of Le Chéile Mentoring*. [online] Le Cheile. Available at: <https://www.lecheile.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Reducing-Youth-Crime-in-Ireland-An-Evaluation-of-Le-Cheile-Mentoring-Full-Report.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>297</sup> O'Dwyer, K. (2017). *Reducing Youth Crime in Ireland: An Evaluation of Le Chéile Mentoring*. [online] Le Cheile. Available at: <https://www.lecheile.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Reducing-Youth-Crime-in-Ireland-An-Evaluation-of-Le-Cheile-Mentoring-Full-Report.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>298</sup> Deloitte (2019). *Evaluation of the Learning of Young Adults Programme in Slovenia*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/SIE14.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>299</sup> Federal Employment Agency (2017). *Unemployment Benefit II / Social Assistance Basic Security - Benefits for Jobseekers - SGB II*. [online] European Commission. Available at: [https://www.kreis-lup.de/export/sites/LUP/.galleries/PDF-LUP1/PDF-FD16/Ausfuellhinweise\\_Merkblaetter-ALG-II-mehrsprachig/ALG-II-englisch.pdf](https://www.kreis-lup.de/export/sites/LUP/.galleries/PDF-LUP1/PDF-FD16/Ausfuellhinweise_Merkblaetter-ALG-II-mehrsprachig/ALG-II-englisch.pdf) [Accessed July 2019]

market.<sup>300</sup> Applying the 'peer-to-peer concept' and using guidance from professional coaches, the project sought to improve the social participation, engagement with services and employability of the long-term unemployed.<sup>301</sup>

Also, as part of the OP in the region of Murcia (2014ES05SFOP003), projects based on the well-tested and effective *Lanzaderas*<sup>302</sup> methodology, which follows a co-operative society model (in this case a team of twenty long-term unemployed volunteers, self-organise under the guidance of a professional coach) were also evaluated as leading to improved soft outcomes. These outcomes include higher personal satisfaction and motivation, improved aptitudes and attitudes for job search and employment, as well as enhanced employability.<sup>303</sup> The ESF also had a positive effect on the increasing number of participants that entities can help.

National evaluations in the Netherlands in relation to its National OP ESF 2014-2020 (2014NL05SFOP001) also point to positive results. For example, initial evaluation results for its operation in 2014-2015 showed that 27% of disadvantaged participants secured a job after their participation in an ESF programme.<sup>304</sup> In general, national evaluations show that ESF funding has both increased the intensity of support – quality effect – and its coverage in terms of reaching and helping a larger target group – volume effect.

The meta-analysis of evaluations assessing ESF support in Poland in relation to OP Knowledge, Education, Development 2014-2020 (2014PL05M9OP001) reported on the positive results of day care homes (9iv) including improvements in (i) physical and/or mental health (e.g. of participants); (ii) family relationships; and (iii) work-life balance.<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> IAW Institute for Applied Economic Research at the University of Tübingen (2018). *Evaluation and monitoring of the ESF-model project 'Schritt für Schritt - Brücken bauen'*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/DEE56.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>301</sup> IAW Institute for Applied Economic Research at the University of Tübingen, (2018). Evaluation and Monitoring of the ESF Pilot Project 'Schritt für Schritt - Brücken bauen' (Step by Step - Building Bridges). [online] IAW. Available at: <http://www.iaw.edu/index.php/-310/evaluation-und-monitoring-des-esf-finanzierten-modellprojektes-schritt-fuer-schritt-bruecken-bauen> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>302</sup> Fundación Santa María la Real & Fundación Telefónica, (n.d.). [online]. Available at: <http://www.lanzaderasdeempleo.es/> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>303</sup> Fundación Santa María la Real & Fundación Telefónica (2015). *Evaluation of the social impact of Employment Shuttles*. [online] Fundación Telefónica. Available at: [http://www.fundaciontelefonica.com/arte\\_cultura/publicaciones-listado/pagina-item-publicaciones/itempubli/486/](http://www.fundaciontelefonica.com/arte_cultura/publicaciones-listado/pagina-item-publicaciones/itempubli/486/) [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>304</sup> Agency of Social Affairs and Employment (2016). *ESF in the Netherlands - Active Inclusion Fact sheet*. [online] CBS Netherlands. Available at: <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/background/2016/24/fact-sheet-esf-in-the-netherlands-> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>305</sup> European Commission (2019). *Synthesis Report of ESF 2018 Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs), Final report*. [online] European Commission. Available at:

France also registers positive results in relation to ESF interventions in the field of poverty and social inclusion – delivered as part of National OP ESF Employment and Social Inclusion 2014-2020 (2014FR05SFOP001). For example, according to the impact evaluation of the Axis 3 (corresponding to TO9) of the National OP, the ESF had a positive impact on the participants. Particularly, 37% of the those participating in Axis 3 of the National OP have a positive exit within four weeks after completion. Among these individuals, 14% were in sustainable employment, 6% in temporary employment, 7% in paid employment, 4% in self-employment and 6% are in training. The results vary according to level of implementation and type of authorities. The highest results are achieved by the *Plans locaux pluriannuels pour l'insertion et l'emploi* (PLIEs), indicating 49% positive output and 36% sustainable employment, followed by *départements* (35%), and *Pôle emploi* (French PES, 30%).<sup>306</sup>

In Germany, a number of ESF evaluations have shown positive results as regards TO9. In relation to the OP in Sachsen-Anhalt (2014DE05SFOP013), the ESF-supported measure *Aktive Eingliederung von Zielgruppen* ('Active labour market measures for target groups', e.g. the long-term unemployed) allows for better identification and targeting of different vulnerable groups, with close cooperation among various relevant stakeholders at local level.<sup>307</sup>

The evaluation report of the OP Baden-Württemberg ESF 2014-2020 (2014DE05SFOP003) indicates 'soft' positive outcomes, in relation to its implementation. This assessment is based on the high satisfaction of people and organisations involved in the delivery of ESF measures. According to the report, the region-based approach to design and delivery of ESF measures helped identify and address the needs of participants on the ground.<sup>308</sup>

A mid-term evaluation of integration measures for newly arrived migrants financed by the Estonian OP (2014EE16M3OP001) showed that participants improved their language skills and their general knowledge of the Estonian society and culture. Participants were satisfied with the service received and would recommend the activities.<sup>309</sup>

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<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8248&type=2&furtherPubs=no> [Accessed September 2019]

<sup>306</sup> Amnyos-Edater (2019). *Analysis of the contribution of the ESF National OP to the EU 2020 strategy*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/FRE57.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>307</sup> Ramboll & Chilehaus, C. (2018). *Evaluation of two measures financed by Sachsen-Anhalt OP*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/DEE59.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>308</sup> ISG Institute for Social Research and Social Policy GmbH (2018). *Evaluation of the implementation of the Baden-Württemberg ESF OP 2014-2020*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/DEE60.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>309</sup> CIVITTA (2019). *Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the ESF adaptation and integration*. [online] European Commission. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/) [Accessed July 2019]

**However, not all OPs achieved their expected results.** For example, the evaluation of the service voucher (*Buono servizio*) for vulnerable people in the Piemonte region, as part of OP Piemonte ESF 2014-2020 (2014IT05SFOP013), showed that the majority of the beneficiaries (75%) benefitted from counselling and active job seeking (first treatment). Just over a third also benefitted from a job placement through an apprenticeship (second treatment) but very few (up to 1.5%) secured an actual job contract (third treatment). A comparative analysis of results achieved indicate that, interventions (e.g. counselling and support with job seeking) that induce change in the participants' behaviour or attitude yields most successful results.<sup>310</sup>

**Other evaluations also pointed at the overall positive effects of the ESF operations on reducing social exclusion, in particular of those considered hard to reach or living in the most disadvantaged areas.** The mid-term evaluation of Ireland's Operational Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020<sup>311</sup> (2014IE05M9OP001) showed results achieved to date for projects and programmes relevant to ESF TO9. Programmes such as the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP),<sup>312</sup> (both SICAP 2015-2017<sup>313</sup> and its successor SICAP 2018-2022) represent a strong component of Ireland's social inclusion and community development strategy. Since its launch in April 2015, SICAP proved to have a unique strength in addressing severe and persistent social deprivation, especially poverty and multiple disadvantage. As the PEIL mid-term evaluation highlights, SICAP's model of delivery 'facilitates precise targeting, intensive and multi-dimensional support and focuses on both individuals and groups within target communities'.<sup>314</sup> It also

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<sup>310</sup> Pomatto, G. (2018). *The implementation of job vouchers under the Piemonte ESF OP 2014-2020*. [online] European Commission. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/posters2019/it\\_poster1.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/posters2019/it_poster1.pdf) [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>311</sup> Government of Ireland (2018). *Mid-term evaluation of the Employability, Inclusion and Learning ESF OP in Ireland*. [online] ESF Ireland. Available at: <https://www.esf.ie/en/information-centre/evaluation/evaluation-reports/peil%20mte%20and%20yei%20evaluation.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>312</sup> Pobal (n.d.). *Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018 – 2022*. [online] Pobal. Available at: <https://www.pobal.ie/programmes/social-inclusion-and-community-activation-programme-sicap-2018-2022/> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>313</sup> SICAP 2015-2017 had an overall budget of 100m euros and supported over 110,000 individuals on a one-to-one basis as well as over 5,000 community groups – See Government of Ireland (2018). *Mid-term evaluation of the Employability, Inclusion and Learning ESF OP in Ireland*. [online] ESF Ireland. Available at: <https://www.esf.ie/en/information-centre/evaluation/evaluation-reports/peil%20mte%20and%20yei%20evaluation.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>314</sup> Government of Ireland (2018). *Mid-term evaluation of the Employability, Inclusion and Learning ESF OP in Ireland*. [online] ESF Ireland. Available at: <https://www.esf.ie/en/information-centre/evaluation/evaluation-reports/peil%20mte%20and%20yei%20evaluation.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

engaged a high volume of vulnerable people (110,044 individuals on a one-to-one basis between 2015 to 2017) and achieved low unit costs.<sup>315</sup>

Similarly, the Youthreach has been effective in contributing to the sustainable integration of young people into the labour market and in promoting interagency to better cater to the complex and multiple needs of its target groups. The Irish programme under OP ESF 2014-2020 (2014IE05M9OP001), targeted early school leavers and young people with more complex needs such as lone parents, young people from jobless households and travellers. The 2019 national evaluation of Youthreach shows positive outcomes in terms of learning and educational achievements of participants relative to non-participants, as well as the higher propensity of the former to progress to further education or to employment.<sup>316</sup> At the same time, the evaluation also positively assessed the level of flexibility in individual centres to respond to learner needs.

**Evaluations also highlighted positive results in terms of strengthening services to support social inclusion.** For example, the 'Housing first' model implemented under Axis 3 (Social inclusion) of the NATIONAL OP Metropolitan Cities 2014-2020 (2014IT16M2OP004) in Italy has been quite effective in identifying a number of specific target groups in need of housing services and accompanying measures across its different pilots.<sup>317</sup> The evaluation of these pilots – presented in the evaluation of the NATIONAL OP Metropolitan – shows positive results for participants in terms of reduced need for access to emergency rooms, improved health outcomes (e.g. mental health), reduced incidence of minor crimes, etc. This is in line with a more recent report about the implementation of the 'Housing first' model across the EU, including Italy. This showed that this model – which provides a stable home combined with intensive, person-centred and holistic support – has contributed to ending homelessness among an average of 80% of people with high and complex needs and among 90% of this group across Italy ('housing sustainment').<sup>318</sup> Housing First is being delivered through the Housing First Italia network, a collaboration between service providers,

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<sup>315</sup> Government of Ireland (2018). *Mid-term evaluation of the Employability, Inclusion and Learning ESF OP in Ireland*. [online] ESF Ireland. Available at: <https://www.esf.ie/en/information-centre/evaluation/evaluation-reports/peil%20mte%20and%20yei%20evaluation.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>316</sup> ESRI (2019). *Evaluation of the National Youthreach Programme*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://www.solas.ie/SolasPdfLibrary/Youthreach%20Evaluation%20Final%20June%202019.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>317</sup> These target groups included: migrants and/or people with a migrant background, ethnic minority groups such as Roma, people discharged from hospitals, people with psycho-social problems, ex-offenders, people with substance abuse problems (addictions), LGBT people marginalised by families and communities, low-income families, workless families, single parents, families unable to pay housing costs due to financial difficulties from recent loss of work, low income levels or other temporary obstacles, etc..

<sup>318</sup> Housing First, Europe Hub (2019). *Housing First in Europe - An Overview of Implementation, Strategy and Fidelity*. [online] Housing First Europe. Available at: [https://housingfirsteurope.eu/assets/files/2019/10/2019-10-10-HFinEurope\\_Full-Report2019\\_final.pdf](https://housingfirsteurope.eu/assets/files/2019/10/2019-10-10-HFinEurope_Full-Report2019_final.pdf) [Accessed July 2019]

municipalities and academics, operating under fio.PSD (the federation of Italian homelessness organisations).<sup>319</sup> As has been argued, partnership between service providers, municipalities and universities bring together professionals in service delivery with those in evaluation. This type of partnership also has the potential to enhance capacity as regards the integrated and effective delivery of Housing First. They can also collect, analyse and evaluate relevant data to build a robust evidence base demonstrating impact.<sup>320</sup>

Another area where ESF has been used widely in Italy concerns the provision of affordable and quality childcare services. An evaluation of the OP ESF Toscana (2014IT05SFOP015) assessed the measures supporting access to childcare services under Axis B (Social inclusion). These measures sought to a) increase female employment through improved work-life balance measures and equal opportunities; and b) fight poverty by engaging children from an early age and guaranteeing access to good quality childcare services.<sup>321</sup> The evaluation concluded that the measures increased the provision of childcare services in the area, thus enhancing families' access to this type of services. The measures yielded positive results and increased the proportion of children who accessed childcare services in the territory. Specifically, the proportion of children under three years of age who access childcare services was 36%, beyond the Barcelona target of 33%. There is also anecdotal evidence that these measures had a positive impact on female employment.<sup>322</sup>

**A few evaluations also pointed at obstacles with regards to funding continuity, overall level of funding and how funding was distributed.** Both the 2019 Housing First across the EU Report and the evaluation of Axes 3 (Social inclusion) of the Italian NATIONAL OP Metropolitan highlight the lack of human and financial resources as the main factors hindering the implementation and sustainability of the 'Housing first' action.<sup>323</sup> For example, Italy, is one of the countries reporting the lowest level of funding

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<sup>319</sup> Consoli, T. et al. (2016). *The Italian Network for Implementing the "Housing First" Approach*. [online] European Journal of Homelessness. Available at: [https://www.feantsaresearch.org/download/10-1\\_article\\_46549812314095159059.pdf](https://www.feantsaresearch.org/download/10-1_article_46549812314095159059.pdf) [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>320</sup> Housing First, Europe Hub (2019). *Housing First in Europe - An Overview of Implementation, Strategy and Fidelity*. [online] Housing First Europe. Available at: [https://housingfirsteurope.eu/assets/files/2019/10/2019-10-10-HFinEurope\\_Full-Report2019\\_final.pdf](https://housingfirsteurope.eu/assets/files/2019/10/2019-10-10-HFinEurope_Full-Report2019_final.pdf) [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>321</sup> ValueDo S.r.l. (2018). *Evaluation of the implementation of Axis B childcare services in the Toscana ESF OP 2014-2020*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE31.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>322</sup> IRPET (2017). *Interim evaluation of the Toscana ESF OP 2014-2020*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE27.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>323</sup> Amnyos-Edater (2017). *Monitoring and evaluation of the ESF and YEI OPs 2014-2020*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/FRE22.pdf>; INVITALIA (2018). *Analysis of measures to support housing access funded by the OP Metropolitan Cities in Italy*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE33.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

reliability as regards Housing First, mostly due to the fact that its pilots are often funded on one-off basis through EU funding schemes such as the ESF. As has been argued, 'time-limited funding to pilot projects has in several cases prevented the necessary commitment to offer continuous support to clients, enabling only time-limited support'.<sup>324</sup> The level and continuity of funding were also singled out as a challenge in the relevant evaluation. As it pointed out, although the costs of the Housing First type of services are proportionately lower than keeping homeless people in dormitories, the costs of providing long-term support are high. This, in turn, necessitates either an increase in funding or the removal of current participants from the programme to make way for new homeless participants. Finally, according to the same evaluation, the social stigma towards vulnerable groups such as the homeless is another hindering factor in so far as landlords in some cases refuse to accept them as tenants, even when the programme guarantees the regular rent payment.<sup>325</sup>

The interim evaluation of the OP ESF Campania (2014IT05SFOP020) reported a significant amount of resources under Axis 2 (Social inclusion) planned to support innovative social services for vulnerable people at risk of social exclusion, young people in custody, victims of extortion, etc.. The levels of these combined resources were deemed by the evaluator as insufficient in relation to the needs emerging from the analysis of the socio-economic context. Specifically, the instruments used, and the timing of implementation showed limited capacity to bring about the appropriate level of change in the condition of the target groups.

The meta-analysis of evaluations assessing ESF support in Poland in relation to OP Knowledge, Education, Development 2014-2020 (2014PL05M9OP001) concludes that ESF support has been accurate and useful, yet disproportionately small in comparison to existing needs in relation to poverty and social inclusion. As argued, this usually reflects that the scale of needs in the country is much larger than the ESF funding assigned to relevant interventions.<sup>326</sup>

An European Parliament report on beneficiaries' experience during the 2014- 2020 funding period suggest, result-oriented funding mechanisms limit the potential of ESF. Specifically, when funds depend on results achieved in terms of recruitment of participants, beneficiaries concentrate on designing 'conservative' and small-scale projects to ensure results are achieved.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Housing First, Europe Hub (2019). *Housing First in Europe - An Overview of Implementation, Strategy and Fidelity*. [online] Housing First Europe. Available at: [https://housingfirsteurope.eu/assets/files/2019/10/2019-10-10-HFinEurope\\_Full-Report2019\\_final.pdf](https://housingfirsteurope.eu/assets/files/2019/10/2019-10-10-HFinEurope_Full-Report2019_final.pdf) [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>325</sup> INVITALIA (2018). *Analysis of measures to support housing access funded by the OP Metropolitan Cities in Italy*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE33.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>326</sup> Bieńkowska et al. (2018). *Meta-analysis of evaluations assessing ESF support in Poland (2018 edition)*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/PLE198.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>327</sup> European Parliament (2018). *The European Social Fund: Beneficiaries' Experience in the Current Funding Period*. [online] European Commission. Available at:

**Other evaluations highlighted obstacles related to effectiveness due to a lack of proper targeting of measures, and challenges related to management.** The evaluation of the OP Lombardia ESF 2014-2020 (2014IT05SFOP007), found that impact on gender and equal opportunities was limited. This is because the programme did not include specific measures targeting gender issues, rather women simply participated in the activities offered. In addition, the programme has a lower proportion of women participating in social inclusion measures under Axis 2 (TO9) such as measures targeting people with disabilities (where there is multiple and intersectional discrimination linked to gender and disability) and measures targeting marginalised communities. On the other hand, there is a higher proportion of women in measures on work-life balance and access to childcare services.<sup>328</sup>

The interim evaluation of OP Lombardia ESF 2014-2020 (2014IT05SFOP007) also highlighted specific issues in the implementation of two integrated projects in the area of Milan: a 'social labs' (*laboratorio sociale*) and social inclusion activities through an accredited training provider. The main factors which hindered the effectiveness of these projects related to the following: (i) the decision to appoint the communes as intermediary body with little knowledge of management of ESF funds; and (ii) the complex management of projects funded through multiple funds (ESF, ERDF and regional funds of Italy), each of which often have different rules. For example, both ESF and ERDF are managed by different managing authorities and have different eligibility rules.<sup>329</sup>

An evaluation of measures financed by the OP ESF Sachsen-Anhalt 2014-2020 (2014DE05SFOP013) in Germany point to administrative hurdles, including frequent turnover of job centre staff, which hinder long- term cooperation between family integration case workers and job centre employees. As a result, the case workers must promote specific projects repeatedly to sensitize the job centre employees to work with the target group. In doing so, case workers can coordinate the case work accordingly and use the range of services offered by the job centre.<sup>330</sup> However, cooperation with job centres has improved compared to the previous funding period. Specifically, there has been improvement in terms of attracting participants and integrating financial services from the job centre.<sup>331</sup>

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[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL\\_STU\(2018\)626052](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL_STU(2018)626052) [Accessed September 2019]

<sup>328</sup> IRS- COGEA (2018). *Annual Evaluation report on the Lombardia ESF OP for 2017*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE54.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>329</sup> IRS- COGEA (2018). *Annual Evaluation report on the Lombardia ESF OP for 2017*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE54.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>330</sup> Ramboll & Chilehaus, C. (2018). *Evaluation of two measures financed by Sachsen-Anhalt OP*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/DEE59.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>331</sup> Ramboll & Chilehaus, C. (2018). *Evaluation of two measures financed by Sachsen-Anhalt OP*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/DEE59.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

The EU Structural Funds Investments OP for 2014-2020 (2014LT16MAOP001) in Lithuania point to some weaknesses. First, partner organisations involved in planning and implementing EU funds are often not selected in a transparent and consistent manner. Also, public interest organisations are often involved only at certain stages of the partnership process. As a result, such organisations are not able to grasp the entirety of the decision-making process and were unable to provide timely input.<sup>332</sup>

ESF evaluations in Spain also highlighted a number of challenges. For example, the mid-term evaluation relating to the OP Social inclusion and social economy (POISES) ESF 2014-2020 (2014ES05SFOP012) – published in 2017 and referring to the period up to 31 December 2016 – reports that 90% of entities encountered difficulties in the OP implementation, mainly due to lack of information about the system of simplified cost options (CSOs), management and understanding of the indicators.<sup>333</sup>

The interim evaluation of OP ESF Trento (2014IT05SFOP018)<sup>334</sup> also attributed delays to a lack of experience of those responsible for the implementation (in this case the social services department of the region).

**A few evaluations drew attention to the need to improve monitoring and evaluation systems and processes, to allow for a reliable assessment of effectiveness.** In Denmark, the mid-term evaluation of the OP Education and Entrepreneurship 2014-2020 (2014DK05SFOP001) pointed to the need to develop better indicators. Specifically, the evaluation proposed to define up to two project-specific 'outcome indicators' to measure the accumulative outcome of the planned project activities. This relates to the need to measure the 'distance travelled' in terms of progress made by the most marginalised and furthest from the labour market, for whom entry into employment may not be realistic in the short-term. The current system of ESF indicators do not seem to allow for the measurement of soft outcomes such as improved confidence, self-esteem, (emotional) resilience and motivation that can count towards the participants' progress in term of distance travelled. However, such progress is very important especially for those hardest-to-reach and facing multiple barriers to labour market and social integration. The mid-term evaluation also pointed to the need for greater flexibility and freedom in the way the ESF-supported interventions are delivered to the most vulnerable groups, as this could increase the effectiveness of such interventions. This in turn could be linked with more specific project-based indicators.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> UAB "Visionary Analytics" (2019). *Evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of Training financed by the ESF in Lithuania*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/LTE29.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>333</sup> KPMG (2017). *Mid-term Evaluation of the ESF Social inclusion and social economy OP 2014-2020 in Spain*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ESE89.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>334</sup> Vergani, Alberto (2017). *Interim Evaluation of Trento ESF OP*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE28.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>335</sup> COWI (2019). *Mid-term evaluation of the ESF 2014-2020 in Denmark*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/DKE13.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

Similar points about ESF-related indicators are made in Lithuania.<sup>336</sup> For example, as the Evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of training financed by the ESF (2014LT16MAOP001) highlighted, the relevance of the indicators envisaged in the training priority measures is relatively low.<sup>337</sup> Specifically, the current indicators do not adequately cover all dimensions that can affect participants' engagement in training and associated learning outcomes. As with most other priority measures, there is little measurement of whether participants have acquired new competences or applied them in practice. Due to the specific nature of certain training objectives (e.g. the need to improve participants' social skills), these cannot be measured in formal or universal terms. However, as suggested, evaluations of participants' learning, and behavioural outcomes should be given more prominence at project level. Nevertheless, another ESF-related evaluation also highlighted the need for caution as every data requirement set at a project level creates an administrative burden in an already cumbersome system.<sup>338</sup>

Likewise, the Evaluation of EU Financial instruments in Lithuania (2014LT16MAOP001) pointed to the need for a better and more relevant measurement system and set of indicators.<sup>339</sup> For example, the current system is rather limited to measuring 'intermediate outcomes' (e.g. measuring the change in the number of people who feel they are responsible for their own health, but not assessing whether their health has actually improved).

The evaluation of OP ESF Toscana (2014IT05SFOP015) also reported that, the absence of an indicator linking impact of its measures around childcare services on work-life balance and female employment, it was not possible to assess their actual achievements.<sup>340</sup>

The evaluation report of the OP Baden-Württemberg ESF 2014-2020 (2014DE05SFOP003) also highlights some data and methodological issues pertinent to evaluation. As it points out, the German official statistics cannot address the complex problems of measuring multidimensional deprivation as relevant statistics are subject to strict privacy rules.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> UAB "VG Consult" (2017). *Evaluation of Financial instruments in Lithuania*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/LTE23.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>337</sup> UAB "Visionary Analytics" (2019). *Evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of Training financed by the ESF in Lithuania*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/LTE29.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>338</sup> ESTEP (2018) Evaluation of Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) funded during the 2014-2020 period in Lithuania. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/LTE25.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>339</sup> UAB "VG Consult" (2017). *Evaluation of Financial instruments in Lithuania*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/LTE23.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>340</sup> ValueDo S.r.l. (2018). *Evaluation of the implementation of Axis B childcare services in the Toscana ESF OP 2014-2020*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE31.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>341</sup> ISG Institute for Social Research and Social Policy GmbH (2018). *Evaluation of the implementation of the Baden-Württemberg ESF OP 2014-2020*. [online] European

In France the risk audits carried out throughout the programming period to accompany the managing authority to monitor closely whether targets of the national OPs (2014FR05SFOP001<sup>342</sup> and 2014FR05M9OP001<sup>343</sup>) are achieved, highlighted that one of the difficulties to monitor the implementation has to do with the timely introduction of data on participants into the central management tool. Late supply of participant data also impacted on precise forecasts on delivery of targets foreseen under the national OPs. Auditors highlighted the need to closely follow up on the entry of data to avoid imprecise data to assess the performance. However, this risk was impossible to fully mitigate by the end of the programming period.

### **Efficiency**

The information on the efficiency of ESF TO9 interventions available in the ESF evaluations is, as expected, quite varied and not always clearly presented. Moreover, there is a considerable data gap in the evaluations reviewed. For example, in Cyprus both the 2017 and 2018 Evaluation reports of the OP Employment Human Capital and Social Cohesion (2014CY05M9OP001) state that the implementation of Priority Axis 3 (TO9) has progressed sufficiently, to allow a broad assessment of efficiency.<sup>344</sup> However, assessment of efficiency or cost effectiveness of specific investment priorities was not possible due to gaps in data.<sup>345</sup>

**Most evaluations focussed on unit costs, in terms of cost per person or per activity, with most suggesting that operations are overall cost-effective.** For example, in Italy, the evaluation of the NATIONAL OP Metropolitan Cities 2014-2020 (2014IT16M2OP004) reports that services provided under 'Housing first' action were

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Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/DEE60.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>342</sup> Amnyos-Edater (2016). *Overall analysis and audit of the monitoring system of the National ESF Program*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/FRE24.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]; Conseil, Itinere (2018). *Analysis of the performance of the ESF OP in France*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/FRE47.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>343</sup> Amnyos-Edater (2016). *Overall analysis and audit of the monitoring system of the National ESF Program*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/FRE24.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>344</sup> REMACO SA, ETAM SA (2017) *Evaluation of OP Employment Human Capital and Social Cohesion*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/CYE6.pdf>; REMACO SA, ETAM SA (2018). *Evaluation Report 2017 on the Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion OP in Cyprus*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/CYE8.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>345</sup> REMACO SA, ETAM SA (2017) *Evaluation of OP Employment Human Capital and Social Cohesion*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/CYE6.pdf>; REMACO SA, ETAM SA (2018). *Evaluation Report 2017 on the Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion OP in Cyprus*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/CYE8.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

cost effective. In Bologna, the cost of one person participating in the programme (including support for housing and accompanying services) was 8,500 euros per year as compared with the cost of 8,000 euros per year to keep one homeless person in a dormitory (homeless hostel, emergency accommodation etc.).<sup>346</sup>

In France, the efficiency analysis was focused on integration measures, which are central in the priorities of Axis 3 of the NATIONAL OP (2014FR05SFOP001).<sup>347</sup> These relate to operations corresponding to Specific Objective 1, representing 83% of the planned EU funding and 96% of the participants in axis 3. The results relate only to return to employment and not to other results such as access to training or the removal of socio-economic barriers. To estimate the total cost of support per person (re)entering employment, a simulation model was used. The calculations were done based on the unit costs of integration and the rates of return to employment, specific to each form of integration. According to this model's results, for the subgroup targeted,<sup>348</sup> an average cost of 2,924 euros per person accompanied by employment was estimated, while the estimate ranged from 1,800 to 4,000 euros depending on the person. The departments, which cover 57% of the beneficiaries have a cost of 2,600 euros per person. The overall support provided by Pôle emploi (French PES) amounts to 2,800 euros per person. The evaluation indicates that, this analysis provides only partial results of an integration action, as it is necessary to consider the quality and sustainability of employment when calculating efficiency.<sup>349</sup>

The mid-term evaluation of Denmark's OP Education and Entrepreneurship 2014-2020 (2014DK05SFOP001) does not provide data about the efficiency of ESF operations. Although it includes data about cost per participant for ongoing projects. The evaluation shows strong variations in cost according to the objectives set under different types of ESF TO9 interventions.<sup>350</sup> For example, the calculated median cost is just over 7, 000 euros for each participant in education or in formal training immediately after

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<sup>346</sup> INVITALIA (2018). *Analysis of measures to support housing access funded by the OP Metropolitan Cities in Italy*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE33.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>347</sup> Amnyos-Edater (2019). *Evaluation of the impact of the National ESF Program on the fight against poverty and promoting inclusion (Axis 3)*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/FRE55.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>348</sup> This includes: the unemployed and inactive (ISCED level 0-2), with at least one of the following characteristics: beneficiary of a social minimum benefit, in a single-parent family, of foreign origin. This subgroup represents 62% of the beneficiaries of Axis 3. An indicator for this subgroup was constructed for the simulation model

<sup>349</sup> Amnyos-Edater (2019). *Evaluation of the impact of the National ESF Program on the fight against poverty and promoting inclusion (Axis 3)*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/FRE55.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>350</sup> COWI (2019). *Mid-term evaluation of the ESF 2014-2020 in Denmark*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/DKE13.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

participation. However, the cost per participant reaches over 9, 000 euros for employment related interventions.<sup>351</sup>

In Ireland, the mid-term evaluation of its OP Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020 (2014IE05M9OP001) generally found that the costs of social inclusion measures compared reasonably to other interventions with a similar intensity duration and activities. For example, it found that the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 'engages high volumes of people and achieves a low unit cost per case'. However, as regards Ireland's flagship education, training, and work programme for early school leavers, Youthreach, 'the unit costs or provision are high in the context of the PEIL programme but reflective of the nature of the initiative'.<sup>352</sup> Interventions programmed under both IP9i and IP9iii (covering all T09 activities in Ireland) show similar variation in unit costs, reflecting underlying differences in the goals and operational features of the initiatives. The unit costs generally compare well to the annual costs of social welfare for adults or young people not in education or employment (NEETs). The evaluation also noted the cost efficiency of interventions, in relation to social welfare, health, criminal justice, or other areas.

In Germany, the evaluation of the literacy project as part of the Operationelles Programm für den Europäischen Sozialfonds des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt 2014-2020 (2014DE05SFOP013) concludes that the project, while resulting in quite significant and positive changes for both implementing institutions and participants, has been resource intensive as reflected in high unit costs.<sup>353</sup>

**A few evaluations considered value for money and return on investment.** The recent evaluation of Youthreach stated that the relatively high unit costs of programme provision must be set against the very high costs for individuals, and for society as a whole, of early school leaving. These costs are very significant in monetary terms but also have important consequences for social inclusion and wellbeing. This indicate value for money for the State, in terms of investment in second-chance education for vulnerable young people.<sup>354</sup>

Likewise, the evaluation of Ireland's ESF-supported nationwide mentoring service, Le Chéile which is funded under ESF Programme for Employability Inclusion and Learning

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<sup>351</sup> COWI (2019). *Mid-term evaluation of the ESF 2014-2020 in Denmark*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/DKE13.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>352</sup> Government of Ireland (2018). *Mid-term evaluation of the Employability, Inclusion and Learning ESF OP in Ireland*. [online] ESF Ireland. Available at: <https://www.esf.ie/en/information-centre/evaluation/evaluation-reports/peil%20mte%20and%20yei%20evaluation.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>353</sup> ESRI (2019). *Evaluation of the National Youthreach Programme*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://www.solas.ie/SolasPdfLibrary/Youthreach%20Evaluation%20Final%20June%2020019.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>354</sup> ESRI (2019). *Evaluation of the National Youthreach Programme*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://www.solas.ie/SolasPdfLibrary/Youthreach%20Evaluation%20Final%20June%2020019.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014IE05M9OP001) has shown excellent value for money. Specifically, 'for every 1 euro the national government and EU invest in Le Chéile, there is an impressive return of 4.35 euros'.<sup>355</sup>

**Others highlighted the higher costs associated with innovation.** In the Netherlands, according to the interim evaluation of OP ESF 2014-2020 (2014NLO5SFOP001), activities with a high perceived administrative burden generally are less cost-effective and often less implemented. For example, fewer projects used job brokers to identify eligible placements – an initially planned activity that would be used by local authorities and schools involved in special secondary educations for children with physical or learning disabilities (VSO schools) or basic vocational training (PRO schools).<sup>356</sup> This activity was discarded, as it is difficult to link such brokerage efforts to specific participants and outcomes. In other words, the complex task of administration and accountability in relation to such measures act as a deterrent for implementing such activities.

Innovative projects are also considered less cost-effective and the risk associated with such projects form a barrier for implementing them. As the report underlines, uncertainty of outcomes and the potential for additional administrative burden deter beneficiaries to introduce innovative elements.<sup>357</sup> According to the same evaluation, it is too early to gauge whether the resources invested in ESF TO9 are proportionate to the results achieved, as only preliminary results are available. However, based on these results and its close alignment with the policy and socio-economic context, ESF TO9 funding appears to have been well-spent.<sup>358</sup>

An evaluation of NATIONAL OP Employment and Social Inclusion ESF 2014-2020 (2014FR05SFOP001)<sup>359</sup> indicate difficulty for small structures, to initially mobilise the ESF activities because of the technical and financial constraints. Specifically, these inherent constraints relate to the preparation of applications such as the requirement

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<sup>355</sup> O'Dwyer, K. (2017). *Reducing Youth Crime in Ireland: An Evaluation of Le Chéile Mentoring*. [online] Le Cheile. Available at: <https://www.lecheile.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Reducing-Youth-Crime-in-Ireland-An-Evaluation-of-Le-Cheile-Mentoring-Full-Report.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>356</sup> Bureau Bartels B.V. (2016). *Interim Evaluation of the implementation and execution of the initial phase of ESF Active Inclusion 2014-2020*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/NLE2.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>357</sup> Bureau Bartels B.V. (2016). *Interim Evaluation of the implementation and execution of the initial phase of ESF Active Inclusion 2014-2020*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/NLE2.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>358</sup> Bureau Bartels B.V. (2016). *Interim Evaluation of the implementation and execution of the initial phase of ESF Active Inclusion 2014-2020*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/NLE2.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>359</sup> Amnyos-Edater (2016). *Overall analysis and audit of the monitoring system of the National ESF Program*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/FRE24.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

for a stable legal status and significant cash flow funds. These constraints have been reinforced in the programming, despite the introduction of simplified cost options. Especially, socially innovative projects in the initial stages find it difficult to mobilise ESF operations, due to technical and financial constraints associated with eligibility rules, such as the requirement to have significant cash funds.

**Several evaluations reported on the high administrative burden of the ESF.** A factor widely recognised as hindering the efficiency of ESF TO9 implementation in Italy relates to the associated administrative requirements. This often involves introducing separate or additional criteria for calculating costs, when methods used in existing EU or national schemes with similar types of operation or beneficiaries, can be utilised. In addition to the necessary capacity of both public administrations and beneficiaries, the dedicated e-platforms are often too complex and rigid. To this end, a recent study reported the steps taken in Italy to reduce the beneficiaries' administrative burden and increase capacity of public administrations.<sup>360</sup> In the programming period 2014-2020, the setting up of the digital information system to integrate and centralise all information flow from beneficiaries at national and regional level (Management, Certification and Audit authorities) will be completed.

Italy has also drawn up operational strategies – Plans for Administrative Reinforcement (*Piani di Rafforzamento Amministrativo (PRAs)*) – to strengthen the ESF management capacity of administrations in charge of OPs. The new Italian approach to reducing ESF-related administrative burden includes actions funded under TO11 which implements the strategy for 'Strengthening the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and an efficient public administration'. The strategy has three main strands: (i) the digitisation of the entire management and control system in the Italian territory; the introduction of simplified cost options (SCOs); and the support actions to beneficiaries (through help desks, seminars, workshops etc).<sup>361</sup>

A recent European Commission report highlighted that the Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) used in relation to social innovation is not adequate and should be tailored to social innovation. The use of standard costs is not suitable for the peculiarity and complexity of social innovation initiatives, which are by nature non-standard and make it difficult to manage SCOs. Therefore, as the report concluded, SCOs better tailored to social innovation projects should be developed.<sup>362</sup>

The Mid Term Evaluation of the Irish OP ESF 2014-2020 (2014IE05M9OP001) drew attention to concerns regarding ESF-related administrative requirements. For example,

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<sup>360</sup> European Parliament (2018). *The European Social Fund: Beneficiaries' Experience in the Current Funding Period*. [online] European Parliament. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL\\_STU\(2018\)626052](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL_STU(2018)626052) [Accessed September 2019]

<sup>361</sup> European Parliament (2018). *The European Social Fund: Beneficiaries' Experience in the Current Funding Period*. [online] European Parliament. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL\\_STU\(2018\)626052](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL_STU(2018)626052) [Accessed September 2019]

<sup>362</sup> European Commission (2018). *The ESF support to Social Innovation, ESF Thematic Report*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3fc20b5e-6df0-11e8-9483-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> [Accessed July 2019]

requirement related to legal, regulatory, financial, technical and audit obligations and processes associated with ESF programming often dominate management tasks. Consequently, the significant amount of effort to fulfil administrative requirements divert attention away from the policy relevance and added value of ESF.<sup>363</sup>

**In terms of visibility of ESF funded operations under TO9, results were mixed. Most OPs appear to have been successful in raising awareness and attracting 'new' beneficiaries, but a few failed to engage with those that they aimed to reach.** In Czech Republic, the evaluation of the OP Employment (2014CZ05M9OP001) identified the risk of non-fulfilment of target values for some indicators as regards Priority axis 2 (Social Inclusion and Combating Poverty).<sup>364</sup> Specifically, the number of projects aimed at supporting establishment of new social enterprises is currently low. At the same time, meeting the targets relating to SO 2.2.2 (accessibility and efficiency of health services) is also likely to be challenging, as only six projects have been prepared by the Ministry of Health to date.<sup>365</sup> Indeed, as the evaluation stresses, the managing authority should focus on more intense communication with potential beneficiaries in this area so as to increase the number of projects.<sup>366</sup>

Assessment of awareness raising, communication and dissemination activities in relation to ESF TO9, demonstrate variations. For example, the interim evaluation of the OP Lombardia ESF 2014-2020 (2014IT05SFOP007) reported increased activity in relation to information campaigns targeted at citizens, employers and other stakeholders as potential partners and participants, as well as wider dissemination of the results of ESF projects to the public.<sup>367</sup>

On the other hand, a study about the ESF awareness among citizens – as part of the Toscana ESF OP 2014-2020 (2014IT05SFOP015) – pointed to rather limited ESF knowledge among the region's population.<sup>368</sup> As underlined, the use of ESF logos on

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<sup>363</sup> Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants (2018). *Mid-term evaluation of the Employability, Inclusion and Learning ESF OP in Ireland*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/IEE12.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>364</sup> Hope Group (2017). *Strategic evaluation of the relevance of OP Employment in the Czech Republic*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/CZE24.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>365</sup> Hope Group (2017). *Strategic evaluation of the relevance of OP Employment in the Czech Republic*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/CZE24.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>366</sup> Hope Group (2017). *Strategic evaluation of the relevance of OP Employment in the Czech Republic*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/CZE24.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>367</sup> IRS- COGEA (2018). *Annual Evaluation report on the Lombardia ESF OP for 2017*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE54.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>368</sup> IRPET (2017). *Knowledge of the European Social Fund by the Tuscan citizens*. [online] Tuscan Region Italy. Available at: <http://www.regione.toscana.it/documents/10180/13932338/4.2+Rapporto+conosc>

dissemination material was insufficient, rather more dissemination activities through traditional channels (press, TV and radio) and social media were required. To this end, it recommended enhancing dissemination and information activities targeted at the general public as well as awareness raising activities targeting unemployed people, registered with the region's Public Employment Services (PES).<sup>369</sup>

In Spain, the evaluation of the OP Social inclusion and social economy ESF 2014-2020 (POISES) (2014ES05SFOP012) points to an increased use of the Internet and social media for ESF-related dissemination purposes. Accordingly, the most common dissemination channel has been the organization's website. Reportedly, the official website was used by more than 70% of intermediate bodies and beneficiaries, followed by digital media and social networks used by 53% of stakeholders. Among the direct beneficiaries and social enterprises, the use of social network as a dissemination tool stands out. The evaluation also suggests that private entities resort to more innovative communication and recruitment strategies. According to the evaluation, these communication methods should be regarded as good practice, to be replicated by public bodies.<sup>370</sup>

In Luxembourg, the evaluation of the ESF-related communication strategy commissioned by the MA in 2017 – within the context of OP ESF 2014-2020 (2014LU05SFOP001) – conducted a user/stakeholder satisfaction survey concerning the stakeholders' platform which showed a very high satisfaction rate (89.2%).<sup>371</sup> The evaluation emphasized the well visited ESF website, which was revamped by the Managing Authority (MA). The website has been adapted to potential stakeholders who are looking for information on ESF funding possibilities. According to the evaluation of ESF communication report, an overwhelming proportion (80%) of project stakeholders became aware of the ESF funding through the calls for proposals. According to the same report, all final stakeholders reported their satisfaction with the way ESF related information has been communicated in Luxembourg.<sup>372</sup> However, the evaluation emphasized that the ESF communication strategy should target messages for specific

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[Accessed July 2019]

<sup>369</sup> IRPET (2017). *Knowledge of the European Social Fund by the Tuscan citizens*. [online] Tuscan Region Italy. Available at: <http://www.regione.toscana.it/documents/10180/13932338/4.2+Rapporto+conoscenza+Fondo+Sociale+Europeo.pdf/41587156-4765-4550-ba75-ade5fa5c2b87> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>370</sup> KPMG (2017). *Mid-term Evaluation of the ESF Social inclusion and social economy OP 2014-2020 in Spain*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ESE89.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>371</sup> Clement & Weyer Consulting S.à.r.l. (2017). *Communication activities of the ESF from 2015 until 2017*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/LUE1.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>372</sup> Clement & Weyer Consulting S.à.r.l. (2017). *Communication activities of the ESF from 2015 until 2017*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/LUE1.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

users. Often, it is difficult to distinguish messages addressed to the general public as opposed to stakeholders.<sup>373</sup>

A specific recommendation was made in the mid-term evaluation of integration measures for newly arrived migrants financed by the Estonian OP (2014EE16M3OP001). Particularly, it was recommended to prioritise awareness raising activities and to implement an action plan to ensure effective dissemination for the next programming period. Indeed, the evaluation found the lack of awareness of the existence of the activities among target groups as the main reason for not participating.<sup>374</sup>

Meanwhile in France, grassroots associations have very little knowledge of ESF, hence struggle to become involved. Particularly, the CHFE (French Council of Disabled People for European Affairs) clearly highlight this difficulty as evidenced in the evaluation of the NATIONAL OP Employment and Social Inclusion ESF 2014-2020 in France (2014FR05SFOP001; 2014FR05M9OP001). Some of the more successful co-financed projects are often led by network head associations, experienced in the management of European funds. As a result, there are many "dormant" projects from grassroots associations, that often do not engage with ESF due to a lack of information, expertise and means.<sup>375</sup> Yet, the CHFE highlight that ESF funds have been a real financial lever for actors working in the field of disability, complementing national funds and schemes. In particular, ESF funds have supported experimental and innovative schemes to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities, research and modelling initiatives, and actions for the exchange of experience and good practice.<sup>376</sup>

## Relevance

Evaluation from Member States suggests stark variation between countries, as well as between Operational Programmes within countries in regard to the relevance of ESF T09.

**Some Operational Programmes successfully identified target groups that were most in need and showed flexibility to a changing socio-economic context.** In Italy, an evaluation of the OP Metropolitan Cities 2014-2020 (2014IT16M2OP004) suggest that, actions taken under its 'Housing first' model to support access to housing appropriately identified the target groups and their needs. Identification of target groups

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<sup>373</sup> Clement & Weyer Consulting S.à.r.l. (2017). *Communication activities of the ESF from 2015 until 2017*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/LUE1.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>374</sup> CIVITTA (2019). *Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the ESF adaptation and integration*. [online] European Commission. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/) [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>375</sup> Amnyos-Edater (2018). *Analysis of the inclusion of people with disabilities in the national ESF and YEI OPs in France*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/FRE44.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>376</sup> Amnyos-Edater (2018). *Analysis of the inclusion of people with disabilities in the national ESF and YEI OPs in France*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/FRE44.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

were based on two basic elements– either based on their economic conditions (targeting people with a low income and people with employment issues), or based on their psychological, social and health conditions (targeting people in temporary homelessness situation and ‘chronically homeless people’). In both cases, the evaluation found that service provision was strictly relevant to the target groups and their needs. For example, services provided to groups selected based on economic criteria, were given support with housing intermediation and active employment measures. Meanwhile, service provision to groups chosen based on psycho-social and health factors included co-housing services as well as support for improving their mental and physical health.<sup>377</sup>

Similarly, a 2017 evaluation report on the Lombardia ESF OP (2014IT05SFOP007) suggest that, some target groups benefitted from strategies that integrate household support programmes to active labour market measures and psycho-social support measures.<sup>378</sup>

Evaluation of the impact of the National ESF Programme on the fight against poverty and promoting inclusion (2014FR05SFOP001) in France shows that, the target group for Axis 3 was well defined. The evaluation highlights that 62% of the beneficiaries of operations under Axis 3 represent a criterion to assume a situation of precariousness. In addition, the evaluation also highlights that implementing authorities managing calls for proposals made strategical choices to achieve targeted results under the national OP.<sup>379</sup> In France, Axis 3 corresponding to ESF TO9 funding, includes operations aimed at responding to the 5<sup>th</sup> challenge identified under the national OP “strengthen inclusion in order to fight against precariousness and poverty”. The operations targeted all those in a situation of social and professional difficulties. Specifically, referring to unemployed and inactive persons, and persons with disability. This general target group needs to be considered against a list of criteria that indicate potential precariousness on the labour market, such as being a beneficiary of the social minimum benefit, single parents, or migrant background. Hence, unemployed or inactive beneficiary targets should also be included in the criteria of precariousness.

Assessment of the OP Baden-Württemberg ESF 2014-2020 (2014DE05SFOP003) point to continued relevance of its Investment Priorities related to social inclusion. However, additional target groups including long-term unemployed people facing structural barriers have become a priority target group under this Operational Programme, the number of long-term unemployed persons facing such issues has increased.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> INVITALIA (2018). *Analysis of measures to support housing access funded by the OP Metropolitan Cities in Italy*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE33.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>378</sup> IRS- COGEA (2018). *Annual Evaluation report on the Lombardia ESF OP for 2017*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE54.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>379</sup> Amnyos-Edater (2019). *Evaluation of the impact of the National ESF Program on the fight against poverty and promoting inclusion (Axis 3)*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/FRE55.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]; survey among implementing organisations/bodies revealed that 78% made choices to specifically adapt to a more precise target group.

<sup>380</sup> ISG Institute for Social Research and Social Policy GmbH (2018). *Evaluation of the implementation of the Baden-Württemberg ESF OP 2014-2020*. [online] European

In Ireland, the mid-term evaluation of the OP ESF 2014-2020 (2014IE05M9OP001)<sup>381</sup> indicates that, interventions and initiatives under the framework of the Operational Programme remain relevant, despite positive changes in the socio-economic context. Although the economic and labour market conditions improved since the early years, the OP has been consistent in allocating appropriate resources to target the ongoing labour market, social and educational challenges of those socially disadvantaged. Specifically, the OP has dedicated significant amount of resources to eliminate barriers to participation in education, the need for which remain comparably more relevant than support for employment uptake.

The National Reform Programme 2019 report submitted by the Irish Government included similar findings. Over the years, progress has been made towards achieving the Europe 2020 poverty objective, with some room for improvement. In this respect, interventions under ESF TO9 continues to be relevant in Ireland. Specifically, evaluation of the OP ESF 2014-2020 (2014IE05M9OP001) and Youthreach has identified a large number of early leavers, despite a decline in proportion of those in secondary education.<sup>382</sup>

Similarly, an assessment of projects under the OP ESF Active Inclusion 2014-2020 (2014NL05SFOP001) in Netherlands show positive impacts for newly identified target groups. As part of the broader active inclusion objectives, the Operational Programme aims to increase labour market participation by supporting those farthest from the labour market to find and keep a job. Since 2016, refugees with a permanent residence permit have been included as a specific target group within this OP, showing the programme's capacity to adapt to the evolving situation.<sup>383</sup>

A mid-term evaluation of the OP Education and Entrepreneurship 2014-2020 (2014DK05SFOP001) suggests that the 'Erhvervsstyrelsen' the Danish Business Authority has been adaptive to the needs of the target groups. Specifically, projects targeted at the socially excluded or those at risk of social exclusion have been effectively adapting to their needs.<sup>384</sup>

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Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/DEE60.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>381</sup> Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants (2018). *Mid-term evaluation of the Employability, Inclusion and Learning ESF OP in Ireland*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/IEE12.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>382</sup> Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants (2018). *Mid-term evaluation of the Employability, Inclusion and Learning ESF OP in Ireland*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/IEE12.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>383</sup> Bureau Bartels B.V. (2016). *In-depth study ESF Active Inclusion 2014-2020*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/NLE5.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>384</sup> COWI (2019). *Mid-term evaluation of the ESF 2014-2020 in Denmark*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/DKE13.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

In addition, Operations under TO9 in Finland have been relevant for the target groups, evidenced by high levels of participation in projects. The programme managers of the OP in Finland also attest to the flexibility of the Programme. Particularly, they attribute the flexible definition of the target groups as a result of the cooperation between regional Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centres) and their awareness of the local needs in the regions.<sup>385</sup>

The mid-term evaluation of integration measures for newly arrived migrants financed by the Estonian OP (2014EE16M3OP001) reports that 64% of participants considered the actions relevant to their needs and met their expectations. The measures were implemented in response to an increase of migration flow and therefore an increase in needs for services. The measures provided built on the experience of activities previously implemented, thus further improving the tailoring the measures to the needs of the target groups.<sup>386</sup>

**Several OPs were less successful, particularly in determining the needs of specific target groups and the best approaches to address these needs.** The interim evaluation of the OP ESF Campania (2014IT05SFOP020) indicate that, the achievement of the OP was inadequate and not aligned with the critical challenges of the region.<sup>387</sup> Similarly, the Lombardia ESF OP (2014IT05SFOP007) has not delivered any specific interventions to target the need of migrants, citizens with migrant background and minorities (including marginalised communities such as Roma people), despite being planned.<sup>388</sup>

Similarly, an evaluation on the impact of the National ESF Programme (2014FR05SFOP001) in France highlighted that none of the specific objectives of the ESF national OPs specifically targeted persons with disabilities. For instance, people with disabilities in operations supported by the ESF reflect a similar share as those observed in the French working population (6.4% in the ESF OP as against 7%). Also, the share of disabled participants in the total number of unemployed participants accounted for in the ESF OP operations is very close to that of job seekers in France in 2015 (8.8% in

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<sup>385</sup> Study supporting the 2020 Evaluation on the support to promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination by the European Social Fund (Thematic Objective 9)– Finland country evidence report [internal document]

<sup>386</sup> CIVITTA (2019). *Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the ESF adaptation and integration*. [online] European Commission. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/) [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>387</sup> Special Office for Assessment Analysis and Verification of Public Investments (2017). *Interim Evaluation of the Campania ESF OP 2014-2020*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE30.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>388</sup> IRS- COGEA (2018). *Annual Evaluation report on the Lombardia ESF OP for 2017*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE54.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

the ESF OP compared to 8.5% according to Pôle Emploi data).<sup>389</sup> However, operations financed still account for a relatively limited level of support to these target groups.

An evaluation of the OP Employment (2014CZ05M9OP001) in the Czech Republic indicates challenges in terms of designing interventions tailored to the specific concerns of the target group. Evidence point to ongoing relevance of Investment Priorities– social inclusion and fighting poverty – for the identified target group of socially excluded persons and persons at risk of social exclusion, whose numbers have increased significantly. This indicates that, interventions designed under this Operational Programme, specifically for targets groups under social inclusion priorities, need to be further defined to meet their specific needs.<sup>390</sup>

While the OP ESF Active Inclusion 2014-2020 (2014NL05SFOP001) in Netherlands implemented successful interventions for its target groups, not all individuals benefitted equally from interventions. Among all refugee participants, a larger proportion of men achieved positive results with increasing differences between men and women overtime. Similarly, the proportion of men, who are (partly) incapable of work due to disability or illness and are not claiming unemployment benefit, achieving? positive results after completing their participation was larger than that of women.<sup>391</sup> This suggests that, while the interventions are relevant to the needs of the wider target group, more streamlined interventions need to be designed to better tackle the challenges faced by vulnerable women, including refugees or those with disabilities.

**Several evaluations point to examples where partnerships between multiple levels of governance were successfully implemented.** An interim evaluation of the Toscana ESF OP 2014-2020 (2014IT05SFOP015)<sup>392</sup> points to increased relevance of measures, due to a new model of governance involving public sector actors, along with civil society at the local or district level. Enhanced cooperation between public and private actors in addition to direct involvement from local stakeholders allowed for a better targeting of needs of target groups under Axis B Social inclusion (disabled and vulnerable people cared for by social services, children under 3 and people over 65 years) and those defined under multiple Axes (including also Axis B) including unemployed women under 30, young graduates, long-term unemployed, people close to retirement, disabled and disadvantaged people, people recently dismissed from work.

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<sup>389</sup> Amnyos-Edater (2018). *Analysis of the inclusion of people with disabilities in the national ESF and YEI OPs in France*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/FRE44.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>390</sup> Hope Group (2017). *Strategic evaluation of the relevance of OP Employment in the Czech Republic*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/CZE24.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>391</sup> Bureau Bartels B.V. (2016). *In-depth study ESF Active Inclusion 2014-2020*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/NLE5.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>392</sup> IRPET (2017). *Interim evaluation of the Toscana ESF OP 2014-2020*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE27.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

The new integrated model aimed for active inclusion of the target groups through employment and integrated social and health services.<sup>393</sup>

In Lithuania, organisations representing the interests of the public, business, employers and employees have set a positive example of cooperation, in terms of planning and implementing interventions under the OP for EU Structural Funds Investments for 2014-2020 (2014LT16MAOP001)<sup>394</sup>, which has benefited the relevance of the operations. An evaluation on the progress of the Operational Programme indicate strong partnership between Ministries and representatives of different sections of society. Social partners are consulted by public authorities in all stages of the use of EU funds, even when not required by legislation. In addition, partners are empowered to propose and comment on public policy measures, both verbally and in written form.

Operations under TO9 in Finland also suggest strong partnership between various stakeholders. Particularly, the evaluation suggests that the target groups have been carefully identified based on analysis of the social and employment context of Finnish society and cooperation between partners and beneficiaries.<sup>395</sup>

**Other evaluations highlight the complexity of coordinating multiple partnerships among different levels of governing bodies.** For example, the evaluation report on the Lombardia ESF OP (2014IT05SFOP007) published in 2017, suggest that the 'multilevel and integrated governance model' was not initially well implemented. Delays in the implementation of the programme occurred as partners and stakeholders found it difficult to adapt to the new governance model which requires enhanced cooperation between different levels of governing actors.<sup>396</sup>

An evaluation of measures financed by the OP ESF Sachsen-Anhalt 2014-2020 (2014DE05SFOP013) in Germany indicate the need for improvement in partnership between different actors. Particularly, there is no direct relation between economic and social partners and public service personnel. Cooperation between project or family integration case workers and economic and social partners are implemented indirectly through established Working Groups at regional level.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>393</sup> European Commission (2018). *ESF Performance and thematic reports the ESF support to social innovation, Final Report*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3fc20b5e-6df0-11e8-9483-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>394</sup> PPMI Group (2016). *Evaluation of progress in implementing the EU Structural Funds Investments OP*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/LTE12.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>395</sup> Study supporting the 2020 Evaluation on the support to promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination by the European Social Fund (Thematic Objective 9)– Finland country evidence report [internal document]

<sup>396</sup> IRS- COGEA (2018). *Annual Evaluation report on the Lombardia ESF OP for 2017*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE54.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>397</sup> Ramboll & Chilehaus, C. (2018). *Evaluation of two measures financed by Sachsen-Anhalt OP*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/DEE59.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

The mid-term evaluation of integration measures for newly arrived migrants financed by the Estonian OP (2014EE16M3OP001), reported that the cooperation between implementing bodies and service providers was limited to administrative functions such as reporting and written feedback. The evaluation therefore recommended to improve the interaction processes between service providers and ensure a shared understanding of the objectives.<sup>398</sup>

In Slovenia, the evaluation of the PUM-O programme, financed under the social inclusions and poverty reduction axis (OP 2014SI16MAOP001) and targeting young unemployed between 15 and 26 years old, recommended taking steps towards a better coordination and involvement of providers and all stakeholders.<sup>399</sup>

## Coherence

The evaluations of Operational Programmes across Member States suggest variability in regard to coherence between ESF TO9 priorities and measures at EU, national and regional level. A number of the evaluation present similarities in objectives and implementation priorities of different projects within an Operational Programme. Coherence between intervention implemented by different projects ultimately benefit the target group identified under TO9, in meeting their needs. However, lack of cooperation between relevant stakeholders lead to duplication of activities between different projects within an OP or between different Operational Programmes.

**Several evaluations points to high coherence between ESF support to social inclusion and other instruments.** In relation to coherence between Priority Axes, an evaluation of the OP Employment Human Capital and Social Cohesion (2014CY05M9OP001) in Cyprus indicate positive results. The Operational Programme for the 2014- 2020 funding period focused on meeting the relevant development needs as well as the broader national development strategy under Priority Axis 3, which includes Thematic Objective 9. Particularly, the objectives focused on improving the employment opportunities of the workforce, focusing on vulnerable groups, as well as combating poverty and social inclusion with a focus on high-risk groups in poverty and social exclusion. Another objective under Priority Axis 3 aimed to improve the education system, particularly matching labour market demands with available skills. Lastly, Axis 3 aimed to improve the efficiency of public administration. According to the findings of the interim evaluation for the 2014-2020 programming period, the four Priority Axes through which the OP actions are implemented are strongly coherent. Particularly, the actions implemented to achieve the specific objectives of Priority Axis 3 are in strong

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<sup>398</sup> CIVITTA (2019). *Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the ESF adaptation and integration*. [online] European Commission. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/member-states/) [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>399</sup> Deloitte (2019). *Evaluation of the Learning of Young Adults Programme in Slovenia*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/SIE14.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

synergy with NSRF 2014-2020 Priority 2 Financing Strategy, which supports the corresponding Thematic Goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy.<sup>400</sup>

In Poland, ESF support has been deemed consistent with EU and national policies. Initial reporting suggest that support provided to increase the availability of development services hold similar assumptions to those specified in strategic documents at EU and national level, namely Europe 2020 Strategy, Strategy for Responsible Development, Program for new skills and employment, Enterprise Development Program until 2020).<sup>401</sup> There is also positive reports of complementarity between central and regional levels of ESF implementation. Particularly, the OP Knowledge, Education and Development (2014PL05M9OP001) is coherent with Investment Priority (IP) 9b, 'Supporting revitalization in the physical, economic and social sphere of poor communities and urban and rural areas', financed by the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF). However, some challenges exist in terms of ensuring synergy between projects implemented from the ESF and ERDF. Particularly, participants report lack of consistency and legibility of planning calls for proposals interrelated with ESF and ERDF activities or sub-measures.<sup>402</sup>

The Annual Evaluation report on the Lombardia ESF OP (2014IT05SFOP007) in Italy reported a 'medium-high'<sup>403</sup> coherence between objectives and contents of the Operational Programme with instruments and regulations identified at EU, national and regional level. Particularly, the measures in the OP targeted the same issues identified at EU, national and regional level and the measures appeared to be strongly in harmony in terms of achieving similar results. In addition, a qualitative assessment indicated that the potential of the OP to achieve the EU2020 targets is positive, specifically in relation to employment, drop-out rates and tertiary education. The Lombardia region has already achieved the EU2020 targets envisaged for Italy in relation to employment, drop-out rates and tertiary education. Adding to this, the OP should further support the reduction of the population at risk of poverty and social inclusion.<sup>404</sup> The main objectives of the strategy were, inter alia, the promotion of the ESF's image and funding

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<sup>400</sup> REMACO SA, ETAM SA (2018). *Evaluation Report 2017 on the Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion OP in Cyprus*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/CYE8.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>401</sup> Bieńkowska et al. (2018). *Meta-analysis of evaluations assessing ESF support in Poland (2018 edition)*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/PLE198.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>402</sup> Bieńkowska et al. (2018). *Meta-analysis of evaluations assessing ESF support in Poland (2018 edition)*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/PLE198.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>403</sup> IRS- COGEA (2018). *Annual Evaluation report on the Lombardia ESF OP for 2017*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE54.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>404</sup> IIRS- COGEA (2018). *Annual Evaluation report on the Lombardia ESF OP for 2017*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE54.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

opportunities and the provision of information to beneficiaries about the rules and their responsibilities in relation to dissemination of ESF material.<sup>405</sup>

**Other evaluations suggest there are overlaps or duplications of ESF support to social inclusion and other thematic areas, or that linkages and synergies could be better exploited.** An issue was raised by evaluations of investments in 2007-2013 programming period, regarding lack of complementarity between ESF TO9 with other ESF interventions in Lithuania. Addressing this, particular attention was paid when designing specific measures for 2014-2020 programming period. Specifically, the intermediary bodies were asked to assess the extent of complementarity between investment priorities and specific measures with actions financed by EU funds and other resources. This process required detailed responses to questions regarding complementarity, synergies and delimitation of specific measures and priority axes, at the design stage. In addition to this, several meetings were held between intermediary bodies and the Managing authority. Overall, these actions have helped to avoid overlap or duplication of activities under ESF TO9 and with other ESF interventions.<sup>406</sup>

In France, Axis 3 under the national OP corresponding to ESF TO9 has been designed in complementarity to the 2007- 2013 multi-year plan. The objectives of both are to combat poverty and promote inclusion to reduce inequalities, prevent career interruptions, support integration into the labour market and coordinate social action. The "National Plan to Combat Poverty and Promote Inclusion" highlights the relevance of integrated and reinforced pathways, to enable individuals far from the labour market into employment. ESF specific objectives under Axis 3 contribute to finance actions, to create coherent insertion pathways and to the complementarity between actors in this field, to achieve better results for integration of participants. A survey involving managers of ESF management bodies - Evaluation of the impact of the National ESF Programme on the fight against poverty and promoting inclusion (Axis 3)-2014FR05SFOP001, reveals that only 35% of the managers considered this objective as achieved. Implementing organisations believe shared responsibilities in managing the ESF negatively impact synergy and complementarity between the actors, who support insertion of people far from the labour market into employment. This occurs when there is lack of clarity in the management chain and actions of relevant actors are not adequately coordinated. Hence, the coherence of the insertion offer remains an issue for the future.

1 The initial results of the final evaluation - Evaluation of the impact of the National ESF Programme on the fight against poverty and promoting inclusion (Axis 3)-2014FR05SFOP001 – show a lack of coordination between the national OP and the ERDF-ESF operational programs managed by the Regions. According to the survey realised in

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<sup>405</sup> IRS- COGEA (2018). *Annual Evaluation report on the Lombardia ESF OP for 2017*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/ITE54.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>406</sup> Institute of Public Policy and Management and the PPMI UAB Group (2013). *Report on the Evaluation of the Efficiency of the EU Structural Assistance Administration System of the Republic of Lithuania*. [online] Esparama. Available at: [http://www.esparama.lt/es\\_parama\\_pletra/failai/fm/failai/Vertinimas\\_ESSP\\_Nerinas/Ataskaitos\\_2011MVP/ES\\_strukturines\\_paramos\\_administravimo\\_sistemas\\_efe\\_ktyvumo\\_vertinimas.pdf](http://www.esparama.lt/es_parama_pletra/failai/fm/failai/Vertinimas_ESSP_Nerinas/Ataskaitos_2011MVP/ES_strukturines_paramos_administravimo_sistemas_efe_ktyvumo_vertinimas.pdf) [Accessed July 2019]

the framework of this national evaluation, only 20% of the intermediary bodies<sup>407</sup> coordinated their actions..<sup>408</sup>

An interim evaluation of the OP Entrepreneurship and Skills 2014-2020 (2014FI05M2OP001) in Finland, point to the need for early dissemination of good practices in ERDF/ESF funded projects to tap into the seemingly high level of interest in learning from other projects financed by these funds.<sup>409</sup> Meanwhile, an evaluation of the OP Employment (2014CZ05M9OP001) in Czechia indicate that further efforts are required to set up complementary linkages. In this respect, only minor formal reformulations of two linkages have been recommended. However, complementary linkages on ESIF programmes or EU tools have not been identified. In order to create better synergy between actions under the Operational Programme, better communication has been identified as key, between various public administrators of national fund specifically, in relation to activities supporting young people (SO 1.1.2) within the OP.<sup>410</sup>

### **EU added value**

Several evaluations across Member States suggest added value of ESF TO9 interventions in terms of reinforcing national priorities, identifying and addressing the needs of additional disadvantaged groups, contributing to innovative approaches as well as, enhancing capacity of service delivery to aid vulnerable groups.

**Interventions under ESF TO9 added value to national priorities.** For instance, evaluation of the National OP ESF 2014-2020 (2014NL05SFOP001) in the Netherlands suggest ESF funding improved the quality of service provision and made it possible to reach a wider target group.<sup>411</sup> In addition, the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) funded under Ireland's Operational Programme for

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<sup>407</sup> To implement the Axis 3 there are 120 intermediary bodies and managing bodies that organise call for proposals to award the specific beneficiary. These intermediary bodies are known as PLIE – Plans Locaux pour l'Insertion et l'Emploi (Local Plans for Integration and Employment) and CDs – Conseil départementales (Departmental Council).

<sup>408</sup> Amnyos-Edater (2019). *Evaluation of the impact of the National ESF Program on the fight against poverty and promoting inclusion (Axis 3)*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/FRE55.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>409</sup> Teräs et al. (2019). *Åland Structural Funds Program 2014-2020 – The evaluators' second interim report*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/FIE6.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>410</sup> Hope Group (2017). *Strategic evaluation of the relevance of OP Employment in the Czech Republic*. [online] European Commission. Available at: <http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/CZE24.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>411</sup> Agency of Social Affairs and Employment (2016). *ESF in the Netherlands - Active Inclusion Fact sheet*. [online] CBS Netherlands. Available at: <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/background/2016/24/fact-sheet-esf-in-the-netherlands-> [Accessed July 2019]

Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020 (2014IE05M9OP001), is a significant part of the social inclusion and community development strategy in the country. The programme particularly showed great strength in addressing individuals stricken by poverty and multiple disadvantages.<sup>412</sup>

**ESF TO9 funding benefitted additional target groups and encouraged innovation in service delivery.** An assessment of the OP in Sachsen-Anhalt (2014DE05SFOP013) in Germany indicate that the 'Active labour market measures for target groups' initiative funded by ESF, led to more effective identification and targeting of various vulnerable groups.<sup>413</sup> Also evaluation of Ireland's Operational Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020 (2014IE05M9OP001) indicate, the new model of service delivery (under the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme) led to more targeted, effective and multi-faceted support.<sup>414</sup>

**ESF TO9 played a major role in introducing innovative approaches.** For example, ESF support towards social innovation in Finland, as part of the OP Sustainable growth and jobs 2014-2020(2014FI16M2OP001), allowed the development of a new integration plan, creating a more open society for migrants. Also, a case study on the OP Brandenburg ESF 2014-2020 (2014DE05SFOP006) in Germany indicate, innovative approaches have been made possible by ESF funding. Specifically, ESF resources contributed to the social integration of people who are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market and threatened by social exclusion and poverty.<sup>415</sup> Within OP ESF Sachsen-Anhalt 2014-2020 (2014DE05SFOP013), a number of ESF measures are aimed at social integration of ex-offenders. Particularly, these measures are designed to prevent criminality, often using social innovation approaches to prevent long-term unemployment and poverty. In that regard, these projects adopted a holistic approach targeted not only at prisoners but also their families. Assessment of individual projects identify two innovations in the way interventions are implemented to enhance their effectiveness– improvements in the person-centred and holistic approaches to counselling and welfare service delivery; improvements in locally managed approaches and greater empowerment of participants.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> Pobal (n.d.). *Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018 – 2022*. [online] Pobal. Available at:<https://www.pobal.ie/programmes/social-inclusion-and-community-activation-programme-sicap-2018-2022/> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>413</sup> Ramboll & Chilehaus, C. (2018). *Evaluation of two measures financed by Sachsen-Anhalt OP*. [online] European Commission. Available at:  
<http://files.evaluationhelpdesk.eu/DEE59.pdf> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>414</sup> Pobal (n.d.). *Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018 – 2022*. [online] Pobal. Available at:<https://www.pobal.ie/programmes/social-inclusion-and-community-activation-programme-sicap-2018-2022/> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>415</sup> European Commission (2018). *The ESF support to Social Innovation, ESF Thematic Report*. [online] European Commission. Available at:  
<https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3fc20b5e-6df0-11e8-9483-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> [Accessed July 2019]

<sup>416</sup> Ramboll (2018). *Contribution of the ESF-funding to enhance integration of particularly disadvantaged people*. [online] European Commission. Available at:

An evaluation of the ESF and YEI OPs 2014-2020, (2014FR05SFOP001) in France found that socially innovative operations accounted for 10% of the operations programmed in 2017.<sup>417</sup> The report highlights three types of socially innovative approaches. First, a circular economy approach with an inclusion component. Second, a "territorial social innovation" operation including access to local services in landlocked territories, social innovation research operations in the coordination frameworks, governance of the integration offer and the engineering of integration pathways with a view to renewing the offer. Lastly, the financing of programs such as social business incubators and support programs such as "Activity and Employment Cooperatives", the structures of which encourage the development of social innovation. These hybrid structures allow entrepreneurs to test their project in real life. These Cooperatives claim to be a tool for innovation and social progress within a rigorous framework: They pool their know-how within a national network, called "Coopérer Pour Entreprendre" (Cooperate to undertake business). This network brings together some sixty companies in France and Belgium. They constitute a laboratory for new forms of work organisation: emergence of dual activities (status of "employee-entrepreneurs"), cooperative tools, pooling of resources, combining employee ownership and independence, as well as creation of companies by retired people.

Also, in the Netherlands, the National OP ESF 2014-2020 (2014NL05SFOP001) set aside 1% of all ESF funding for local authorities to come up with and/or test new ways of supporting their target groups (SITS), to upscale in the future.

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Table 20. National evaluations reflected in the synthesis

Country	Fund	English title	Date	Evaluation type	CCI
Cyprus	ESF	Evaluation of OP Employment Human Capital and Social Cohesion	Mar-17	Monitoring/progress oriented	2014CY05M9OP001
Cyprus	ESF	Evaluation Report 2017 on the Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion OP in Cyprus	Mar-18	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014CY05M9OP001
Czech Republic	ESF, YEI	Strategic evaluation of the relevance of OP Employment in the Czech Republic	Mar-17	Process/Implementation oriented	2014CZ05M9OP001
Denmark	ESF	Mid-term evaluation of the ESF 2014-2020 in Denmark	Mar-19	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014DK05SFOP001
Estonia	ESF	Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the ESF adaptation and integration measures - OP for Cohesion Policy Funding 2014-2020	Jun-19	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014EE16M3OP001
Finland	ERDF, ESF	Åland Structural Funds Program 2014-2020- The evaluators' second interim report	Apr-19	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014FI05M2OP001
France	ESF	Analysis of the contribution of the ESF National OP to the EU 2020 strategy	May-19	Monitoring/progress oriented	2014FR05SFOP001
France	ESF, YEI	Monitoring and evaluation of the ESF and YEI OPs 2014-2020	Jun-17	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014FR05SFOP001
France	ESF, YEI	Analysis of the inclusion of people with disabilities in the national ESF and YEI OPs in France	May-18	Impact/Result oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014FR05SFOP001; 2014FR05M9OP001

Country	Fund	English title	Date	Evaluation type	CCI
France	ESF	Overall analysis and audit of the monitoring system of the National ESF Program	Jun-16	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014FR05SFOP001; 2014FR05M9OP001
France	ESF	Analysis of the performance of the ESF OP in France	Feb-18	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014FR05SFOP001
France	ESF	Evaluation of the impact of the National ESF Program on the fight against poverty and promoting inclusion (Axis 3)	Dec-19	Impact/Result orientated	2014FR05SFOP001
Germany	ESF	Contribution of the ESF-funding to literacy and basic education in Sachsen-Anhalt	Jan-18	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014DE05SFOP013
Germany	ESF	Evaluation and monitoring of the ESF-model project 'Schritt für Schritt - Brücken bauen'	Feb-18	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014DE05SFOP010
Germany	ESF	Evaluation of two measures financed by Sachsen-Anhalt OP	Dec-18	Impact/Result orientated, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014DE05SFOP013
Germany	ESF	Evaluation of the implementation of the Baden-Württemberg ESF OP 2014-2020	Nov-18	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014DE05SFOP003
Germany	ESF	Contribution of the ESF-funding to enhance integration of particularly disadvantaged people	Jul-18	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014DE05SFOP013
Ireland	ESF, YEI	Evaluation of the National Youthreach Programme	May-18	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014IE05M9OP001

Country	Fund	English title	Date	Evaluation type	CCI
Ireland	ESF, YEI	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018 – 2022	Sep-16	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014IE05M9OP001
Ireland	ESF, YEI	Mid-term evaluation of the Employability, Inclusion and Learning ESF OP in Ireland	Dec-18	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014IE05M9OP001
Italy	ESF	Interim evaluation of the Toscana ESF OP 2014-2020	Dec-17	Process/Implementation oriented	2014IT05SFOP015
Italy	ESF	Interim Evaluation of the Campania ESF OP 2014-2020	Dec-17	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014IT05SFOP020
Italy	ESF	Evaluation of the implementation of Axis B childcare services in the Toscana ESF OP 2014-2020	Jan-18	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014IT05SFOP015
Italy	ERDF, ESF	Analysis of measures to support housing access funded by the OP Metropolitan Cities in Italy	Jan-18	Process/Implementation oriented	2014IT16M2OP004
Italy	ESF	Annual Evaluation report on the Lombardia ESF OP for 2017	Apr-18	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014IT05SFOP007
Italy	ESF	The implementation of job vouchers under the Piemonte ESF OP 2014-2020	Apr-18	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014IT05SFOP013
Italy	ESF	Interim Evaluation of Trento ESF OP	Dec-17	Impact/Result orientated, Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014IT05SFOP018

Country	Fund	English title	Date	Evaluation type	CCI
Lithuania	ERDF, CF, ESF, YEI	Evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of Training financed by the ESF in Lithuania	Jan-19	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014LT16MAOP001
Lithuania	ERDF, ESF	Evaluation of Financial instruments in Lithuania	Nov-17	Process/Implementation oriented	2014LT16MAOP001
Lithuania	ERDF, CF, ESF, YEI	Evaluation of Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) funded during the 2014-2020 period in Lithuania	Oct-18	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014LT16MAOP001
Lithuania	ERDF, CF, ESF, YEI	Evaluation of progress in implementing the EU Structural Funds Investments OP	Dec-16	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014LT16MAOP001
Luxembourg	ESF	Communication activities of the ESF from 2015 until 2017	May-17	Monitoring/progress oriented	2014LU05SFOP001
Netherlands	ESF	Interim Evaluation of the implementation and execution of the initial phase of ESF Active Inclusion 2014-2020	Apr-16	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014NL05SFOP001
Netherlands	ESF	In-depth study ESF Active Inclusion 2014-2020	Oct-16	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014NL05SFOP001
Poland	ESF, YEI	Meta-analysis of evaluations assessing ESF support in Poland (2018 edition)	Aug-18	Process/Implementation oriented	2014PL05M9OP001
Slovenia	ESF	Evaluation of the Learning of Young Adults Programme in Slovenia	Feb-19	Monitoring/progress oriented	2014SI16MAOP001

Country	Fund	English title	Date	Evaluation type	CCI
Spain	ESF	Mid-term Evaluation of the ESF Social inclusion and social economy OP 2014-2020 in Spain	Jul-17	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014ES05SFOP012
United Kingdom	ESF	Process Evaluation of the Parents, Childcare and Employment Project	Dec-18	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014UK05SFOP001;2014UK05SFOP002
United Kingdom	ESF	Evaluation of Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) OP in the UK	Dec-18	Process/Implementation oriented, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014UK05SFOP001;2014UK05SFOP002
United Kingdom	ESF	Evaluation of Communities for Work - Stage 3: Emerging Outcomes and Impacts	Jun-18	Impact/Result orientated, Monitoring/progress oriented	2014UK05SFOP001

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## 1. Bibliography of other literature reviewed

In addition to the national evaluations of ESF support to social inclusion, the research team carried out an extensive review of other literature including European Commission studies and research reports to inform the evaluation. Text relevant to addressing the evaluation questions was extracted from these sources and drawn on in developing the initial answers to the evaluation questions. The bibliography of other literature reviewed is presented below.

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## ANNEX 2 - TYPES OF OPERATIONS AND TARGET GROUPS REACHED BY ESF SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

### Overview

This Annex provides more information about the typology of operations and the typology of target groups of ESF TO9 operations, which is presented in Section 3 of the Interim Report. The typologies were used to map TO9 operations that were planned for and implemented during the 2014-2020 period. The mapping of TO9 operations helps to highlight the wide range of TO9 operations as well as identify the most common types of operations, the underlying actions and target groups over the evaluation period. As stated in Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013: *'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.*

Section 2 presents the methodology used by the project team to construct the two typologies. The project team carried out a systematic mapping of Operational Programmes (OPs) planned for TO9. The project team subsequently reviewed implemented operations against the same typologies drawing from the Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) and other country-based analysis (e.g. interviews, national evaluations).

Section 3 presents the typology of operations while Section 4 presents the typology of target groups.

Section 5 presents an intervention logic for each type of operation. Each intervention logic reflects the most common actions and target groups reflected in the OPs. The intervention logics were constructed from an ex-ante perspective of how each type of ESF operation was expected to work and generate impacts supporting the overall objectives of the TO9. The full database of the mapping is available in an embedded Excel file in Section 6.

### Methodology implemented to identify and code the type of operations and target groups

This section describes the five-step methodology the study team developed to identify a typology of operations and a typology of target groups planned for TO9 operations during the 2014-2020 period and to map their implementation. Each step is described in the sub-sections below.

TO9 operations are diverse and complex. This is reflected in the challenges faced in identifying target groups and the expected impacts of TO9 operations.<sup>418</sup> Moreover, as

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<sup>418</sup> ESF Transnational Platform (2018). Social inclusion indicators for ESF investments - areas for development in addressing the 20% social inclusion target. This study notes that the analysis of the Specific Objectives 'do not always seem to narrow down the IP and target specific issues or groups in a way that can be measured. Specific Objectives are sometimes broadly defined or not specific enough which leads to difficulties in measuring results."

also noted in the same study, there appear to be significant overlaps between TO9 operations and operations under TO8 and TO10. However, the extent to which there are overlaps depends on how the operation is designed, implemented and delivered. As highlighted in Section 5 (intervention logic for Type 1 operations), the main difference between TO9 and TO8 operations is expected to be in terms of the target group where TO9 operations are more tailored to the multi-dimensional needs of people in vulnerable situations. The assessment of coherence will investigate this issue further supported to a large extent by the case studies. Another challenge faced during the mapping exercise was the broad approach often taken at the planning stage for TO9 operations. The lack of detail on certain actions and target groups hampered the classification of these operations. This challenge was still evident when examining implemented operations. The Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) did not always provide sufficient detail on the actions carried out and the target groups reached.

To address these challenges the study team took an exploratory approach that first examined the OP documents (planned TO9 operations) and which was later extended to the AIRs (2016-2018). The AIRs downloaded on 07 November 2019 were the last point considered for the mapping. The study team defined the typologies and the target groups and categorised TO9 planned operations centrally. The country experts validated the categorisation of planned TO9 operations and target groups and assessed the categorisation of implemented TO9 operations drawing on the AIRs and other sources (e.g. interviews and national evaluations).

### **Step 1 – Identification and extraction of information on operations and target groups from Operational Programmes (OP) documents by country expert**

The first step involved the systematic extraction of information from all OPs relevant to TO9 by the country experts. The study team prepared a tool (in the form of an Excel database) which was transmitted to country experts along with the last approved versions of the OP documents. The tool included written guidance to support country experts in identifying the information to extract and to make assessments based on the extracted information. This guidance was complemented by ad-hoc support through calls and emails.

The extraction part of the tool contained the following fields:

- Identification of OP: OP CCI, Country, name of OP, Priority Axis for TO9, version of OP;
- Context analysis and needs assessment: National/Regional socio-economic context underpinning the strategy in the OP; CSR and national/regional policy strategies as mentioned in OP; ESF (If mentioned in the OP) Use of ESF: how managing authorities intend to use ESF to respond to the needs identified;
- Target region covered by OP;
- (for each IP under TO9) justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities', using the information available in Table 1 of the OP;
- (for each IP under TO9) name of specific objective covered under each IP, using the information available in Table 2.A.5 of the OP;
- (for each IP under TO9) target groups identified, using the information available in Table 2.A.5 of the OP;

- (for each IP under TO9) description of expected results, using the information available in Table 2.A.5 of the OP;
- (for each IP under TO9) summary of actions (description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries) using the information available in Table 2.A.6.1 of the OP;
- (for each IP under TO9) summary of target groups that may be mentioned in Table 2.A.6.1 in relation to the planned actions but not been mentioned in Table 2.A.5 of the OP; and
- Beneficiaries mentioned in the OP using the information available in Table 2.A.6.1 of the OP.

The tool also asked country experts to provide several assessments based on the information extracted, contributing towards the assessment of several evaluation criteria in particular relevance and coherence.

First, country experts were asked to assess the targeting approach. They were also asked to assess whether a target group(s) was specifically identified and if so, whether the identified target groups were relevant to the context/needs assessment on a four-point scale and to provide a brief rationale. The four possible responses a country expert could provide were as follows:

- Fully: The identified target groups are fully relevant to the context/needs assessment;
- Mostly: The majority of identified target groups are relevant to the context/needs assessment; however several mismatches exist;
- Partially: Several identified target groups are relevant to the context/needs assessment; however the majority are not in line/related to the identified needs (context); and
- Not at all: There is little or no relevance of the identified target groups to the context/needs assessment.

Country experts were then asked to assess the extent to which the objectives and the operations funded under the OP relevant to the needs identified for the target groups and to provide a brief rationale. The response options were as follows:

- Fully: The objectives were fully relevant to the needs identified for the target groups;
- Mostly: The majority of objectives and operations were relevant to the needs identified for the target groups. In some instances, there was a mismatch identified;
- Partially: Several objectives and operations were relevant to the needs identified for the target groups; however significant mismatches exist; and
- Not at all: The objectives and operations funded do not correspond to the needs identified for the target groups.

Lastly, country experts commented on the extent to which the IP(s) selected in the OP were consistent with the stated European Priorities (for example: Country Specific Recommendations; Europe 2020 strategy). They were also asked to consider the actions and target groups described under IP9i and whether some actions may better be covered under one or more other IPs.

## **Step 2 – Exploratory analysis**

In this step the study team carried out an exploratory analysis of the extracted information and assessments made by the country experts. The study team reviewed all actions and target groups identified by Investment Priority (IP). This analysis uncovered heterogeneity in the level of detail in the OPs. Some presented long and detailed list of actions while others provided more generic high-level description of actions and strategies. Some OPs made direct linkages between actions and target groups while in others target groups were not mentioned.

With respect to target groups, the initial analysis uncovered a wide range of specific target groups identified under each IP that included both individuals and entities. The analysis also found that broad references to 'vulnerable groups', 'people at risk of extreme poverty,' 'people at the margin of the labour market', and 'victims of discrimination' were used.

Target groups for TO9 operations that focused on individuals were wide-ranging. Country experts identified the following target groups in their review of the OPs: long-term unemployed, inactive, low skilled, people not in education employment or training (NEETs), early school leavers, individuals in the labour market at risk of poverty, low income families, people of households recipient of minimum income, single parents, people with disabilities, people with mental health disorders, people experiencing housing exclusion or at risk of housing exclusion, offenders and ex-offenders, young people at risk of delinquency, migrants and asylum seekers, Roma people, ethnic minorities, elderly people, women victims of violence or trafficking, people with current of former addiction, people with caring responsibilities, entrepreneurs in the social economy, employees of social enterprises, staff of social services and health care sectors, staff of local-authorities, and medical and paramedical staff.

TO9 operations also targeted entities. Country experts identified the following in their review of the OPs: SMEs, civil society organisations (CSOs), micro companies, NGOs and social enterprises.

## **Step 3 – Consultation of key literature**

The study team reviewed several sources to draw insights as to how to define a typology of operations and target groups. The key sources identified in the review were:

- European Commission, (2016). The analysis of the outcome of the negotiations concerning the Partnership Agreements and ESF Operational programmes, for the programming period 2014-2020.
- ESF Transnational Platform (2018). Social inclusion indicators for ESF investments - areas for development in addressing the 20% social inclusion target

The first study listed above identified the following types of actions under TO9: integrated approaches, social innovation, development of new tools, career support guidance, other actions for entities, other, for individuals, skills development for entities, awareness raising, change management, basic training, start-up incentives/support, vocational training, employment incentives, traineeships, working place arrangements – individuals, working place arrangements – entities, validation of competencies, prevention early school leaving, support to PES and LM institutions, promoting partnerships, studies/documents, apprenticeships, higher education, cooperation, best practices. The list of actions was broadly in line with the actions identified in Step 2.

Some actions were not considered to be discrete and well-defined, for example, integrated approaches, social innovation, other actions for entities, other for individuals, cooperation. The study team also identified a greater variety of actions covered in the OPs.

The second study above identified the following target groups under TO9: disadvantaged, poverty, other, unemployed, local and regional organisations, women, ethnic minorities, enterprises, long-term unemployed, migrants, CSOs, older, national public organisations, young unemployed, civil servants, inactive, employees at risk, employees, low skilled, employment services, social partners, young people in education, NEETs, schools, school personnel. The report also highlights that 'the target groups are still broadly formulated in some cases'. The target groups identified in this report were generally in line with those identified in Step 2.

#### **Step 4 – Developing typologies to categorise target groups and operations of identified actions and target groups into the typologies**

The study team then grouped the identified actions under TO9 operations into an initial set of categories, which provided the basis for the typology of operations presented in Section 3. The study team also grouped the identified target groups under TO9 operations into another set of categories. This categorisation provided the basis for the typology of target groups, which is presented in Section 4. The categorisation of the target groups proved to be particularly complex due to the long list of target groups identified in Step 2, the broad descriptions often provided in the OPs, differences in wording across different OPs and countries, as well as the intrinsically multifaceted nature of people in vulnerable situations (e.g. a person can be a long-term unemployed, and at the same time be a person with a disability and a recipient of minimum income).

To ensure alignment of the typologies with other activity strands of the evaluation, the categorisation of identified actions and target groups took into consideration the following:

- Information collected for specific projects put forward to consider for in-depth analysis as part of the case studies;
- The public consultation questionnaire; and
- The ESF monitoring indicators.

Each is described below.

The research team reviewed the in-depth description of actions and target groups for 52 projects considered for the case studies. The review of these projects often provided the study team with greater insights about TO9 actions and target groups than the information available in the OPs and AIRs. For example, one operation under OP 2014IT05SFOP001 in Italy was call n. 4/2016 which referred to the 'presentation of proposals to combat severe marginalisation of adults and people in conditions of housing exclusion'. Under this operation several projects were implemented, one being call 4/2016 - AV4-2016-BO in Bologna, which was featured in the list of the 52 projects considered for the case studies. The project sought to enhance services to support homeless people on their path to independent living. The project sought to enhance skills, strengthen inclusion processes of homeless people together with non-homeless people, associations and communities, provide food and clothing, and promote access

to housing. These actions can be grouped in terms of those that enhance basic skills and those that promote access to services (in this case, housing).

The public consultation questionnaire was also a key source, as the response options in relation to target groups and actions promoting social inclusion should, in as much as possible, be aligned with the typologies that are ultimately used as part of this mapping exercise, so as to support the triangulation of information from different sources for the evaluation. As the target groups and actions presented in the public consultation were quite extensive, the research team considered grouping them to define the categories of the typologies. In relation to actions and target groups, the questionnaire includes the following questions and response options:

- 'in your opinion how effective are the following actions in promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination? With the following response options:

Information, guidance, tutoring in the search of job; incentives for employers; on the job guidance and tutoring; skills assessment and recognition; internships, traineeships to learn a trade; second change education; training and education (including vocational training); basic skills training (e.g. social skills, IT, language); support to overcome barriers to job search actions (e.g. transport of childcare); counselling (e.g. debt or health); help with care obligations (e.g. childcare, long-term care); support to people with disabilities (e.g. promotion of community-based care); assistance in situation of crisis (e.g. shelters); help in setting up a business; awareness raising and information campaigns; studies and evaluations of existing institutions; structural support for strengthening institutional capacity.

- 'Which target groups should be prioritised?'
- unemployed for 12 months or more; unemployed for less than 12 months; low-skilled people; part-time employed; self-employed; recipients of minimum income schemes; Roma or other minorities; people with migrant or foreign background; people with disability; people having a chronic health problem; single parents; other group(s).

The study team also reviewed the categories of 'participants' in Annex 1 of the ESF Regulation (Regulation (EU)1304/2013), where the common output indicators are defined. The common output indicators for participants are: unemployed, including long-term unemployed; long-term unemployed; inactive; inactive, not in education or training; employed, including self-employed; below 25 years of age; above 25 years of age; above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long-term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training; with primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2); with upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4); with tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8); participants who live in jobless households; participants who live in jobless households with dependent children; participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children; migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma); participants with disabilities; other disadvantaged; homeless or affected by housing exclusion; from rural areas. These categories do

not fully represent the diversity of target groups that were identified in the review of programme documents.

The common output indicators for entities are: Number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or NGOs, number of projects dedicated to the sustainable participation and progress of women, number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level, and lastly, the number of supported micro, small and medium sized enterprises (including co-operative enterprises and enterprises of the social economy).

The categorisation of the actions and target groups were discussed with DG Employment through several exchanges between 10 October 2019 and 28 October 2019. The categories for the two typologies were consequently refined and finalised for the evaluation.

### **Step 5 – Mapping planned and implemented operations against the typologies of operations and target groups**

Finally, based on the typologies discussed with DG Employment, the study team reviewed the actions and target groups identified in the extraction from the OPs made by the country experts, this time to apply the agreed typologies on the full sample of OPs at the planning and implementation stages. This resulted in the identification of the types of operations and target groups that were most referred to in the OP extraction per IP following the definitions of the typologies presented in Sections 3 and 4. Country experts reviewed and validated the mapping of planned TO9 operations carried out by the study team.

In addition, they were asked to review the mapping of implemented TO9 operations, drawing on the desk review of the AIRs 2016-2018, interviews with Managing Authorities (MA) and other relevant ESF stakeholders, and desk review of other national documents (e.g. national evaluations). Based on their review, the country experts were asked to complete the following fields in the database contained, the following fields:

- "Are the types of operations implemented notably different from what was planned?" (Select Y/N from drop-down list). If the reply was Y (Yes):
  - "What types of operations were actually implemented in practice?" (Select types of operations from drop-down menu)
  - "Why did this shift occur?" (Open response)
- "Were the target groups notably different to what was planned?" (Select Y/N from drop-down list). If the reply was Y (Yes):
  - "Please specify which target groups were addressed in practice." (Select types of target groups from drop-down menu)
  - "Why did this shift occur?" (Open response)

### **Typology of operations**

This section presents the typology of operations, which was the output of steps 1 through 5 of the methodology.

In total, the exercise defined six types of operations. Four types of operations (Types 1, 2, 3 and 4) encompass actions directed to people in vulnerable situations, while the two remaining types (Type 5 and 6) comprise actions directed to people in vulnerable

situations and to organisations (e.g. capacity building of social services, support to social enterprises).

Figure 13 presents an overview of the six types of operations. Each type is described in the sub-sections below. A list of identified actions is noted for each type of operation along with specific examples drawn from the review of TO9 operations. The intervention logic for each type of operation is presented in Section 0.

Figure 13. *Typology of TO9 operations*



## Type 1: Employment-focussed actions

Type 1 operations comprise actions aimed at increasing participants' knowledge of the job search, increasing their motivation, and enhancing their professional skills.

The review identified the following actions:

- **Information guidance** – These actions include: job orientation, counselling, profiling, services; work grants, research grants and support in finding internships (2014IT05SFOP008); action matching participants to job opportunities, internships and traineeships; support for job search, interview, job retention and professional guidance (2014ES05SFOP020).
- **Skills assessment and recognition** – These actions include: activities to formally recognise skills and identifying pathways to formal qualifications (2014AT05SFOP001); establishing and supporting local support centres/ job centres to provide services such as aptitude assessments, health and lifestyle advice, educational and professional development (2014DE05SFOP016).
- **Adult upskilling, lifelong learning** – These actions include: training for older workers to re-enter the labour market (2014MT05SFOP001); vocational training or other training measures to qualify the long-term unemployed, low unskilled and semi-skilled workers (2014DE05SFOP008); training in professional skills (2014ES05SFOP008).
- **Training to develop business skills and to set-up enterprises** (excluding social enterprises) – These actions include: actions to enhance entrepreneurship and self-employment skills by offering support services, training on digital skills, literacy etc. (2014GR16M2OP006).
- **Internships, traineeships to learn a trade** – These actions include: traineeships, apprenticeships and employment support (2014BG05M9OP001); wage subsidies or internships to increase labour demand (2014SE05M9OP001).
- **Incentives for employers** – These actions include: incentives to private firms for hiring 'vulnerable groups' (2014GR16M2OP006); subsidies and incentives to employers to hire long-term unemployed (2014ES05SFOP020); measures incentivising employers to hire people with disabilities (2014PL05M9OP001) (2014ES05SFOP003).

Type 1 operations do not include actions related to social enterprises; these actions are classified under Type 5 operations.

### **Type 2: Enhance basic skills**

Type 2 operations encompass actions that aim to build basic transversal competencies and soft skills (e.g. confidence, self-esteem) for those furthest from the labour market. Under Type 2 the review identified one main type of action:

- **Basic skills training (e.g. social skills, IT, language)** – These actions comprise the following: actions promoting the integration of migrants and of refugees through literacy and language (2014DE05SFOP011); individualised labour market integration pathways, mixed training and employment programmes, development of competencies (knowledge, skills and attitude, digital skills) training in Spanish language, literacy, ICT literacy, healthy lifestyle, gender equality and basic social skills (2014ES05SFOP022) (2014ES05SFOP008); assistance in the development of softer skills such as assertiveness, anger management, motivation, parenting (2014UK05M9OP001); continuous education programmes for marginalised groups (e.g. actions aimed at digital literacy) (2014RO05M9OP001).

Actions under type 2 operations can be complemented by actions that address barriers to participation in education, training and job search. These complementary actions may address the cost of transportation, equipment, food and psychological support.

### **Type 3: Basic school education**

Type 3 operations aim to support the education of children, especially those at risk of dropping out. The review identified the following actions:

- **Basic education for children and youth, extra curricula activities, educational integration, activities to combat school drop-out** – These actions comprise the following: actions to combat early school leaving of Roma children through integrated actions between schools and social services (2014IT05SFOP001); actions to provide education, training and work experience programme for early school leavers; programmes to promote school engagement among youth at risk of drop out (2014IE05M9OP001).
- **Inclusive education** – These actions include the following: support to inclusive education and social inclusion through the optimisation of the network of special kindergartens and schools (2014BG05M2OP001); actions to eliminate barriers to training, personalised action plans to improve employability, support to educational centres in addressing illiteracy (including digital illiteracy) and promoting inclusive teaching (2014MT05SFOP001).
- **Activities to engage parents in the education and care of children** – These actions include the following: awareness and support to families to promote their involvement in the school performance of the children (2014ES05SFOP015); actions to encourage parental involvement in the educational process (2014BG05M2OP001).
- **Actions to eliminate segregation in schools** – These actions include the following: actions aimed at eliminating segregation in schools (2014ES05SFOP012); tutoring and mentoring support to pupils in elementary and secondary schools, provision of scholarships, educational and

leisure activities, activities aimed against segregation at schools and classes (2014SK05M0OP001); promotion of intercultural education as an integral part of the process of modernization of the Bulgarian education system, provision of alternative models for working with students with deviant behaviour, actions to overcome towards the education of children and pupils with special educational needs in mainstream kindergartens and schools and prevention of discrimination towards them (2014BG05M2OP001).

Type 3 operations can also be complemented by additional support to overcome barriers to participation in education and training (e.g. transport, purchase of equipment, payments for food or free school meals, socio-psychological support to children and their families).

#### **Type 4: Access to services**

Type 4 operations aim to enhance access to quality services, which spans the following dimensions: affordability, availability (provision), outreach and accessibility. Type 4 operations typically include integrated delivery of services in terms of planning, needs-assessment, follow-up, joint team delivery and one-stop-shops. Type 4 operations can be classified in four sub-categories, which are as follows: (1) services of general interest (such as health and education); (2) mainstream social services (such as childcare, elderly care); (3) personal targeted social services aimed predominantly at social and eventual labour market inclusion (needs-based) and (4) essential services (such as transport, banking, digital services) (as defined in Principle 20 of the European Pillar of Social Rights). A variety of TO9 actions were classified under the third sub-category (personal targeted social services). The mapping exercise did not identify stand-alone TO9 actions under the fourth sub-category (essential services). Essential services could be provided alongside TO9 actions and may complement them. Under Type 4 the review identified the following actions (by sub-category):

##### 1 Services of general interests (such as health and education)

- **Setting-up of local health units and mobile clinics** – These actions comprise for example activities for preventing poverty and social exclusion through the provision of social services, including health services. These activities include the provision of primary healthcare from Local Health Units (2014GR16M2OP006)

##### 2 Mainstream social services (such as childcare and long-term care)

- **Help with care obligations (e.g. childcare, long-term care, elderly care)** – These actions comprise for example combining different forms of labour market measures that improve employability with access to quality services health care, social services, childcare, housing support, online services, mobility, family support (2014BE05SFOP002); specialised services for those facing multiple barriers aiming at employment, education and training including the provision of childcare and social care services (2014UK05M9OP002); economic incentives to support access to educational services and childcare services, support to families of pupils (aged 3/13) and students (aged 14-15) to attend summer camp services/centres (2014IT05SFOP003); actions including the provision of childcare services (including children with disabilities) integrated with actions for the psychological and social support of abused women (2014GR16M2OP014);

actions to support inter-municipal initiatives to promote the quality of life and well-being of elderly people and active ageing (2014PT16M2OP002);

- 3 Personal targeted social services aimed predominantly at social and eventual labour market inclusion (needs-based). These services are typically integrated services that focus on different functions, including:
- **Support in accessing housing services (e.g. housing support programmes)** – These actions include for example the implementation of multi-dimensional and integrated active inclusion interventions, structured according to the “Housing First” model and aimed at individuals and families with the activation of paths for work, social, educational and health inclusion. These actions aim at progressively overcoming the causes of housing poverty and the simultaneous activation of paths to housing (2014IT16M2OP004).
  - **Support for deinstitutionalisation for people with disabilities (e.g. promotion of community-based care)** – These actions include for example adaptation and redesign of existing networks of institutional care and admission of new providers in order to offer community-based services and programmes for the elderly (2014SI16MAOP001); the establishment and/or extension of high-quality services provided at community level, including actions to prevent institutionalisation, to support the gradual transition to community-based care and the closure of care facilities for children, disabled and elderly persons (2014SK05M0OP001); support for the development and provision of non-institutional and community-based services (2014LT16MAOP001).
  - **Crisis support (e.g. shelters, domestic violence)** – These actions include for example support for the establishment of crisis intervention centres offering support to people and families affected by problems and crisis situations, providing assistance in the form of shelter and care facilities, psychological support, information, legal counselling, helplines, etc (2014PL16M2OP006).
  - **Financial counselling (e.g. debt, health, basic housing maintenance)** – These actions include for example the promotion of financial literacy, debt management, micro-credit and savings programmes (2014SK05M0OP001).

## **Type 5: Social entrepreneurship**

Type 5 operations include actions that promote social entrepreneurship from the supply and demand sides. As such they target both individuals as well as entities. Under Type 5 the review identified actions directed to individuals and actions directed to entities:

### 1. Actions directed to individuals

- **Help in setting up a social enterprise or business in the social economy** – These actions include: services for setting up new or supporting existing social enterprises (animation, incubation and social services), subsidies and bridge support for setting up social enterprises leading to employment (2014PL16M2OP014); the provision of economic support to new social enterprises, the operation of financial tools including the use of micro-

loans, actions for facilitating networking among social enterprises and other similar interventions and initiatives (2014GR16M2OP006).

- **Capacity building activities for social enterprises through advice, consultancy, training, guidance, marketing and consultancy training, exchange of information** – These actions include for example training of established social enterprise employees (2014RO05M9OP001); the provision of services such as legal, business and financial consultancy, including support to access micro loans (2014PL16M2OP005); activities to improve the qualifications and professional experience of employees of social economy entities (2014PL16M2OP003).
- **Training to develop entrepreneurial skills for social enterprises and the third sector** – These actions include for example training and development services for third sector enterprises (2014UK05M9OP002); training, education, mentoring and counselling programmes for stakeholders in social entrepreneurship (2014SI16MAOP001); training, mentoring, coaching and learning schemes to upgrade the skills, knowledge and competencies of vulnerable groups to encourage the establishment of social enterprises (2014MT05SFOP001).
- **Ah-hoc support to aid the job integration in social enterprises** – These actions support the integration phase in social enterprises through training to vulnerable people (2014RO05M9OP001); information, motivation, ad-hoc support and tutoring during workplace training (2014SI16MAOP001).

## 2. Actions directed to entities

- **Support for promoting the cooperation, networking and development of social enterprises** – These actions include for example support to develop networking and the exchange of good practices within the social economy sector, promote economies of scale through the activation of Centres for the Support of Social Economy on a regional level (2014GR16M2OP014); the establishment and development of regional and national networks of social economy entities through effective coordination of educational and labour market institutions (2014PL05M9OP001); support to develop the networking and exchange of good practices within the social economy sector, promote partnerships between the public, private and third sectors (2014IT05SFOP012); support schemes that includes training, education, mentoring and counselling programmes for all stakeholders in social entrepreneurship, networking, promotion etc. (2014SI16MAOP001).
- **Implementation of pilot projects on innovative approaches in the third sector** – These actions include for example the provision of funds to explore the feasibility of new business models in the social economy. (e.g. testing of new products and methods, market research, training for social enterprises' employees) (2014ES05SFOP011); specialised programmes promoting social enterprises/self-employment in the recycling field or processing of raw materials (e.g. by-products of other businesses, secondary raw materials) (2014HU05M2OP001).
- **Subsidies for social enterprises to employ and train (job placements, internships, etc.) people in vulnerable situations** – These actions include subsidises to support the employment of people with disabilities through social enterprises and legal entities working with people with disabilities (2014BG05M9OP001).

## **Type 6: Actions influencing attitudes and systems**

Type 6 operations include actions that seek to shape attitudes and systems related to social inclusion. Under Type 6 the review identified actions directed to individuals and actions directed to entities:

### 1. Actions directed to individuals

**Awareness raising and information campaigns (e.g. health awareness programmes, health prevention campaigns, healthy lifestyle campaigns, diseases prevention and control)** – These actions include for example the development of public health programs, health awareness programs and services (prevention and care of circulatory diseases, obesity, diabetes, reducing the risk of cancer, early detection and treatment). Awareness-raising programs and targeted interventions to prevent and reduce substance use, with particular emphasis on community and family involvement. Development of health culture, capacity building of public, local health communication organizations, health promotion, disease and injury prevention programs, support to public health communication content, local events that promote “healthy choices” (2014HU05M2OP001). Education and training of target groups on the topic of healthy lifestyles, health promotion, disease prevention (2014LT16MAOP001); information campaigns, awareness raising, and information activities targeted at people suffering from mental health conditions (2014EE16M3OP001); complex health promotion to educate about possibilities to improve and preserve health (2014LV16MAOP001).

**Activities to promote corporate social responsibility and the potential of social entrepreneurship and third sector in the fight against social exclusion and unemployment** – These actions include for example awareness raising activities supporting the promotion of social inclusion within the context of Corporate Social Responsibility (2014IT05SFOP004); training, guidance, staff exchanges, studies and assessments (2014LT16MAOP001); awareness raising and training activities on corporate social responsibility through the involvement of educational institutions and public bodies in charge of inspection activities (e.g. labour inspectorate) (2014IT05SFOP012); actions to increase the visibility of opportunities in the social economy as a means for generating employment (2014HR05M9OP001).

### 2. Actions directed to entities

- **Development of tools, guidelines, coordination protocols between services (e.g. social care and health care services)** – These actions include for example designing, testing, launching and developing effective and innovative models and solutions for the provision of health care services (2014LT16MAOP001); the development and implementation of tools and methodologies to improve the efficiency of integration processes, especially those in which social services and employment services are involved (2014ES05SFOP012).
- **Training to professionals working in the health care, social services, public employment services (PES)** – These actions include for examples

training programmes provided to professionals working in the provision of health and care services, upskilling and re-skilling of persons working with vulnerable groups (2014MT05SFOP001); activities to strengthen the qualifications and professional experience of management staff, employees and volunteers of PES (e.g. training, internships, apprenticeships, study visits); advice on developing social competences of PES employees (2014PL16M2OP005); actions to train family carers and creation of accreditation registers and lists of care service providers for elderly persons (2014IT05SFOP015); capacity building for pedagogical specialists working in a multicultural environment (2014BG05M2OP001).

- **Studies and evaluations of existing institutions** – These actions include for example studies to map availability of health services from public, private and third sector, to identify barriers to access, and develop new models to support access of Roma people (2014IT05SFOP001); studies to assess the feasibility of new business models in the social economy (e.g. testing of new products and methods, market research, training for social enterprises' employees) (2014ES05SFOP011).
- **Structural support for strengthening institutional capacity** – These actions include for example targeted measures to empower the managerial capacity and participation of social partners and mechanisms (2014FR05SFOP005); the promotion of partnerships between the public, private and third sectors through social dialogue (2014LT16MAOP001); the implementation of the national information system of social services and social benefits (2014IT05SFOP001).
- **Training and awareness raising activities aimed at enhancing the participation of social enterprises in public procurement market** – These actions include for example promoting the use of social clauses in public procurement (2014BE05M9OP002); training social enterprises in public procurement law to encourage public-private partnerships in the third sector (2014PL05M9OP001).
- **Design, implementation and enhancement of community-led local development (CLLD) strategies** – These actions include for example the development of the community health care network (2014RO05M9OP001); the enhancement of networks of institutional care (needs analysis at local level, staff training, implementation of community-based services) and the development of community-based programmes and services to support deinstitutionalisation (2014SI16MAOP001).

## Typology of target groups

This section presents the typology of target groups, which was the output of steps 1 through 5 of the methodology presented in Section 2 of this annex. The classification of target groups was complicated by the multiple dimensions of vulnerability that can be experienced by unique persons (e.g. a migrant woman victim of trafficking and violence, a low skilled person with mental disabilities, a low income person with physical disabilities, a long-term unemployed in phasing homelessness). Differences in wording and meaning across different OPs and countries was another challenge specific to the mapping of the target groups. For example, 'marginalised communities' sometimes clearly referred to Roma communities, but in other cases it was not possible to infer other characteristics of the intended target group.

While taking the above into account, the study team developed a typology of target groups grounded in the review of TO9 operations. In total, 12 categories were identified, one of which was 'target group not clear/broad'. The construction of the typology required some simplifications and assumptions.

Two of the 12 categories related to the unemployed. Based on the information reviewed, the study team distinguished between "unemployed for 12 months or more" and "unemployed for less than 12 months". The former category included persons identified as being long-term unemployed, as well as those targeted for interventions that are typically delivered to this population. For example, interventions for older workers, labour market integration measures for economically inactive persons (including women where a primary characteristic could not be identified e.g. migrant) and promoting the labour market participation of NEETs. In this case, the assumption was made that NEETs are typically persons who have not been employment for over a year. Eurofound analysed the characteristics of NEET population and categorised the NEETs into seven sub-groups, in particular 22% were 'unemployed, seeking work for more than a year, at high risk of disengagement and social exclusion', 5.8% 'believe that there are no job opportunities and have stopped looking for work, at high risk of social inclusion and lifelong disengagement for employment'.<sup>419</sup>

Target groups considered under "unemployed for less than 12 months" included other groups identified as being unemployed, but not necessarily long-term unemployed.

Examples of groups identified in the review that fall under the two unemployment categories are listed below along with some examples:

- **Unemployed for 12 months or more:** this category included the long-term unemployed, NEETs if the operation focused on labour market (re)integration; elderly people where operations focused on re-integrating them into the labour market; women where operations focused on (re)integrating them into the labour market, supporting their professional diversification and their work-life balance. Some examples of the target groups identified in the review that were classified in this category are presented below:
  - long-term unemployed, recipients of social welfare and guaranteed minimum support (2014HR05M9OP001); actions to integrate vulnerable groups into the labour market including: long-term unemployed; economically inactive; people distant from labour market; low-skilled and low-income households; indebted people; training to increase the probability of employment of long-term unemployed youth and of "NEETS" in precarious living conditions (2014DE05SFOP007); social inclusion activities for older unemployed people (2014NL05SFOP001); social and psychological support to retain older people at work or reintegrate them into the labour market or training system (2014LT16MAOP001); actions to increase social and labour inclusion of persons from the most vulnerable groups, promoting gender equality and work-life balance, preventing multiple discrimination (2014ES05SFOP0090)
- **Unemployed for less than 12 months:** this category included individuals who were identified only as 'unemployed'. Examples are: employment actions for

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<sup>419</sup> <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/topic/NEETs>.

unemployed and vulnerable workers (2014BE05M9OP001); employment opportunities for unemployed persons (2014GR16M2OP004); unemployed people belonging to vulnerable groups (2014IT05SFOP003)

- One category focussed on low-skilled people, this category included NEETs when the description of the context of the operation would suggested that these were low-skilled NEETs.
- **Low-skilled people:** this category included NEETs when the operation focused on boosting their skills. Examples are: measures to prevent the social exclusion of NEET youth (2014EE16M3OP001); improving low-level skills amongst NEETs (2014UK05M9OP001)

The mapping identified as target group self-employed.

- **Self-employed people:** for example: self-employed working poor (2014AT05SFOP001)

Another category was defined to reflect beneficiaries (direct and indirect) of minimum income schemes. Receipt of minimum income schemes in this case was understood to be a proxy for low income. This assumption is supported by a study from the European Commission<sup>420</sup> that found that the most common type of eligibility conditions for minimum income schemes in Europe relate to: lack of financial resources, not having assets above a certain limit, nationality/citizenship and/or residence, willingness to work (unless prevented on health grounds), and having exhausted rights to any other (social) benefits. On the basis that the lack of financial is the first eligibility condition for accessing minimum income schemes it can be approximated that recipients of minimum income schemes have similar characteristics to those that may not receive minimum income schemes but are in low income and therefore are likely to receive similar interventions.

- **Recipients of minimum income:** this group included persons and their family members in low income; jobless households; children from more deprived backgrounds; isolated minors/young adults in difficulty; people living in rural areas; low-income families with children. Examples are: recipients of minimum income benefits (2014BE05M9OP002); families with low income, or jobless households, including recipients of minimum income support (2014GR16M2OP014); low-income households with children (including beneficiaries of minimum income support and families without access to childcare services) (2014IT05SFOP003); subjects belonging to families without income, single parent or single income families with dependent children (2014IT05SFOP012); children, school students and youths with special educational needs (2014BG05M2OP001); people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, the materially deprived (2014MT05SFOP001); supporting young people in rural areas (2014HU16M2OP001); people in deprived and rural areas (2014PL05M9OP001); measures promoting equal participation of women in the labour market especially social welfare recipients (2014DE05SFOP008).

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<sup>420</sup> European Commission (2015). Minimum Income Schemes in Europe, A study of national policies

Two categories focused on Roma or other ethnic minorities and migrants. The identification of these two groups in the review of operations was often straightforward. The 'primary' characteristic clearly linked to the categories. For example, 'migrant women', 'accompanied migrant children' were classified as 'migrants'.

- **Roma or other ethnic minorities:** this group included Roma people of all ages, other ethnic minorities. Examples are: actions for promoting Roma employment (2014ES05SFOP012); ethnic minorities, particularly Roma community; young people from ethnic minorities such as Roma, including children and students (2014BG05M9OP001).
- **People with a migrant or foreign background:** this group included migrants who are victims of human trafficking, migrants who are unaccompanied children. Examples are: actions promoting the integration of migrants and of refugees; literacy and language projects (2014DE05SFOP011); measures for new migrants information and support services; language courses, integration trainings (2014EE16M3OP001); victims of violence, trafficking and serious exploitation, unaccompanied migrant children and young migrants who entered Italy as unaccompanied migrant children, third-country national migrants in particularly vulnerable conditions, such as asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international, subsidiary and humanitarian protection (2014IT05SFOP001); measures promoting equal participation of women in the labour market especially migrant women (2014DE05SFOP008).

Two categories related to people with a disability, people having a chronic health problem and/or requiring long-term care. The study team created two distinct categories as the assumption was made that these two groups of people may have different characteristics and needs. For example, a person with a disability may not necessarily be in need of care therefore this group is likely to receive support in relation to labour market integration and be target group for Type 1 actions while people who are in need of care are more likely to be recipients of Type 4 actions.

- **People with a disability:** this group included persons suffering from mental health problems and elderly people who have a disability. Examples are: provision of services to families with children (including children with disabilities) (2014BG05M9OP001); people with disabilities, elderly with limited autonomy, dependent persons (2014IT05SFOP011).
- **People having a chronic problem/requiring long-term care:** this group included people with long-term conditions and elderly people who require access to healthcare. Examples are: people with mental health issues, people with long-term sicknesses, older people (2014FI16M2OP001); people with long-term health issues (2014UK05M9OP002)' development of care services for dependent persons (including the elderly and those with disabilities) (2014GR16M2OP014).

A specific target group related to single parents. The focus of some actions of TO9 on the provision of childcare and care support suggests that single parents and women with care responsibilities are a target.

- **Single parents:** this group included single parents and women with care responsibilities. Examples are: Counselling and psycho-social stabilization measures for single parents and women (2014DE05SFOP003); promoting employment for

caretakers (particularly women), single parents (2014GR16M2OP004); families, even single parents, with dependents (minor children, elderly people, disabled persons) (2014IT05SFOP011)

An additional target group was defined for other target groups that were identified in TO9 operations. These groups typically experienced more than one dimension of vulnerability – e.g. substance abusers may suffer from poor health and low income.

- **Other groups:** These groups were found primarily in relation to Type 4 operations and Type 1 operations. Type 4 operations dealing with access to services such as housing services and health services included mainly homeless people, people suffering and/or at risk of housing exclusion, as well as substance abusers who were also in conditions of housing exclusion. Ex-offenders were included in Type 4 operations when in conditions of housing exclusion. However, the group of ex-offenders were mainly included in Type 1 operations to support the re-integration of this group. Examples are: measures to improve employability of prisoners, people with low qualifications, people with disabilities, addicts from alcohol, drugs or conflicting laws (excluding prisoners) (2014PL16M2OP010); individuals and families in conditions of poor housing or at significant risk of it, who belong to social groups and population groups in situations of particular fragility (related to income, physical or psychological situation), and are unable to integrate and access to a "suitable" house outside a safety net (2014IT16M2OP004); support centres for people at high risk of housing exclusion or homelessness, etc. (2014GR16M2OP004).

Two target group categories were defined for entities. The study team could identify these target groups easily from the review of operations. Each is presented below along with some examples.

- **SMEs, micro companies (e.g. private and third sector organisations, NGOs, social enterprises):** Examples are: financing innovation in SMEs and the social economy by providing medium-term subsidies and mentoring (2014PT16M2OP003); training and development services for third sector enterprises (2014UK05M9OP002).
- **Public administrations/public services (including workers in public services):** Examples are: training of public sector employees, municipal authorities, associations and foundations working with issues of discrimination and diversity (2014LV16MAOP001); educational activities for employees of services (social workers specialisation, supervision training, creating networks of NGOs, social assistance institutions and labour market institutions etc.) (2014PL05M9OP001).

The last category included target groups that were not clearly specified. It includes operations targeted to 'vulnerable people', 'people at risk of poverty'.

- **Target group not clear broad:** examples are: people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, most vulnerable people (2014IT05SFOP005); persons who face the risk of poverty or social exclusion (2014GR16M2OP013).

## Intervention logic by type of operation

This section presents an intervention logic for each of the six types of TO9 operations presented in Section 3. The intervention logics were developed following Tool 46 of the Better Regulation Guidelines.<sup>421</sup> Each one outlines the rationale, the objectives, the actions identified, the assumptions and the expected results and impacts of the type of TO9 operation. The expected impacts may include 'hard' or 'soft' outcomes. 'Hard' outcomes include outcomes such as gaining employment or completing an educational qualification that can be more easily measured. 'Soft' outcomes include other outcomes that are relevant (for example, empowerment), but that are more challenging to measure.

The intervention logic for each type of operation is presented below and followed by a visualisation.

### **Type 1: Employment-focussed actions**

**Rationale** - Employment is generally viewed as a route out of poverty, although this is not always the case (e.g. in-work poverty). Even so, being in gainful employment is seen as one of the best ways of avoiding poverty and social exclusion.<sup>422</sup> Considering the broader European socio-economic context, the unemployment rate in Europe was 10.2% in 2014 and declined to 6.8% in 2018. These overall figures mask considerable variation across Member States. Unemployment rates were substantially higher in countries hit particularly hard by the Great Recession and its aftermath, for example Greece, where the unemployment rate in 2014 was 19.3%, and Spain where the unemployment rate in the same year was 15.3%. Long periods of unemployment can lead to severe skills erosion which, in turn, may further hinder one's ability to re-enter the labour market. Although the long-term unemployment rate has fallen from 2014 to 2018 from 49.3% to 43.2%, this is a proportionally smaller decrease than in the unemployment rate. This, in turn, suggests that people in vulnerable situations – who are more likely to be long-term unemployed – are not benefiting equally from improvements in the labour market. Compared with TO8, which focusses on supporting labour market integration, TO9 is expected to support people in vulnerable situations with actions tailored to the specific multi-dimensional needs of the target groups. Therefore, TO9 is expected to differ from TO8 in relation to target groups (i.e. targeting the most in need) and actions (i.e. actions tailored, designed and implemented to address the specific needs of the participants).

**Objectives** – Type 1 actions seek to reduce barriers to employment; help people in vulnerable situations to enter or (re-enter) employment and those already in employment to enhance their job prospects, upgrade their skills and/or help them stay in the labour market.

**Actions** – The actions most commonly implemented under Type 1 are:

- information, guidance

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<sup>421</sup> Better Regulation Toolbox, tool 46 – Designing an evaluation.

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/better-regulation-toolbox-46\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/better-regulation-toolbox-46_en_0.pdf)

<sup>422</sup> Eurofound, 2002. Report on poverty and social exclusion.

<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/article/2002/report-on-poverty-and-social-exclusion>

- skills assessment and recognition
- adult upskilling, lifelong learning
- training to develop business skills and set-up enterprises
- internships, traineeships to learn a trade
- incentives for employers

**Assumptions** – The primary objective of these actions is to support the labour market inclusion of people in vulnerable situations. Therefore, an important assumption is that these actions provide participants with the skills that are needed to (re)enter or stay in the labour market. It is important that the skills supply matches the skills demand at local level, thus responding to the skills shortages that are faced in the area. These actions should be designed to equip participants with transversals and technical skills that are requested in the area where the actions are provided. Therefore, an important factor would be that these actions are designed with the cooperation of local actors, social partners would play a key role in identifying the job and skills needs in the area, as well as supporting the design and implementation of the actions. For these actions, the overall state of the local economy is also an important factor, therefore the availability (or the lack) of jobs and skills needs in the area is likely to impact on the likelihood of (re)enter and stay in the labour market. Another important factor is the quality of the support provided (e.g. the quality of training, the internships and traineeships), in relation to the methodologies used (e.g. teaching methods), content (e.g. relevant to the context), tutors and trainers.

**Results** – The expected results of these actions are:

- engagement in job-searching/education/training
- engagement in education and training
- gaining a qualification

Although, participants to Type 1 actions are expected to be relatively job-ready, compared with participants to other type of operations, these are still people in vulnerable situations. Therefore, these actions are expected to support participants in improving soft-skills, specifically:

- practical work-focussed skills (e.g. time management)
- career management skills (e.g. job search abilities, ability to write a job application letter or prepare a CV)
- thinking and analytical skills (e.g. the ability to exercise judgement, managing time or problem solving)
- personal skills and attributes (e.g. self-management, insight, motivation, self-esteem, confidence, reliability and health awareness)

**Impact** – The expected impact of these actions is:

- closer proximity to the labour market
- enhanced employment prospects of participants
- increased likelihood of employment (including self-employment)
- increased prospects of generating income

## **Type 2: Actions to enhance basic skills**

**Rationale** – The New Skills Agenda for Europe launched in 2016<sup>423</sup> clearly stated the importance of acquiring basic skills to support full integration into society '*Europe faces a skills challenge. People need a minimum level of basic skills, including numeracy, literacy and basic digital skills, to access good jobs and participate fully in society. These are also the building blocks for further learning and career development*'.

**Objectives** - These actions primarily serve those groups furthest from the labour market who are less job ready and require additional help. Therefore, the objectives of these actions are to enhance the employment prospects of people in vulnerable situations by equipping them with the basic skills (e.g. social skills, IT, language skills) needed to 'move closer' to or enter the labour market.

**Actions** – The actions implemented under Type 2 are basic skills training (e.g. social skills, IT, language)

**Assumptions** - While the actions under Type 1 are directed to more 'job ready' people, Type 2 actions target people in need of additional support. Indeed, the spirit of TO9 is to identify and assess the complex needs of people in vulnerable situations to provide tailored support. Therefore, it would be difficult to make hypothesis on the characteristics of participants who receive support through Type 2 actions. However, it can be assumed that these participants are more likely to be recent migrants, people with severe disabilities and people with a very low educational attainment level. Type 2 actions assume that the needs' assessment has correctly identified the complex needs of the participants (for example highly skilled new migrants are likely to need intensive language courses to support their integration into the labour market but not IT skills; people with severe physical disabilities might need courses in IT to support their journey into the labour market, while people with severe behavioural disorders might need first support on social skills to support their journey into integration, and the intended immediate result may not necessarily be integration into the labour market). Therefore, it is paramount that Type 2 actions focussed on the specific needs of different participants, the objectives of the actions and the intended results were clearly set since the beginning and participants complete the actions. Finally, and similar to Type 1 actions, the quality of the support provided (e.g. the quality of training, the internships and traineeships), in relation to the methodologies used (e.g. teaching methods), content (e.g. relevant to the context), tutors and trainers is paramount to ensure that the actions have the intended impact on participants.

**Results** – Taking into account the assumptions made for this type of actions, actions under Type 2 are not expected to necessarily lead to labour market integration of participants, to the same extent of Type 1 actions.

The expected results of these actions are:

- increased participation in basic skills training
- improved basic skills (such as social skills, IT and language skills)

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<sup>423</sup> New Skills Agenda for Europe, COM(2016) 381 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0381&from=EN>

- improved interpersonal skills (e.g. communication, social skills and coping with authority, ability to get on and work with people, team-working, individual appearance/presentation)

In cases where the actions envisage a longer path with the objective of leading to training and/or employment, the expected results are:

improved career management skills (e.g. job search abilities, ability to write a job application letter or prepare a CV)

**Impact** – The expected impact of these actions is:

- engagement in job-searching/education/training
- engagement in education and training
- increased likelihood of gaining a qualification
- closer proximity to the labour market
- increased employment prospects of participants
- increased likelihood of employment (including self-employment)

### **Type 3: Basic school education**

**Rationale** – The focus on basic school education is crucial, given the significance of educational attainment on a young person's employment and overall life chances. As stressed by the European Commission, *'the EU regards upper secondary education attainment as a prerequisite for better labour market integration, lowering chances of poverty and social exclusion, and at the same time setting a minimum guarantee for continued personal development and active citizenship'*.<sup>424</sup> While there are important country and regional variations, the average number of early school leavers remains high. According to Eurostat, in 2014, 11.2% of the 18-24 olds in the EU were early school leavers, this percentage slightly declined to 10.6% in 2018.<sup>425</sup> Moreover, there are marked country differences in the early school leaving rate, which in 2018 ranged from 3.3% in Croatia to 17.9% in Spain. Early school leavers face increased difficulties in the labour market and are at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion.<sup>426</sup> This also chimes with OECD estimates according to which 30-40% of early school leavers risk facing persistent difficulties in securing stable employment, which puts them in danger of marginalisation over time.<sup>427</sup> The likelihood of dropping out of school early is greater

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<sup>424</sup> European Commission, (2015). *Education and Training Monitor 2015*, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/monitor15\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/monitor15_en.pdf)

<sup>425</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Early\\_leavers\\_from\\_education\\_and\\_training](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Early_leavers_from_education_and_training)

<sup>426</sup> European Commission, (2017). *Early School Leavers – European Semester Thematic Factsheet*, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-semester\\_thematic-factsheet\\_early-school-leavers\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-semester_thematic-factsheet_early-school-leavers_en.pdf)

<sup>427</sup> Scarpetta, S., A. Sonnet and Manfredi, T., (2010). 'Rising Youth Unemployment During The Crisis: How to Prevent Negative Long-term Consequences on a

among people in vulnerable situations; for example, young migrants (non-EU citizens) are more than twice as likely to be early school leavers as nationals,<sup>428</sup> while this risk is especially high for Roma and other disadvantaged minorities.<sup>429</sup> There has been a concerted effort at both EU and national levels to increase educational attainment levels by, *inter alia*, reducing early school leaving (ESL) which is also one of the headline targets of the EU2020 strategy (i.e. the ESL rate should fall below 10% by 2020).

**Objectives** – These actions intend to support the education of children, especially those from the poorest background and at risk of dropping out. In particular, actions seek to improve the conditions for equal access to and inclusiveness of education, prevent early school leaving and marginalisation, increase parental engagement in their children’s education and enhance integration in schools.

**Actions** – The most commonly implemented actions under Type 3 are:

- basic education for children and youth, extra curricula activities, educational integration, activities to combat school drop-out
- inclusive education
- activities to engage parents in the education and care of children
- actions to eliminate segregation in schools

**Assumptions** – Participants of Type 3 actions are likely to come from the poorest background and most deprived areas. Therefore, for these actions to achieve the intended results it is important that the interventions are tailored to the specific needs and challenges faced by the children and the schools participating to the actions. Therefore, it is important that the design and the implementation of the actions involves local actors, and primarily the schools, to assess the specific issues faced by the schools, the type of barriers experienced by the children and the challenges of the neighbourhoods where the schools operate. For example, schools with a high presence of ethnic minorities in one country are likely to face specific issues which might be difference from schools in deprived neighbourhoods with high level of local crime in another country. The cooperation and motivation of the teachers is crucial for the success of these actions, to ensure effective engagement of children and their families.

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Generation?’, *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 106, OECD Publishing, <http://www.oecd.org/employment/youthforum/44986030.pdf>

<sup>428</sup> European Commission, (2015d). *Situation of Young People in the EU - Social Inclusion*, Draft 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the Implementation of the Renewed Framework for European Cooperation in the youth Field (2010-2018), SWD(2015) 169 final, Part 3/6, Brussels, 15.9.2015, [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:d4b27e70-5b8a-11e5-afbf-01aa75ed71a1.0001.05/DOC\\_3&format=PDF](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:d4b27e70-5b8a-11e5-afbf-01aa75ed71a1.0001.05/DOC_3&format=PDF)

<sup>429</sup> European Commission, (2017). *Early School Leavers – European Semester Thematic Factsheet*, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-semester\\_thematic-factsheet\\_early-school-leavers\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-semester_thematic-factsheet_early-school-leavers_en.pdf)

**Results** – The actions are expected to impact on children and their parents as well as the teachers. The expected results of Type 3 actions are:

- increased participation in basic school education from pupils
- attitudinal/behavioural changes of pupils, parents and teachers towards discrimination

**Impact** – The expected impact of these actions is:

- greater propensity to stay engaged in education
- reduced early school leaving

#### **Type 4: Access to services**

**Rationale** – The 2018 OECD Health at a Glance report stated that ‘Poor Europeans<sup>430</sup> are on average five times more likely to have problems accessing health care than richer ones’ and that ‘Unmet health care needs are generally low in EU countries, but low-income households are five times more likely to report unmet needs than high-income households’.<sup>431</sup> At the same time, the risk of a child dying before his or her first birthday is over five times higher in the poorer than the richest regions of the EU, while in some Member States the gap in life expectancy between poor and better off people is 10 years.<sup>432</sup> A growing body of evidence shows the vital importance of quality and affordable early childhood education and care for the successful development of children and their subsequent education trajectories and life chances.<sup>433</sup> Children from vulnerable groups, such as those from low-income or jobless households, with a Roma or other ethnic minority or migrant background, or living in deprived areas, are less likely to have access to quality and affordable childcare.<sup>434</sup> In addition to the above-mentioned

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<sup>430</sup> It is understood that this report follows the most widely used poverty measure in OECD countries which is the “relative poverty,” or the proportion of people earning less than half their country’s median income.

<sup>431</sup> OECD/EU, (2018). *Health at a Glance: Europe 2018: State of Health in the EU Cycle*, OECD Publishing, Paris, [https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/state/docs/2018\\_healthatglance\\_rep\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/state/docs/2018_healthatglance_rep_en.pdf)

<sup>432</sup> European Commission, (2017). *Social Inclusion - European Semester Thematic Factsheet*, November, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/european-semester\\_thematic-factsheet\\_social\\_inclusion\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/european-semester_thematic-factsheet_social_inclusion_en_0.pdf)

<sup>433</sup> European Expert Network on Economics of Education (EENEE), (2018). *Benefits of early childhood education and care and the conditions for obtaining them*, January, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/14194adc-fc04-11e7-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

<sup>434</sup> European Commission, (2017). *Social Inclusion - European Semester Thematic Factsheet*, November,

services of general interests (health and education) and mainstream services (childcare and long-term services), targeted social services play a key role in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.<sup>435</sup> Targeted social services are employment related services (often provided as ALMP measures), e.g. training, including motivational and coaching activities, personal assistance at a workplace for disabled people, work placements; services in response to crises and emergencies, e.g. shelters and emergency accommodation for homeless people, shelters for victims of domestic violence, suicide prevention, domestic violence prevention; services addressing social exclusion, e.g. socio-cultural activities, day centres, group activities and clubs, information centres, psychological assistance such as stress management, health education, services for ex-offenders or probation clients such as criminal rehabilitation, access to essential services such as transport; and services addressing specific problems, e.g. debt counselling, financial advice, family counselling, domestic violence counselling, mentoring, psycho-social support, legal advice, mediation.

**Objectives** – These actions aim at supporting social inclusion, and eventual labour market integration, by enhancing access to quality services. Services of general interests (health and education), mainstream social services (childcare and long-term care), personal targeted social services aimed predominantly at social and eventual labour market inclusion (needs-based). These services are vital to fight against poverty and social exclusion, ensure full participation in society and independent living.

**Actions** – The actions implemented under Type 4 are divided in 1) services of general interests (health and education); 2) mainstream services (childcare and long-term care); 3) personal targeted social services aimed predominantly at social and eventual labour market inclusion (needs-based). These are:

1. Services of general interests (health and education), including setting-up of local health units and mobile clinics
2. Mainstream social services, focussing on help with care obligations (e.g. childcare, long-term care, elderly care)
3. Personal targeted social services aimed predominantly at social and eventual labour market inclusion (needs-based), consisting of:
  - Provision of integrated services, one-stop-shops (e.g. health, social services, counselling, education, employment)
  - Support in accessing housing services (e.g. housing support programmes)
  - Assistance in a situation of crisis (e.g. shelters, domestic violence)
  - Support services to persons in vulnerable situations (e.g. counselling services, psychological support, legal support)
  - Support to elderly people, children (and their parents), people with disabilities (e.g. promotion of community-based care)

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[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/european-semester\\_thematic-factsheet\\_social\\_inclusion\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/european-semester_thematic-factsheet_social_inclusion_en_0.pdf)

<sup>435</sup> Social Protection Committee (SPC), (2018). *Social services that complement active labour market inclusion measures for people of working age who are furthest away from the labour market*, Thematic Report, October, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=758&langId=en>

- Counselling (e.g. debt, health, basic housing maintenance)

**Assumptions** – Actions under Type 4 are particularly complex with a wide-ranging objective of supporting social inclusion by enhancing access to quality services and eventual labour market integration. These activities are expected to support social inclusions in different ways. Access to services of general interests (health and education), mainstream social services (childcare and long-term care) and personal targeted social services address various barriers to social inclusion, these barriers can be linked to family situation, housing situation, disability and health issues, personal problems etc. In addition, personal targeted services are expected to address the barriers to labour market integration which are interlinked with and exacerbated by the abovementioned barriers to social inclusion, but also include barriers linked to lack of personal and professional skills. Due to their complex and multiple needs as well as the lack of resources in the form of human, financial and social capital, these people require comprehensive assistance and are much more reliant on a wide range of social services. The 'access' dimension of these services refers to affordability, availability (provision), outreach and accessibility. Therefore, for these actions to help people in their journey towards social integration, it is important first to ensure that these services are affordable, available and are able to reach those at margins of societies, with effective outreach strategies. In addition, the design and implementation of these actions require a multi-level approach with the coordination of several local actors, primarily social services, health services, service care providers, civil society organisations and employment services. It is important to design actions with an in-depth understanding of the barriers, clear objectives and able to address the specific and multiple barriers addressed by participants. For example, the labour market integration of people in housing exclusions requires first the implementation of strategies to identify and reach people in homeless situations, address basic health needs as well as mental health issues, ensure long-term solutions to affordable housing, (re)train and support these people in gaining soft-skills such as interpersonal skills, organisational skills; personal skills and attributes (e.g. self-management, insight, motivation, self-esteem, confidence, reliability and health awareness). Following, all these steps, which support individuals in their journey to social integration, actions more oriented to employment are needed to help the development of soft and transversals skills, and eventually professional and technical skills.

**Results** – The actions are expected to lead to different results depending on the type of services provided and the specific objectives.

The expected results are:

- increased provision of services of general interests (health and education), mainstream social services (childcare and long-term care), personal targeted social services)
- increased coverage of people in vulnerable situations by services (services of general interests (health and education), mainstream social services (childcare and long-term care), personal targeted social services)
- increased access to services of general interests (health and education), mainstream social services childcare and long-term care), personal targeted social services) from people in vulnerable situations
- changes in soft-skills of participants primarily:

- interpersonal skills (e.g. communication, social skills and coping with authority, ability to get on and work with people, team-working, individual appearance/presentation)
- organisational skills (e.g. personal organisation, the ability to order and prioritise, ability to manage and plan finances)
- personal skills and attributes (e.g. self-management, insight, motivation, self-esteem, confidence, reliability and health awareness).

Following the access to services and participation to activities that led to an increase of first set of soft-skills, for those people closer to the labour market these actions are expected to result in changes in soft-skills such as:

- career management skills (e.g. job search abilities, ability to write a job application letter or prepare a CV)
- practical work-focussed skills (e.g. time management)

In addition, for some participants the completion of activities can lead to:

- participation in education and training
- engagement in job-searching/education/training
- gain a qualification

**Impact** – The expected impact of these actions is:

- increased met health care needs
- improved health
- closer proximity to the labour market
- increased prospects of generating income

## **Type 5: Social entrepreneurship**

**Rationale** - The social economy and social entrepreneurship can be a tool for social inclusion, since they employ people who experience significant difficulties in accessing the labour market (e.g. people with physical or learning disabilities, people with a foreign or migrant background, ex-offenders, etc.). The social economy sector in the EU not only weathered the Great Recession much better than other sectors, but it also played a counter-cyclical and innovative role at a time of great economic and social disruption.<sup>436</sup> As has been argued, "*the social economy has contributed to creating new jobs, retaining jobs in sectors and businesses in crisis and/or threatened by closure, increasing job stability, shifting jobs from the black economy to the official one, keeping skills alive (e.g. crafts), exploring new occupations (e.g. social educator) and developing*

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<sup>436</sup> For example, during the first phase of the Great Recession (2008-2010) employment in the social economy held much better than in the private sector – See European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), (2012). *The Social Economy in the European Union*, <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/qe-30-12-790-en-c.pdf>

*routes into work, especially for disadvantaged groups and the socially excluded*".<sup>437</sup> In addition, they often provide social services and/or goods and services to those at risk of poverty or exclusion.<sup>438</sup> Although there is a wide range of social enterprises, three major types of social enterprise are most prominent:<sup>439</sup> (i) those which provide employment for people in vulnerable situations; for example, the so-called Work Integration Social Enterprise (WISE) seek to improve the employment prospects of those furthest from the labour market through a wider range of work-based opportunities e.g. work placements, training, etc.; (ii) those which deliver services, e.g. welfare services, childcare, local/community services, environment/recycling; and (iii) those which provide value-based goods/services especially fair trade.

**Objectives** – These actions aim at (i) support the labour market integration of people in vulnerable situations through social enterprises; and (ii) support social enterprises and their ecosystems, as well as the third sector overall, to ultimately develop the sector as engine of growth.

**Actions** - The actions implemented under Type 5 are divided in actions directed to individuals and actions directed to entities, these are:

1. Actions directed to individuals

- Help in setting up a social enterprise or business in the social economy
- Capacity building activities for social enterprises through advice, consultancy, training, guidance, marketing and consultancy training, exchange of information
- Training to develop entrepreneurial skills for social enterprises and the third sector
- Ad-hoc support to aid the job integration in social enterprises
- Actions directed to entities
- Support for promoting the cooperation, networking and development of social enterprises
- Implementation of pilot projects on innovative approaches in the third sector
- Subsidies for social enterprises to employ and train (job placements, internships, etc.) people in vulnerable situations

**Assumptions** – As indicated these actions have the twofold objective of supporting the labour market integration of people in vulnerable situations and supporting the growth of social enterprises and the third sector. Actions directed to individuals assume that there are jobs available in the social economy and third sector. They also assume that the actions provide participants with the right skills needed to set up a social enterprises and operate a social enterprises and that the ad-hoc support provided to aid the integration into the company is tailored to the challenges faced by the individual.

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<sup>437</sup> European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), (2012). *The Social Economy in the European Union*, <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/qe-30-12-790-en-c.pdf>

<sup>438</sup> European Commission, (2014). *Draft Thematic Guidance Fiche for Desk Officers – Social Economy and Social Enterprises*, Version 2 – 27/01/2014, [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance\\_social\\_inclusion.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_social_inclusion.pdf)

<sup>439</sup> Spear, R., (2013). *Social entrepreneurship and other models to secure employment for those most in need*

Similarly, to other type of actions containing training elements the quality of the support provided in relation to content, methodologies and teachers delivering the training is fundamental to achieve the intended results.

For actions directed to entities, it is important that they are tailored to the specific needs and characteristics of the area whether enterprises are operating, as well as to support their provision of services and goods that are in demand. This is crucial for the sustainability of the enterprises as well as to ensure quality and sustainably employment.

**Results** - The actions are expected to lead to a range of results at participant level and entity level.

At participant level these actions are expected to lead to:

- Take up of advice/counselling/guidance
- Participation in education and training (focussed on entrepreneurial skills in the third sector)
- Gain a qualification
- Enhancement of entrepreneurial skills professional skills (e.g. business, management, accountancy, etc)
- Changes in soft-skills of participants primarily:
  - practical work-focused skills (e.g. time management)
  - interpersonal skills (e.g. communication, social skills and coping with authority, ability to get on and work with people, team-working, individual appearance/presentation)
  - personal skills and attributes (e.g. self-management, insight, motivation, self-esteem, confidence, reliability and health awareness)

At entity level these actions are expected to lead to:

- Creation of new social enterprises
- Increase collaboration and networks between social enterprises and/or other businesses and education providers
- Improve capacity of social enterprises

**Impact** – These actions are expected to have a range of impacts.

The expected impact on individuals is:

- Increased likelihood of employment (including self-employment) in social enterprises
- Acquisition of a quality and sustainable job in social enterprises/third sector
- Increased income prospects

The expected impact on entities is:

- Increased survival rates for social enterprises

## **Type 6: Actions influencing attitudes and systems**

**Rationale** – The intention behind TO9 i.e. supporting the social inclusion of people in conditions of vulnerability with coordinated actions and integrated approaches requires also wider changes in society as well as expertise from different stakeholders in designing and implementing the integrated actions.

The literature demonstrated that campaigns have the capacity to influence behavioural changes, for example drinking and smoking habits, weight management. The literature also shows that the time is an important factor as shorter interventions were found achieving larger impacts and greater adherence. From a design and methodological perspective, these interventions need to be goal oriented, need to show a wide range of consequences and provide support with goal settings if appropriate.<sup>440</sup> The literature identified key elements of successful awareness raising campaigns: the planning of the campaign should define clear goals, the needs to be addressed and the gaps; a clear identification of the target group(s) to guide the assessment of needs, definition of goals and methodology of the campaigns; the messages should be developed in a way that capture the attention of and motivate the audience as well as suggest feasible solutions; the design and implementation phase should involve partners and relevant stakeholders; proper communication channels should be used; finally the campaigns are more effective when they are linked to wider policies and strategies.<sup>441</sup>

The capacity and expertise of policy makers and all stakeholders involved in designing and implementing complex TO9 actions is a critical factor for the success of ESF-funded projects in social inclusion. In addition, the novelty of TO9, not only in relation to actions and target groups, but vis-à-vis the theoretical approach in addressing social exclusion and poverty, requires attitudinal and behavioural changes also in public administrations. Therefore, under TO9 a group of actions was dedicated to support the overall implementation of TO9.

**Objectives** – Type 6 actions aim at (i) raise awareness and inform about specific topics of interest with the aim of increasing the knowledge of the targeted population, fighting stereotypes, changing attitudes and behaviour (e.g. gender equality, antidiscrimination, health awareness); (ii) strengthen and enhance the capacity of organisations with the aim of improving the design and delivery of services (e.g. social services, health care services, employment services).

**Actions** - The actions implemented under Type 6 are divided in actions directed to individuals and actions directed to entities, these are:

1. Actions directed to individuals

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<sup>440</sup> Cugelman B, Thelwall M, Dawes P: Online interventions for social marketing health behavior change campaigns: A meta-analysis of psychological architectures and adherence factors. *J Med Internet Res* 2011;13:1–25  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3221338/>

<sup>441</sup> European Literacy Policy Network, The key features of successful awareness raising campaigns [http://www.elinet.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user\\_upload/The\\_key\\_features\\_of\\_successful\\_awareness\\_raising\\_campaigns\\_10-15\\_LM\\_ELINET.pdf](http://www.elinet.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/The_key_features_of_successful_awareness_raising_campaigns_10-15_LM_ELINET.pdf)

- Awareness raising and information campaigns (e.g. health awareness programmes, health prevention campaigns, healthy lifestyle campaigns, diseases prevention and control)
- Activities to promote corporate social responsibility and the potential of social entrepreneurship and third sector in the fight against social exclusion and unemployment
- Actions directed to entities
- Development of tools, guidelines, coordination protocols between services (e.g. social care and health care services)
- Training to professionals working in the health care, social services, public employment services (PES)
- Studies and evaluations of existing institutions
- Structural support for strengthening institutional capacity
- Training and awareness raising activities aimed at enhancing the participation of social enterprises in public procurement market
- Design, implementation and enhancement of community-led local development (CLLD) strategies

**Assumptions** – Type 6 covers a wide range of actions directed to people and entities. For example, health-related awareness raising campaigns and education programmes aim to increase awareness on major lifestyle-related health determinants, which address in particular people in vulnerable situations, so that they are better informed and, hopefully, able to make 'healthier lifestyle' choices. Campaigns promoting corporate social responsibility seek to influence employers' attitudes to gain their support in combating discrimination by developing more inclusive and diverse workplace (e.g. by including in recruitment and selection practices people in vulnerable conditions).

The actions under Type 6 operations are also geared toward enhancing the capacity of organisations involved in addressing these needs. For example, to reach and engage those furthest from the labour market and most marginalised, e.g. Roma, the relevant professionals (e.g. in healthcare and social care, education services, public employment services) need to be properly trained and/or use a variety of channels (including cultural mediators).

In addition, the actions directed to develop information systems and implement studies allow for a better understanding a phenomenon so that interventions can be better targeted, monitored and evaluated.

All actions under Type 6 are thus aimed at trigger and support changes which influence the overall environment, from people in vulnerable situations to policy makers and organisations involved in supporting these people.

**Results** – The actions are expected to lead to a range of results at participant level and entity level. These are:

At participant level these actions are expected to lead to:

- Attitudinal behavioural changes (e.g. healthier lifestyle) in people in vulnerable situations
- Improved health literacy
- Improved skills and knowledge among professionals in public services

- Improved understanding of causes and consequences of discrimination
- Increased levels of employment opportunities for target groups (e.g. as part of corporate social responsibility)
- At entity level these actions are expected to lead to:
- Improved ability among public services to design and deliver services to meet a wide range of users' requirements
- Improve ability among public services to tackle barriers to users accessing services
- Increased cooperation among CLLD's LAGs' partners
- Increased networking and participation in socially inclusive local development

**Impacts -**

The actions are expected to have a range of impacts.

The expected impact on individuals is:

- Reduced experiences of discrimination
- Increased levels of employment in the social economy
- Improved the perceived quality of public service delivery
- Improved health status
- The expected impact on entities is:
- Improved effectiveness of public services
- Engaged relevant partners in providing assistance to target groups
- Increased awareness among organisations of the potential impact of policy and practices

Figure 14. Type 1: Employment-focussed actions

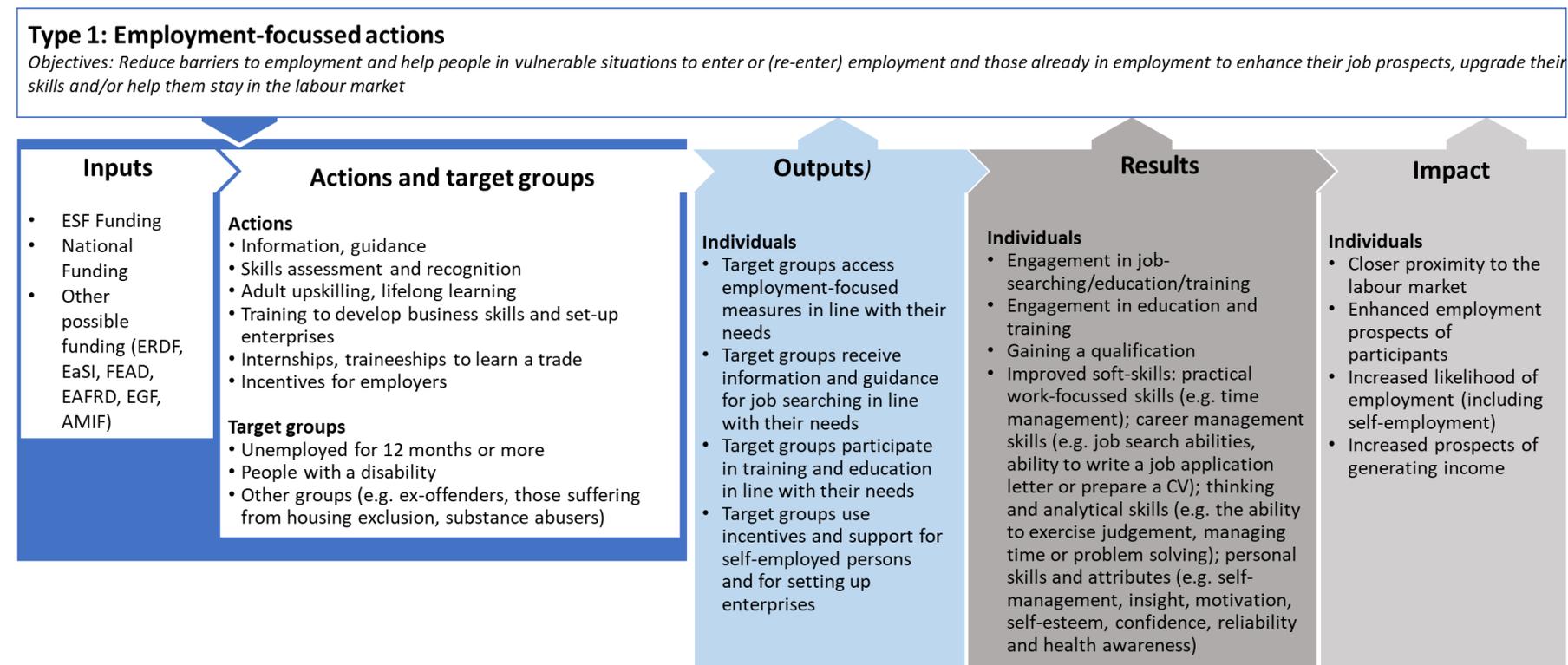


Figure 15. Type 2: Actions to enhance basic skills

**Type 2: Actions to enhance basic skills**

*Objective: Enhance the employment prospects of people in vulnerable situations by providing them with the basic skills they need to ‘move closer’ to or enter and progress in the labour market*

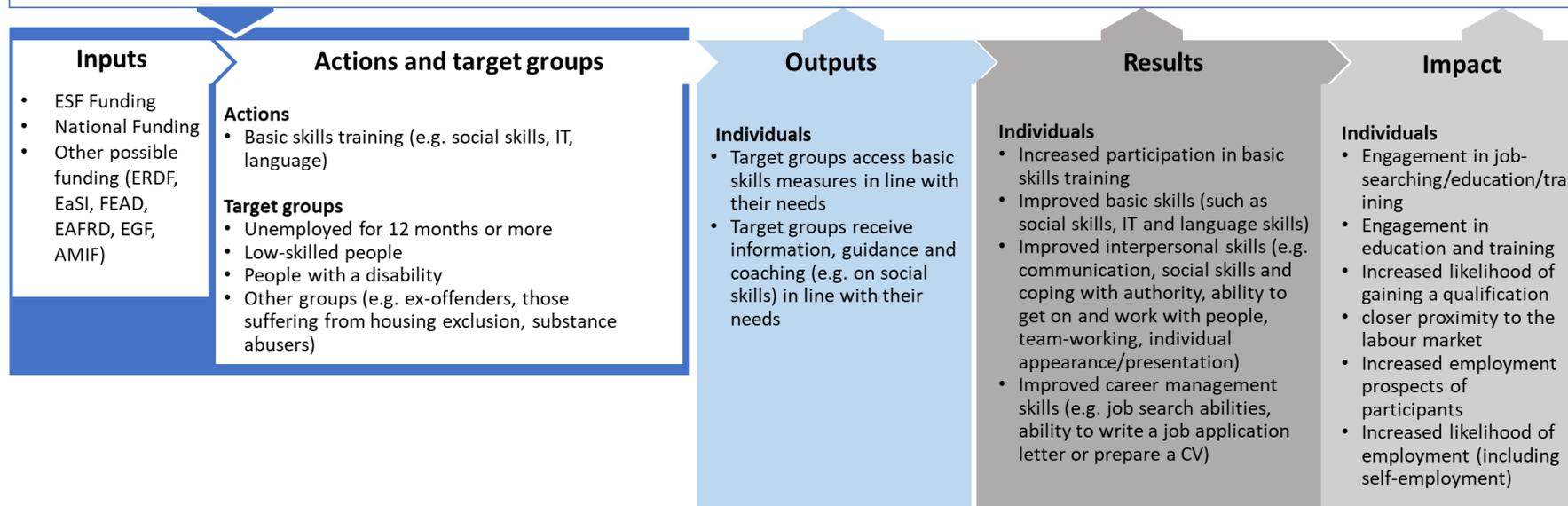


Figure 16. Type 3: Basic school education

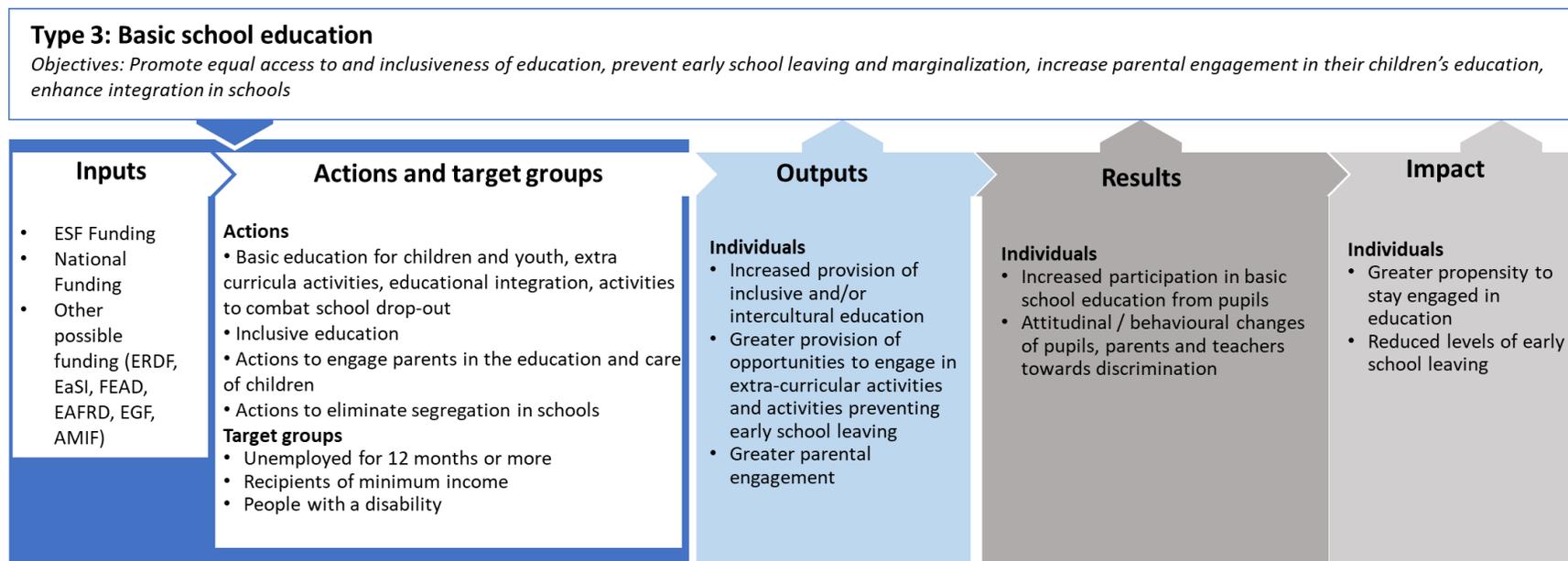


Figure 17. Type 4: Access to services

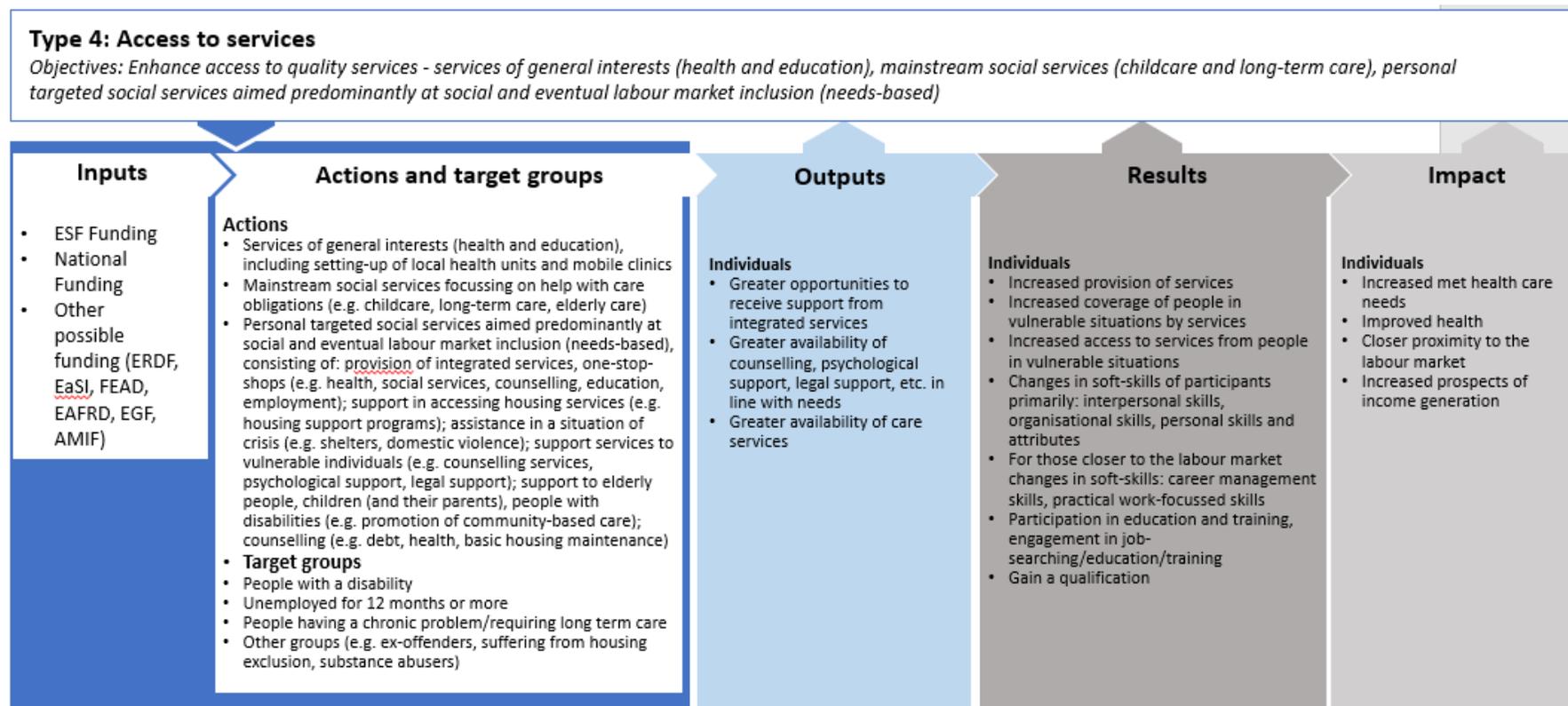


Figure 18. Type 5: Social entrepreneurship

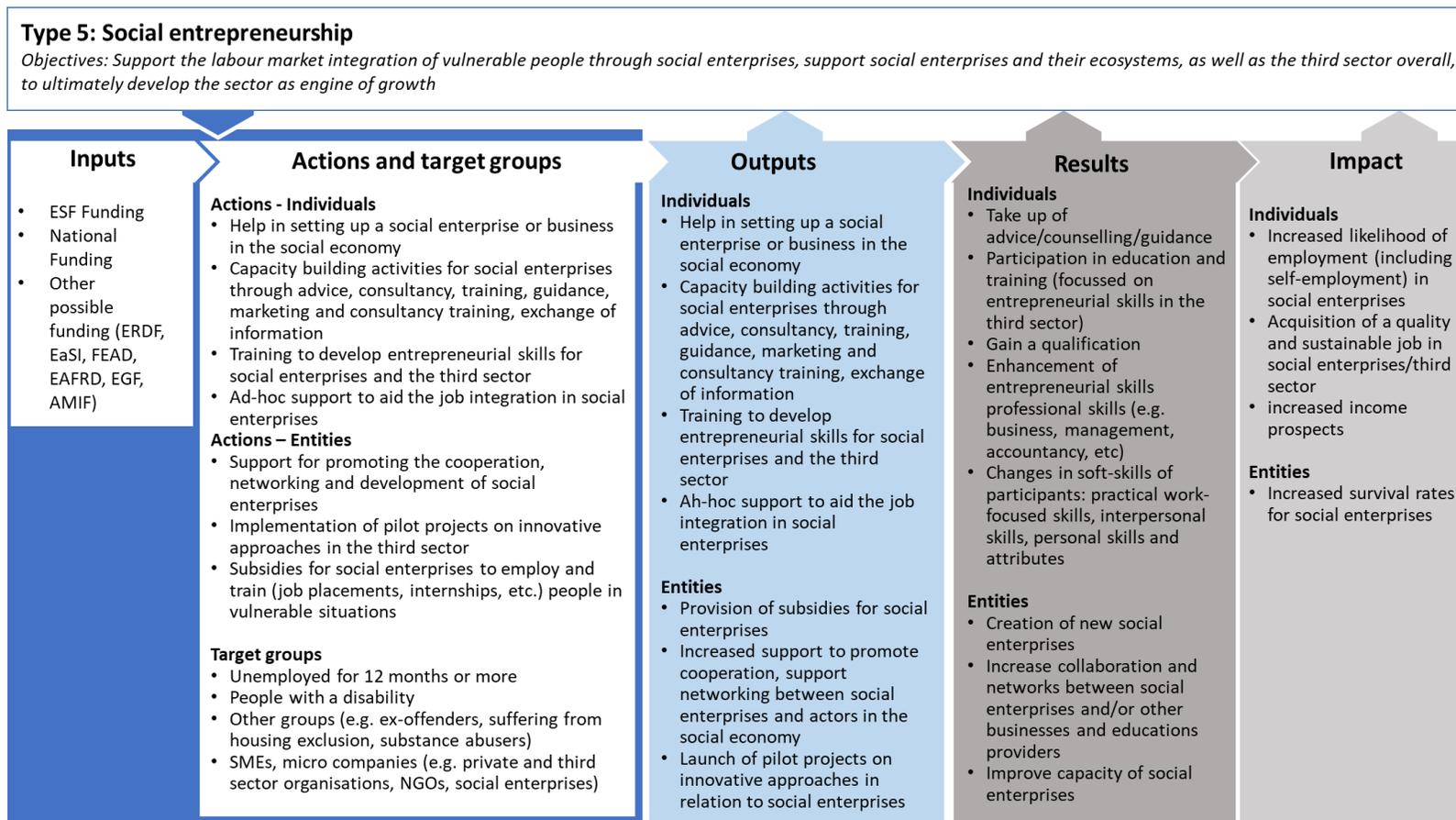
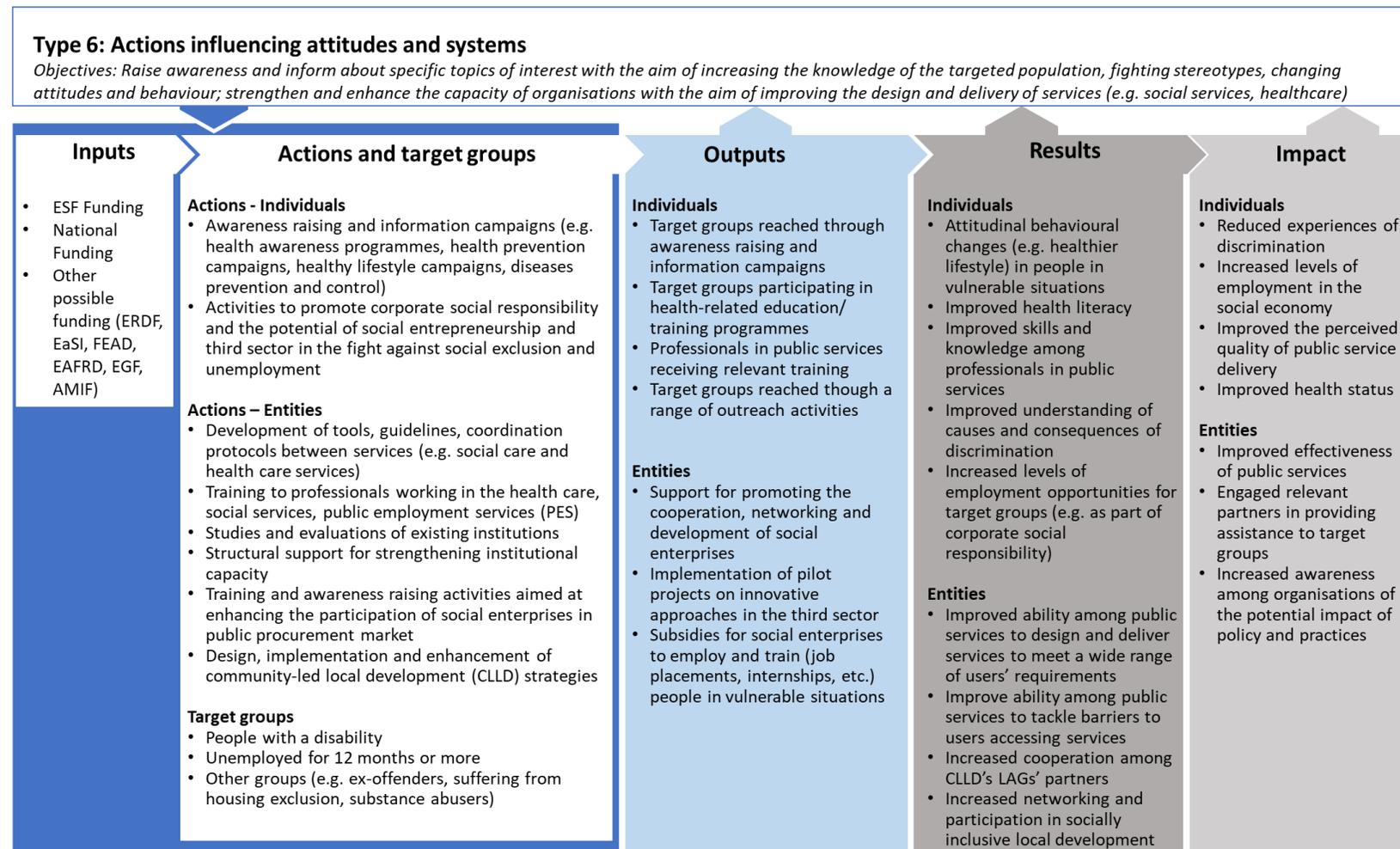


Figure 19. Type 6: Actions influencing attitudes and systems



## ANNEX 3 - BASELINE ASSESSMENT OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND ITS EVOLUTION OVER TIME

### Overview

Generally, the **EU has seen some improvements in living standards** over the past few years, with severe material deprivation declining. This is considered to have at least partly resulted from increasing real median income and household incomes, as well as improvements in economic activity and the labour market.<sup>442</sup> Indeed, the gross disposable household income has been increasing in real terms since 2012-2013 across nearly all Member States, although in some this has not yet returned to pre-crisis levels (notably some southern Member States).<sup>443</sup>

Despite these positive developments, as well as the Europe 2020 target of lifting 20 million people out of poverty, **over one fifth of the EU population remains at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE)**.<sup>444</sup> The Europe 2020 target was set before the 2008 economic and financial crisis, which had a detrimental impact on the EU's ability to reach this target.<sup>445</sup> **Inequality is also still stark**. Whilst the redistributive effects of taxes and social transfers have gone some way to stabilise it, this impact differed across the EU, with income inequality in fact widening since 2012 in some Member States. Households are also receiving less support in social benefits, and levels of financial distress among the poorest people remain high (in 2017, 9% of adults in the EU in low-income households were in debt, compared with 4% of the total population).<sup>446</sup>

**Poverty is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon** which goes beyond levels of income. It can be measured in different ways and people can experience multiple dimensions of poverty. Poverty is based on, and manifests itself through a number of factors, including low incomes, material deprivation, low work intensity, and housing deprivation.<sup>447</sup> Both individual and wider social factors, such as public policies, can impact an individual's material assets.<sup>448</sup> Generally, multidimensional poverty in the

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<sup>442</sup> European Commission (2018). Employment and Social Developments in Europe: Annual Review 2018.

<sup>443</sup> European Commission (2018). Employment and Social Developments in Europe: Annual Review 2018.

<sup>444</sup> Eurostat, EU-SILC [ilc\_peps01].

<sup>445</sup> European Commission (2018). Employment and Social Developments in Europe: Annual Review 2018.

<sup>446</sup> European Commission (2018). Employment and Social Developments in Europe: Annual Review 2018.

<sup>447</sup> European Commission, (2016). *Social Inclusion - European Semester Thematic Factsheet*, November.

<sup>448</sup> Israel, S. & Spannagel, D. (2013), *Material Deprivation – an Analysis of cross-country Differences and European Convergence*. FP7 project 'Combating Poverty in Europe: Re-organising Active Inclusion through Participatory and Integrated Modes

EU has seen a decline since 2014. This is measured using the EU's indicator on material and social deprivation, which decreased from 19.3% in 2014 to 12.8% in 2018 in the EU-28.<sup>449</sup> It is defined as the proportion of people living in households who cannot afford at least five of 13 specified items.<sup>450</sup> **Multidimensional poverty also varies significantly across Member States**, countries such as Romania and Bulgaria have concerning high rates of material and social deprivation, with nearly one in two people being materially deprived (47.7% and 44.4% respectively).<sup>451</sup> This presents a stark contrast to Member States such as Sweden, Luxembourg and Finland, which have very low rates of multidimensional poverty (2.8%, 3.9% and 5.3% respectively). It has been argued that these differences are at least partly a result of varying levels of social protection and inclusion and social stratification between Central and Eastern European countries and Nordic countries.<sup>452</sup> Generally, countries with social democratic welfare regimes - as found in Nordic countries - tend to experience lower levels of material deprivation than other welfare regimes.<sup>453</sup>

**In-work poverty** is not necessarily a new phenomenon, but it **continues to persist across the EU** and has seen a rise since 2008.<sup>454</sup> In-work poverty is defined as people

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of Multilevel Governance'. Work Package 3 – Poverty and its socio-economic structure in Europe.

<sup>449</sup> Eurostat, EU-SILC [ilc\_md07]

<sup>450</sup> Since 2014, these items are collected annually in each country. Seven deprivation items relate to the person's household and six to the person. The seven household deprivation items refer to the inability for a household to: (1) face unexpected expenses; (2) afford one week annual holiday away from home; (3) avoid arrears (in mortgage, rent, utility bills and/or hire purchase instalments); (4) afford a meal with meat, chicken or fish or vegetarian equivalent every second day; (5) afford keeping their home adequately warm; (6) have access to a car/van for personal use; and (7) replace worn-out furniture. The six personal deprivation items refer to the inability for a person to: (1) replace worn-out clothes with some new ones; (2) have two pairs of properly fitting shoes; (3) spend a small amount of money each week on him/herself ("pocket money"); (4) have regular leisure activities; (5) get together with friends/family for a drink/meal at least once a month; and (6) have an internet connection. The six personal items are collected at the "adult" level, i.e. for all persons aged 16 or over – See European Commission, (2017). *The new EU indicator of material and social deprivation*

<sup>451</sup> Eurostat, EU-SILC [ilc\_md07]

<sup>452</sup> Israel, S. & Spannagel, D. (2013), *Material Deprivation – an Analysis of cross-country Differences and European Convergence*. FP7 project 'Combating Poverty in Europe: Re-organising Active Inclusion through Participatory and Integrated Modes of Multilevel Governance'. Work Package 3 – Poverty and its socio-economic structure in Europe.

<sup>453</sup> Yang, L. & Vizard, P. (2017), *Multidimensional poverty and income inequality in the EU*. Understanding the Links between Inequalities and Poverty (LIP). CASEpaper 207/ LIPpaper 4.

<sup>454</sup> European Parliament (2016), *Poverty in the European Union: The crisis and its aftermath*. European Parliamentary Research Service.

who are in employment and live in a household that is at risk of poverty.<sup>455</sup> Arguably, the **increased prevalence of atypical and precarious employment** has had an impact on in-work poverty,<sup>456</sup> especially in the aftermath of the 2008 economic and financial crisis when employers were less willing to hire employees on full-time open-ended contracts due to economic uncertainty.<sup>457</sup> Non-standard work, such as temporary contracts and part-time employment often entail low pay and work intensity, thus contributing to increasing the risk of in-work poverty.<sup>458</sup> In 2018, the in-work poverty rate across the EU-28 remained at 9.6%, the same as in 2014 (9.5%) (people aged 18 – 64).<sup>459</sup> Whilst this rate may not seem drastically high, it represents over 20 million workers in the EU, the same number of people which the Europe 2020 target aims to lift out of poverty and social exclusion.<sup>460</sup> In-work poverty rates are **significantly higher for people who are self-employed** (22.2%) compared to employees (7.4%) in the EU-28, although this gap varies across Member States.<sup>461</sup> In terms of employees, those on temporary and part-time contracts face a higher rate of in-work poverty (16.2% and 15.6% respectively) than full-time employees (7.7%).<sup>462</sup>

The **in-work poverty rate also varies considerably across Member States**. The lowest rates are found in Finland (2.7%) and Czechia (3.6%), whilst Italy, Greece, Spain and Luxembourg have some of the highest rates (12.3% - 13.7%). Italy, Greece and Spain were particularly hard hit by the 2008 economic and financial crisis, which led to high rates of unemployment. In such Southern European countries, whilst there is generally strong regulation of the labour market, segments of the labour market which are typically predominated by marginalised communities are much less regulated. Moreover, the high regulations and limited labour activation and family policies create barriers for women and young people to enter the labour market, thus placing greater pressure on the main earner of the household and therefore increasing the risk of in-work poverty.<sup>463</sup> Countries such as Italy and Greece also have a high share of self-employed workers. Despite these explanations for the Southern European countries,

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<sup>455</sup> European Commission (2019). In-work poverty in Europe: A study of national policies.

<sup>456</sup> European Parliament (2016), *Poverty in the European Union: The crisis and its aftermath*. European Parliamentary Research Service.

<sup>457</sup> European Commission, (2018). *Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) – Annual Review 2018*.

<sup>458</sup> European Commission, (2016). *Social Inclusion - European Semester Thematic Factsheet*.

<sup>459</sup> Eurostat, EU-SILC [ilc\_iw01]

<sup>460</sup> European Commission (2019). In-work poverty in Europe: A study of national policies.

<sup>461</sup> European Commission (2019). In-work poverty in Europe: A study of national policies.

<sup>462</sup> European Commission (2019). In-work poverty in Europe: A study of national policies.

<sup>463</sup> Eurofound (2017), *In-work poverty in the EU*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

studies have not yet been able to identify a sound explanation for the high rate of in-work poverty in Luxembourg and consider this country to be an outlier.<sup>464</sup>

Several factors can increase the risk of in-work poverty. In terms of socio-demographic characteristics, **educational attainment and country of birth** are some of the most notable factors. The in-work poverty rate for people who have only completed elementary education was 19.3% in 2018, over four times higher than for people with tertiary education. In terms of country of birth, people from non-EU countries face the highest risk of in-work poverty (20.3%), compared to natives (8.3%). Whilst differences across age groups and gender are not as notable, studies show that if household income is measured at the individual level, the **risk of in-work poverty significantly increases for women**, as this overcomes the common assumption that resources are shared equally within households.<sup>465</sup> Women and men also face in-work poverty for different reasons; men are more likely to face in-work poverty due to their household situation (for instance if they are the main or sole earner in the household), whereas women are more likely to be at risk due to the nature of their employment.<sup>466</sup>

This Section provides an overview of relevant indicators in relation to poverty and social exclusion, trends over time in Europe and groups most at risk. This context sets the background within which the OPs were initially drawn up and the way this context has evolved over time. A detailed analysis of the socio-economic context and Eurostat indicators, by Member State is provided in Annex 1.

In 2018,<sup>467</sup> 21.9% of the EU-28 population was still **at risk of poverty or social exclusion**. Despite a slow decline between 2014 and 2018, the proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion remains high (Figure 20). Children (less than 18 years old) were the age group at greatest risk of poverty or social exclusion.<sup>468</sup> Across countries strong regional disparities persist; countries with relatively high regional inequalities include Italy, Spain and Hungary (see Table 22 for estimates of regional dispersion for this indicator).

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<sup>464</sup> Spannagel, D. & Ossietzky, C.V. (2013), *In-work Poverty in Europe: Extent, Structure and Causal Mechanisms*. Universität Oldenburg.

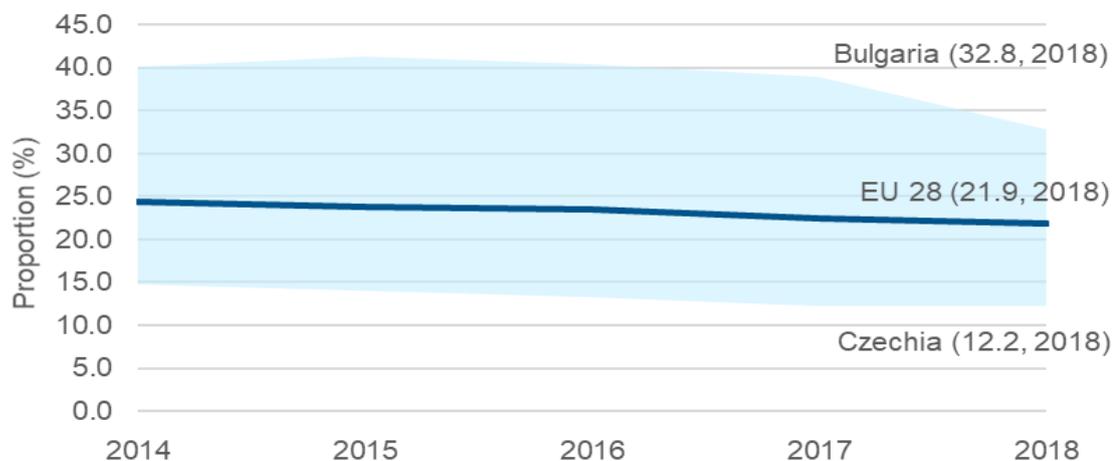
<sup>465</sup> European Commission (2019). In-work poverty in Europe: A study of national policies.

<sup>466</sup> EIGE (2016), *Poverty, gender and intersecting inequalities in the EU – Review of the implementation of Area A: Women and Poverty of the Beijing Platform for Action*.

<sup>467</sup> Data are provided on the basis of the latest available year

<sup>468</sup> Eurostat, 2019. Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion.  
[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Children\\_at\\_risk\\_of\\_poverty\\_or\\_social\\_exclusion#Children\\_growing\\_up\\_in\\_poverty\\_and\\_social\\_exclusion](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Children_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion#Children_growing_up_in_poverty_and_social_exclusion)

Figure 20. Proportion of the EU population at risk of poverty and social exclusion (2014-2017)



Source: Eurostat, *People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex [ilc\_peps01]*, extracted on 18 December 2019. Notes: The line is the EU28 average; the light blue area represents the variation around the average

The proportion of people suffering from **material and social deprivation** declined between 2014 and 2018 from 19.3% to 12.8% in the EU-28. However, certain groups (people with low education, the inactive, children, women, people living in rural areas and people with disabilities) have seen little improvement in relation to this indicator.

The proportion of people in the EU-28 experiencing **severe housing deprivation** slightly declined from 5% to 4% between 2014 and 2018. The groups suffering the most are people earning below 60% of median equivalised income, tenants, households with dependent children, people in rural areas and Roma.

**Access to services** is a key factor in the fight against poverty. The proportion of people in the EU-28 self-reporting unmet needs for medical examination strongly declined from 6.7% to 3.6% between 2014 and 2018. However, strong inequalities persist across certain groups of the population, with people in lower income groups, the unemployed, people with low education and people living in rural areas more likely to report unmet needs for medical examination. The first reason for these unmet needs is the high cost, followed by long waiting lists. Although in 2016, 45% of EU children aged 3 and up to the minimum compulsory school age received formal childcare services, this varied widely between countries. Such country variations ranged from 95.9% in Denmark to less than 15% in other Member States (e.g. IT, HU, EE, ES).

**Regional disparities in terms of unemployment persist while the prevalence of in-work poverty was high and stable over time.** Although unemployment rates declined between 2014 and 2018, strong regional disparities persist (e.g. FR, BE, BG, IT). On average, in 2018, 43.2% of unemployed people in Europe have been long-term unemployed (this has decreased by 6.1 percentage points since 2014).

Although employment is generally seen as a route out of poverty, in 2018 the EU average of in-work poverty rate was 9.5%, unchanged from 2014. Groups more at risk of in-work poverty are people in households with low work intensity, single parents with dependent children, people with low education, migrants, people with a disability and young people.

## **The baseline situation for the EU-28**

This section describes the baseline of socio-economic indicators relevant to TO9. The scope of the analysis includes all EU Member States from 2014 to 2018 (the EU-28). All data is sourced from Eurostat using data from the EU Survey on Living Conditions (SILC) and EU Labour Force Survey (LFS), with the exception of data on Roma, which is sourced from the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (EU FRA) 2016 survey on Minorities and Discrimination in the EU.

In this section, the baseline situation is described using indicators for monitoring poverty and exclusion that are already established in existing monitoring frameworks such as the Social Scoreboard monitoring the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Employment and the Social Protection Committees monitoring frameworks of the employment and social protection situation, and Eurostat's framework monitoring selected indicators against the United Nations Social Development Goals in the EU context. The baseline situation spans 2014 to 2018 and describes the status quo and current trend regarding poverty and exclusion. To ensure comparability between Member States, 2018 data is only used if available across all Member States, or when no 2017 data is available for an individual Member State. Where data is available, and where relevant, the baseline discusses the recent trend and status quo of specific groups (young and old people, women, unemployed and inactive, those with low educational attainment, those living in rural areas, people with activity limitations and Roma), and highlights the existence of differences between NUTS2 regions.

The first part of this section discusses baseline indicators that describe various dimensions of poverty in the EU from 2014 to 2018. The indicators in focus are the at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) rate, the material and social deprivation rate, and the severe housing deprivation rate.

The second part of this section discusses access to services, in particular health care and childcare. Providing people with public services is important in supporting them out of poverty. For this reason, the Social Scoreboard monitoring the European Pillar of Social Rights includes indicators on health care and early childhood education and care. These indicators will also inform this section.

The third and last section discusses inclusion in the labour market. The section focuses on the active population who are still excluded, i.e. the unemployed (including an analysis of long-term unemployed and young people not in employment, education or training), or those who are working but still experience poverty (the in-work poverty rate).

The table below summarises, for each section, which indicators are discussed. It also highlights which indicators are analysed at the regional level, the regional dimension being key to ESF. Where indicators are not analysed by region, this is due to regional data not being available at the NUTS2 level, or availability being very limited. Most indicators analysed here come from the EU SILC survey. NUTS2 is not a mandatory variable in this survey and therefore Member States may choose not to collect data at this level. This also explains why, where regional data is analysed, data are not complete. For countries that do collect EU SILC at the NUTS2 level, only selected indicators are provided at the NUTS2 level. The reason for this is that the high level of disaggregation often leads to unreliable estimates or risk statistical disclosure of individuals. Please note that some countries do not have NUTS2 regions due to their small size, i.e. Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg and Malta.

Table 21. Indicators analysed as part of the baseline

Section	Source	Indicator	Regional analysis
Poverty and social exclusion; 0	EU SILC	People at risk of poverty or social exclusion	Yes
Poverty and social exclusion; 0	EU SILC	Material and social deprivation rate	Yes
Poverty and social exclusion; 0	EU SILC	Severe housing deprivation rate	No
Access to services; 0	EU SILC	Self-perceived health	No
Access to services; 0	EU SILC	Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination	No, data is available for five Member States only
Access to services; 0	EU SILC	Children receiving formal childcare services	No
Inclusion in the labour market; 0	EU LFS	Unemployment	Yes
Inclusion in the labour market; 0	EU LFS	Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex and NUTS 2 regions (NEET rates)	Yes
Inclusion in the labour market; 0	EU LFS	Long-term unemployment	Yes
Inclusion in the labour market; 0	EU SILC	In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate	No

## Poverty and social exclusion

This section provides an overview of the issue of poverty and social exclusion in Europe by using two established indicators for monitoring inclusion and poverty: (1) the at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate and (2) the severe housing deprivation rate. The section also considers a third indicator: the rate of material and social deprivation. The AROPE<sup>469</sup> rate is discussed first. The proportion of people at risk of poverty or social

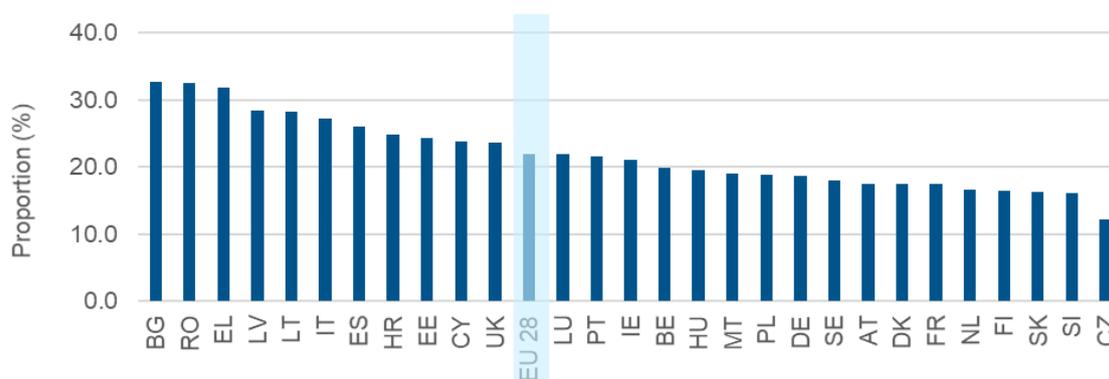
<sup>469</sup> People are considered to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion if they experience one or more of the following three conditions: (i) Being severely materially deprived; (ii) Living in a jobless household or household with very low work intensity; (iii) Being at risk of poverty. People who are at risk of poverty have an equivalised disposable income (after social transfer) that is below the at-risk-of-poverty. This threshold is set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers. People experiencing severe material deprivation are those that express the inability to afford four of nine items which are considered by most people to be desirable or necessary to be able to live an adequate life. People living in a household with a very low work intensity live in

exclusion is a widely used indicator in monitoring the social situation in Europe. It is a headline indicator in the Europe 2020 framework, the Social Scoreboard monitoring the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals in a EU context. It also informs the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure as a context indicator and is used by the Social Protection Committee and Employment Committee in their Social Protection Performance monitor and Employment Performance Monitor. Secondly, the material and social deprivation rate is discussed.<sup>470</sup> The severe material deprivation rate is a common indicator used across the aforementioned monitoring frameworks. To include the social dimension, the analysis presented here focuses on the material and social deprivation rate. Finally, the section discusses the severe housing deprivation rate, which is used in the Social Scoreboard to measure living conditions and poverty. The indicator is a measure of poor amenities and represents the part of the population whose basic needs (i.e. appropriate housing) are not met. This, in turn, forms part of the barrier to social inclusion and stands in the way of a route out of poverty.

### Indicator 1: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion

In 2018, 21.9% of the EU population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion, i.e. more than one one-fifth of the population. Bulgaria, Romania and Greece had the highest proportions of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, with more than one in every three persons being at risk, as illustrated by Figure 21.

Figure 21. Proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by Member State, 2018



Source: Eurostat, *People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex [ilc\_peps01]*, extracted on 18 December 2019.

### Trends over time

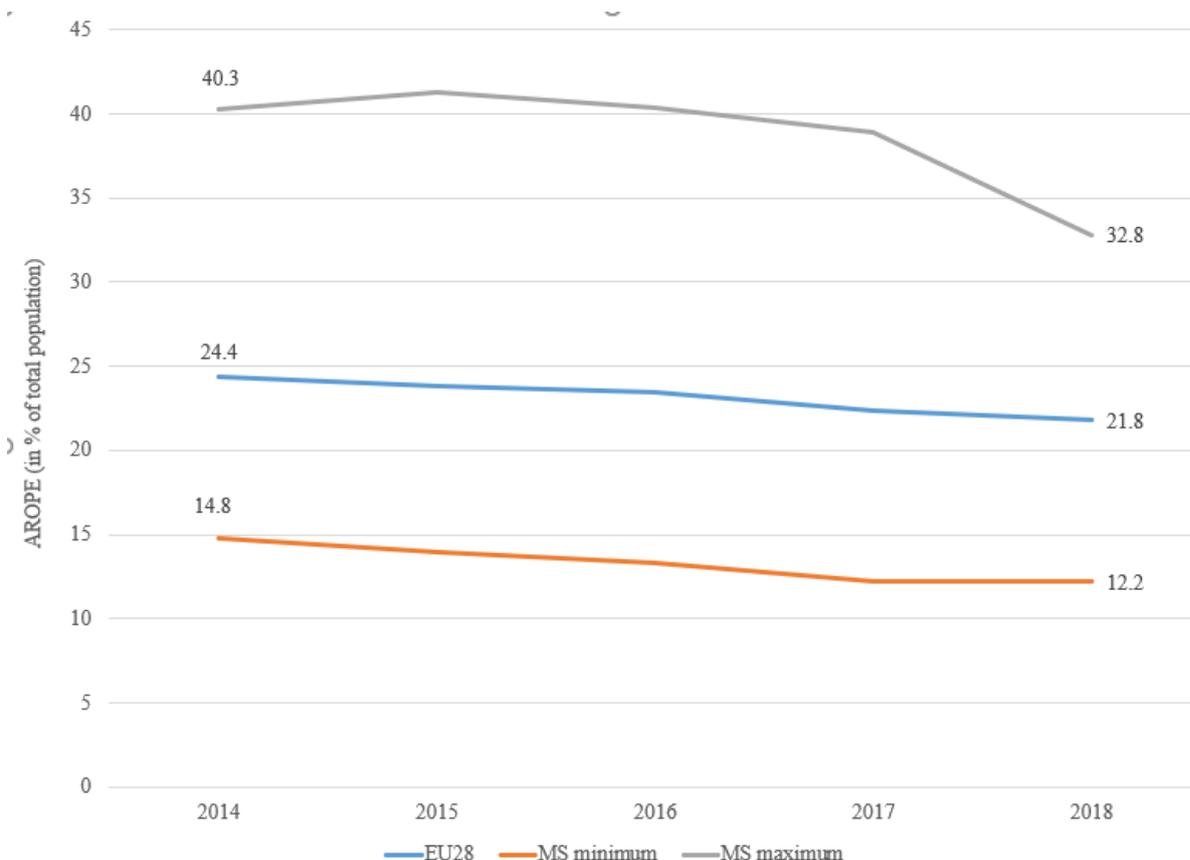
While the proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion remains high, it has declined slightly over the period from 2014 to 2018, including in Bulgaria, Romania and Greece. The baseline assessment finds that the number of persons at risk of poverty or

households where the working age household members worked less than 20 % of their total potential during the previous twelve months.

<sup>470</sup> People are considered to be materially or socially deprived if they could not afford any five items of a list of 13 items. The list can be viewed at Eurostat, via: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20171212-1>

social exclusion in the EU decreased by about 12 million over the time frame between 2014 and 2018. This represents a decline of 2.7% in the proportion of people living at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The highest increase occurred in Luxembourg, where the proportion of people at risk was 2.9 percentage points higher in 2018 than it was in 2014.

Figure 22. Proportion of the EU population at risk of poverty or social exclusion between 2014 and 2018



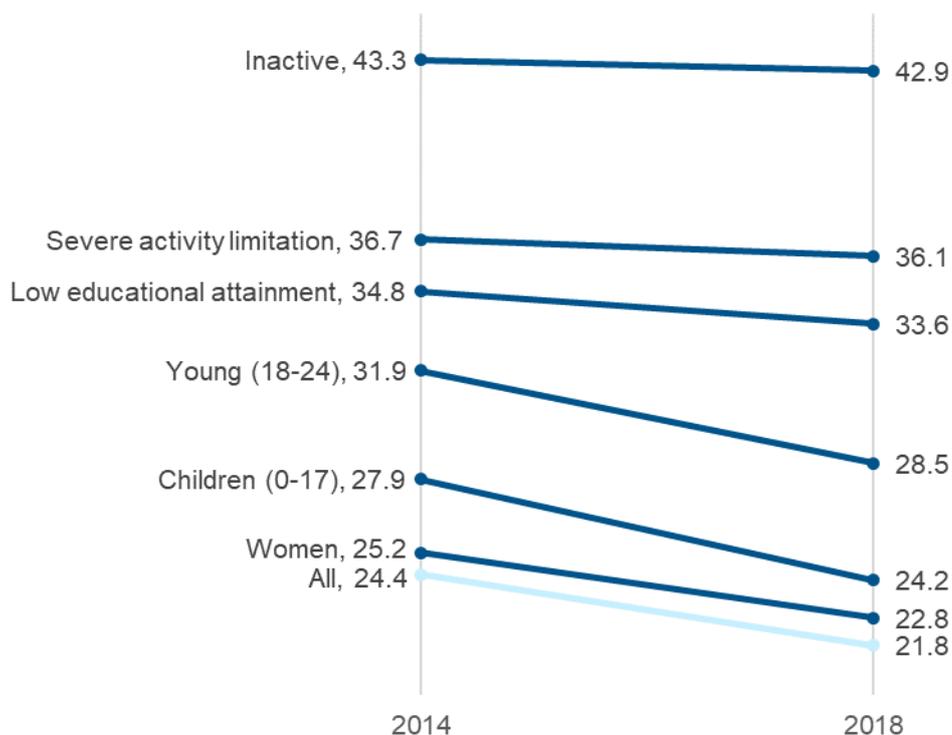
Source: Eurostat, *People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex [ilc\_peps01]*, extracted on 17 June 18 December 2019.

Notes: The line is the EU28 average; the light blue area represents the variation around the average

### Groups most at risk of poverty or social exclusion

The decrease in the proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, however, has not been shared equally across the population. Certain groups are at risk of falling behind because they either experience a higher risk of poverty or social exclusion, or because there is little improvement in the proportion who are at risk, or both. The data presented in this section suggests that this has disproportionately affected children and young people, women, people who are inactive, people with lower educational attainment, people with disabilities and Roma. Figure 23 summarises the proportions of people in these groups who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2014 and 2018 compared to the overall population (All).

Figure 23. Groups most at risk of poverty or social exclusion (proportion of group at risk in 2014 and 2018)



Source: Eurostat, *People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex [ilc\_peps01], extracted on 18 December 2019 (All, Young, Children, Women); People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by most frequent activity status (population aged 18 and over) [ilc\_peps02], extracted on 18 December 2019 (Inactive); People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by educational attainment level (population aged 18 and over) [ilc\_peps04], extracted on 18 December 2019 (Low educational attainment); People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by level of activity limitation, sex and age [hlth\_dpe010], extracted on 18 December 2019 (Severe activity limitation).*

**Children and young people:** In 2018, young people (aged 18 to 24-year-old) in the EU-28 and children experienced the highest risks of poverty or social exclusion. In 2018, 28.5% of young people and 24.9% of children were at risk compared to 21.8% of the total population. There has been progress over the last few years, however: between 2014 and 2018, the rate for young people decreased by 3.4 percentage points. For children, it declined by 3.7 percentage points.<sup>471</sup>

**Women:** Women are at a higher risk than men, and the proportion of women who are at risk is declining slower than that of men. In 2018, the proportion of women at risk of poverty or social exclusion was 1.0 percentage points higher than the Eu average. As, on average, women are already at a higher risk of poverty or social exclusion, the rate of decline should be higher than that of men to obtain equality. The proportion of people

<sup>471</sup> Eurostat dataset ilc\_peps01 "People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex", available from: [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_peps01&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_peps01&lang=en)

at risk of poverty or social exclusion, however, decreased slightly more for the EU population overall as compared with women only (2.6 percentage points compared to 2.4) between 2014 and 2018.<sup>472</sup>

**People who are inactive:** Another group who are at a higher risk of poverty or social exclusion are persons who are inactive. In 2018, 42.9% of inactive people (except retired people) in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, almost twice that of the total population. In 2014, the proportion of the inactive (except retired people) population at risk was 0.4 percentage points higher (43.3%) than in 2018 while for older persons (ages 55 years and up) it was 1.1 percentage points higher (21.7%).<sup>473</sup>

**People with lower educational attainment**<sup>474</sup> are also at a higher risk of poverty or social exclusion. Across the EU-28 in 2018, over a third (33.6%) of people with lower educational attainment were at risk, versus 20.4% of people with medium educational attainment<sup>475</sup> and 10.9% of people with high educational attainment<sup>476</sup>. In Bulgaria, as much as 63.9% of the population with lower educational attainment was at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2018. The decline in the proportion of the population at-risk of poverty or social exclusion has been slowest for those with lower educational attainment. Between 2014 and 2018, the proportion declined by 1.3 percentage points only.<sup>477</sup>

**People with severe activity limitation** (i.e. having a disability or in poor health) are also relatively more at-risk of poverty or social exclusion. In 2018, the rate for people aged 16 years or older with severe activity limitation was 14.7 percentage points higher than the total population of that age (36.2 compared to 21.5) in the EU-28. On average, the proportion of people with a severe activity limitation has declined slowly by 0.6 percentage points between 2014 and 2018 in the EU-28.<sup>478</sup>

**Roma** are a minority group that are particularly at risk of poverty. The 2016 EU FRA survey estimates at-risk-of-poverty rates for Roma (e.g. this is not exactly the same as the at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate). The figure below shows the difference in the at-risk-of-poverty rate for Roma (from EU FRA) versus the overall population of that country (from Eurostat) in 2016. Across the European Member States with data, Roma are on average five time more likely to be at risk of poverty than the overall population.

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<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> Eurostat dataset ilc\_peps02 "People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by most frequent activity status (population aged 18 and over)", available from:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_peps02&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_peps02&lang=en)

<sup>474</sup> ISCED levels 0 to 2: Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education

<sup>475</sup> ISCED levels 3 to 4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education

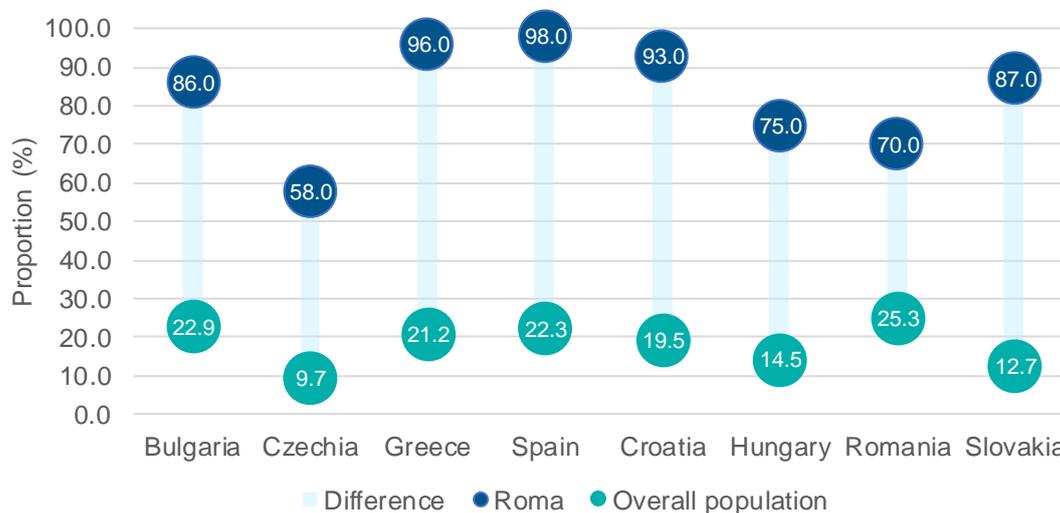
<sup>476</sup> ISCED levels 5 to 8: Tertiary education

<sup>477</sup> Eurostat dataset ilc\_peps04 "People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by educational attainment level (population aged 18 and over)", available from:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_peps04&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_peps04&lang=en)

<sup>478</sup> Eurostat dataset ilc\_peps02, "People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by most frequent activity status (population aged 18 and over)", available home:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_peps02&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_peps02&lang=en)

This is higher in Slovakia (seven times) and Czechia (six times), but this is also driven by their low at-risk-of-poverty rates for the overall population.<sup>479</sup>

Figure 24. At-risk of poverty rate for Roma and the total population, 2016



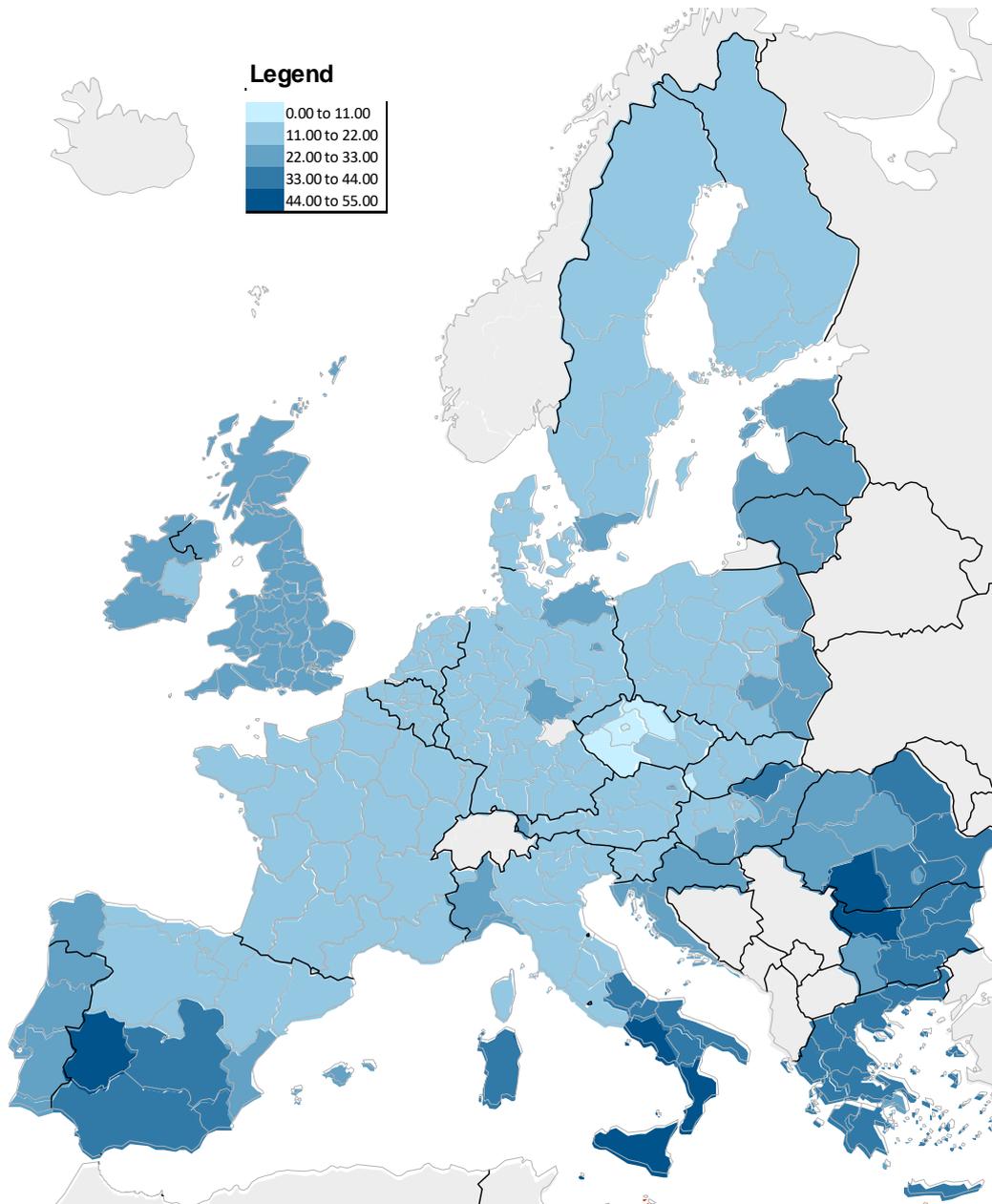
Source: Eurostat (overall rate), at-risk-of-poverty rate [tespm010], extracted on 30 July 2019; EU FRA (Roma rate), at-risk-of-poverty (hw\_arop), extracted on 9 July 2019.

### Regions most at risk of poverty or social exclusion

The map in Figure 25 displays the proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the different NUTS2 areas, insofar data was available by NUTS2. The darker areas represent regions with higher at risk of poverty or social exclusion rates.

<sup>479</sup> FRA (2016) Survey on Minorities and Discrimination in EU: at-risk-of-poverty. Available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-second-eu-minorities-discrimination-survey>

Figure 25. At risk of poverty or social exclusion rate by NUTS2 region, 2018



Source: Eurostat, *People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by NUTS regions [ilc\_peps11]*, extracted on 16 August 2019.

Notes: Data for Belgium, France, Portugal and the UK is for the country level. Data for Greece and Poland is by NUTS1 level. Data for the German region Oberfranken (DE24) is not available.

While the map above provides a visual overview of the regions that have the lowest and highest at-risk rates, it is difficult to discern in which countries the variation is the highest. This is useful to know, as national rates are averages that may hide large regional differences. When this is the case (indicated by a higher dispersion rate in Table 22 below), this country will have some regions that have much higher (but also lower) proportions of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, i.e. higher regional inequality. It shows Italy has the highest amount of regional dispersion, followed by Spain and Hungary, both of which have national rates above the EU average. The

populations of some of the regions of these Member States (also highlighted in the darker blue areas in Figure 25) experience, within the relative context of their Member State, much higher rates of risk of poverty or social exclusion, whereas other regions experience much lower rates.

Table 22. Regional dispersion<sup>480</sup> in the at-risk-of-poverty-or-social-exclusion rate (2017)

Member State	National rate for 2018 (%)	Dispersion of at-risk-of-poverty-or-social-exclusion rate in 2017 (%)	Number of regions
Italy	27.3	40.2	21
Spain	26.1	35.7	19
Hungary	19.6	30.4	8
Slovakia	16.3	28.6	4
Czechia	12.2	27.8	8
Austria	17.5	23.2	9
Romania	32.5	23.1	8
Germany	18.7	17.8	37
Finland	16.5	16.4	4
Sweden	18.0	14.7	8
Bulgaria	32.8	14.1	6
Netherlands	16.7	13.7	12
Ireland	21.1	8.5	3
Croatia	24.8	5.3	2
Denmark	17.4	5.2	5

Source: Eurostat, *People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by NUTS regions [ilc\_peps11]*, extracted on 18 December 2019. Data by NUTS2 regions is not available for Germany and Austria. Data for the Irish regions Border, Midland and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02) and the Hungarian region Közép-Magyarország (HU10) is not available. Data for the Hungarian region Közép-Magyarország (HU10) is from 2017.

## Indicator 2: Material and social deprivation

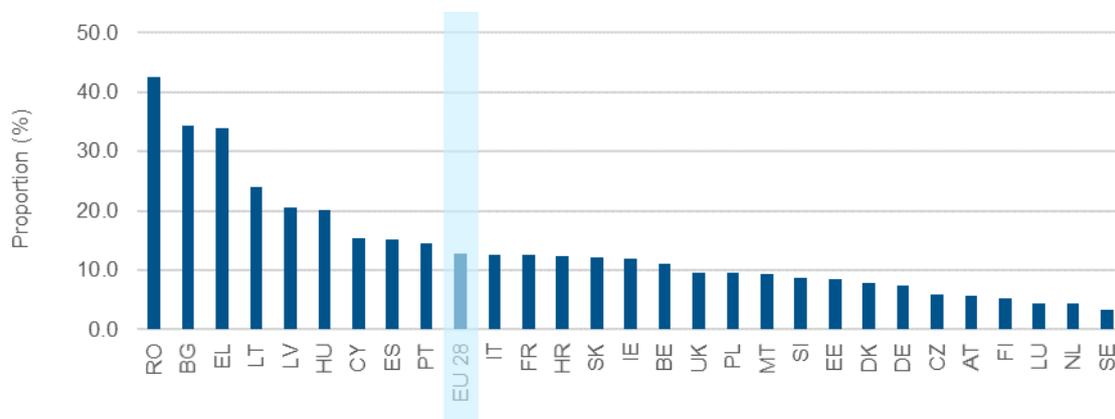
In 2018, 12.8% of the EU population suffered from material and social deprivation<sup>481</sup>. Romania (42.6%) and Bulgaria (34.3%) had the highest material and social deprivation

<sup>480</sup> Regional dispersion has been measured by firstly calculating the relative distance of the regional rate to the national mean. The standard deviation for all regional relative distances for each Member State is used to show regional dispersion.

<sup>481</sup> The indicator presented in this section presents the share of the total population suffering from material and social deprivation. This corresponds to the sum of

rates, affecting nearly half of the population, as illustrated in Figure 26. In Greece (33.9%), over a third of the population was affected.

Figure 26. Proportion of people suffering from material and social deprivation by Member State, 2018



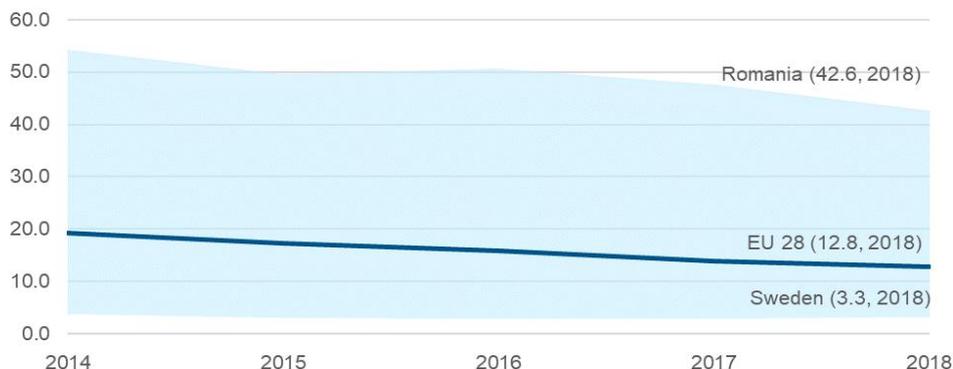
Source: Eurostat, *Material and social deprivation rate by age and sex [ilc\_mdspd07]*, extracted on 18 December 2019.

### Trends over time

The proportion of people suffering from material and social deprivation declined steadily over the period between 2014 to 2018 from 19.3% to 12.8%. This represents a decline of 6.5 percentage points in the proportion of people in material and social deprivation or a decline of 34.0% in 2018 compared to 2014. While there has been progress in Bulgaria (a decline of 34.5%), the decline in the proportion of the population suffering from material and social deprivation has been slow in Romania (21.4% decline) and Greece (9.4% decline), compared to the 33.6% decline across the EU.

persons who are unable to afford at least five items among □ unexpected expenses, one week annual holiday away from home, arrears (in mortgage, rent, utility bills and/or hire purchase instalments), a meal with meat, chicken or fish or vegetarian equivalent every second day, keep their home adequately warm, a car/van for personal use, replace worn-out furniture, replace worn-out clothes with some new ones, have two pairs of properly fitting shoes, spend a small amount of money each week on him/herself ("pocket money"), have regular leisure activities, get together with friends/family for a drink/meal at least once a month or have an internet connection.

Figure 27. Proportion of the EU population suffering from material and social deprivation between 2014 and 2018



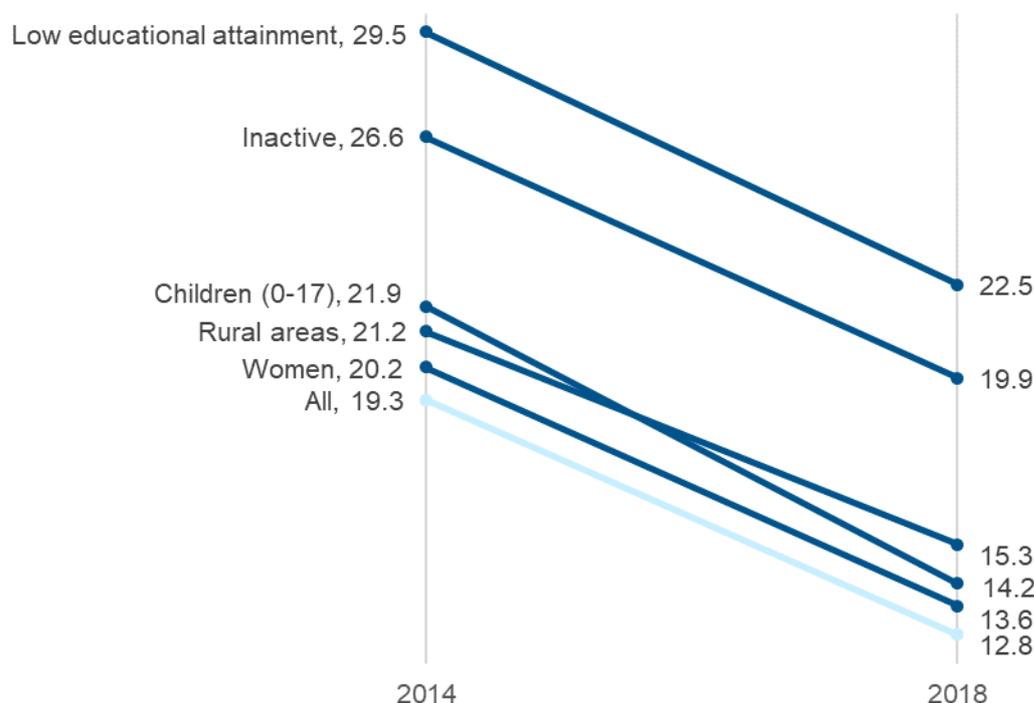
Source: Eurostat, *Material and social deprivation rate by age and sex [ilc\_mdsc07]*, extracted on 18 December 2019.

Notes: The line is the EU28 average; the light blue area represents the variation around the average.

### Groups suffering most from material and social deprivation

The decline in the proportion of people suffering from material and social deprivation has not benefitted everyone equally. Certain groups continue to suffer, as they face high levels of material and social deprivation or there has been little to no improvement in their social condition. Data presented in this section suggests that this has disproportionately affected children, women, ethnic minorities such as the Roma, people who are inactive, people with lower educational attainment, people living in rural areas as well as people with disabilities. The proportion of these groups suffering from material and social deprivation in the EU in 2014 and 2018 is displayed in Figure 28. The prevalence of material and social deprivation among the Roma was not available, but it would be expected to be correlated with their risk of poverty, which is presented in Figure 24.

Figure 28. Groups suffering most from material and social deprivation (proportion of group suffering from material and social deprivation in 2014 and 2018)



Source: Eurostat, *Material and social deprivation rate by age and sex [ilc\_md07]*, extracted on 18 December 2019 (All, Children, Women); *Material and social deprivation rate by age, sex and most frequent activity status [ilc\_md01]*, extracted on 18 December 2019 (Inactive); *Material and social deprivation rate by age, sex and educational attainment level [ilc\_md03]*, extracted on 18 December 2019 (Low educational attainment); *Material and social deprivation rate by degree of urbanisation [ilc\_md09]*, extracted on 18 December 2019 (Rural areas).

**Children:** In 2018, children (aged less than 18 years) experienced higher rates of material and social deprivation. Compared to 12.8% of the total population, 14.2% of children experienced material and social deprivation. However, there has been some progress over the last few years: between 2014 and 2018, the proportion of children suffering from material and social deprivation decreased by 7.7 percentage points.<sup>482</sup>

**Women:** A larger proportion of women suffer from material and social deprivation than men. In 2018, the proportion of women suffering from material and social deprivation was 1.8 percentage points higher than the proportion of men. Bulgaria had the greatest disparity in 2018, where the proportion of women experiencing material and social deprivation was 6.3 percentage points higher than men.<sup>483</sup>

**People who are inactive:** The rate of material and social deprivation among persons who are inactive is also disproportionately high. In 2018, 19.9% of the inactive (except

<sup>482</sup> Eurostat EU SILC dataset ilc\_md07 "Material and social deprivation rate by age and sex", available from: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_md07&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_md07&lang=en)

<sup>483</sup> Ibid.

retired) EU population experienced material and social deprivation, higher than the total population by 7.1 percentage points. The rate of material and social deprivation was also high for persons not in employment (17.8% in 2018). However, there has been some progress over the last few years. Between 2014 and 2018, the material and social deprivation rate declined for inactive persons (except retired) and those not in employment by 6.7 and 6.9 percentage points, respectively. Particularly, Malta and Hungary have made progress in reducing the rate of material and social deprivation among inactive persons, with a decline of 15.8 and 20.1 percentage points from 2014 to 2018.<sup>484</sup>

**People with lower educational attainment**<sup>485</sup> also suffer from material and social deprivation at a higher rate. In 2018, 22.5% of people with lower educational attainment in the EU experienced material and social deprivation, compared to 12.1% of people with medium educational attainment<sup>486</sup> and only 4.0% of people with high educational attainment<sup>487</sup>. Particularly in Bulgaria, 65.4% of people with lower educational attainment suffered from material and social deprivation in 2018. People with lower educational attainment also experience slower decline in material and social deprivation rates, with the 2018 rate representing a 23.7% decrease from the 2014 rate (when it was 29.5), whereas the rate for people with medium and high attainment dropped by 35% and 41% respectively between 2014 and 2018.<sup>488</sup>

**People living in rural areas** experience material and social deprivation at a relatively higher rate. In 2017, 15.3% of rural dwellers in the EU suffered from material and social deprivation, compared to 13.8% of people living in cities and 12.3% of those living in towns and suburbs. A particularly high proportion of people living in rural areas in Bulgaria (56.8%) and Romania (56.0%) suffered from material and social deprivation in 2017. Nevertheless, there has been some progress over the years: between 2014 and 2017 the proportion of people living in rural areas and experiencing material and social deprivation declined by 5.9 percentage points.<sup>489</sup>

**People with disability:** While data on material and social deprivation by activity limitation is not available, data on severe material deprivation show that people with severe activity limitation (i.e. disability) are more likely to suffer from severe material deprivation. In 2017, 12.8% of people with severe activity limitation (16 years or older)

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<sup>484</sup> Eurostat EU SILC dataset ilc\_md01 "Material and social deprivation rate by age, sex and most frequent activity status", available at:

[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_md01&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_md01&lang=en)

<sup>485</sup> ISCED levels 0 to 2: Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.

<sup>486</sup> ISCED levels 3 to 4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

<sup>487</sup> ISCED levels 5 to 8: Tertiary education.

<sup>488</sup> Eurostat EU SILC dataset ilc\_md03, "Material and social deprivation rate by age, sex and educational attainment level", available from:

[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_md03&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_md03&lang=en)

<sup>489</sup> Eurostat EU SILC dataset ilc\_md09, "Material and social deprivation rate by degree of urbanisation", available from:

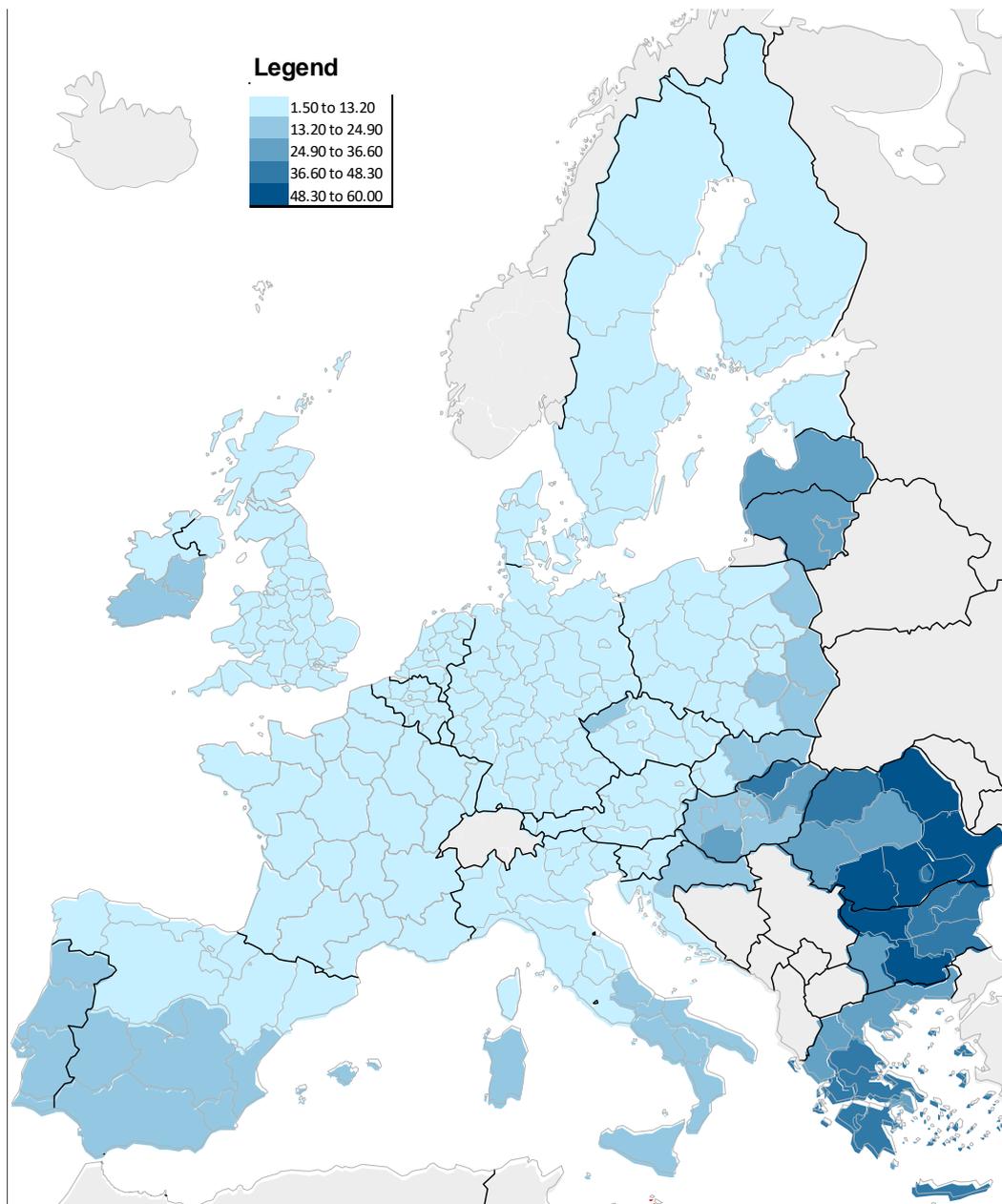
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_md09&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_md09&lang=en)

were affected by severe material deprivation. This is 6.3 percentage points higher than the total population of that age group.<sup>490</sup>

### Regions suffering most from material and social deprivation

The map in Figure 29 displays the proportion of people suffering material and social deprivation in the different NUTS2 areas, insofar data was available by NUTS2. The darker areas represent regions with proportions of people suffering from material and social deprivation.

Figure 29. Material and social deprivation rate by NUTS2 region, 2017



<sup>490</sup> Eurostat EU SILC dataset, hlth\_dm010 "Severe material deprivation by level of activity limitation, sex and age", available from: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth\\_dm010&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth_dm010&lang=en)

Source: Eurostat, *Material and social deprivation rate by NUTS regions [ilc\_md08]*, extracted on 17 June 2019. Notes: Data for Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Greece, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and the UK is at the country level as NUTS2 data is not available. Data for the Hungarian regions Budapest (HU11) and Pest (HU12) are for 2018, as 2017 data was not available.

While the map above provides a visual overview of the regions that have the lowest and highest rates of material and social deprivation, it is difficult to discern in which countries the variation is the highest. The table below presents the countries with the highest regional fluctuation in material and social deprivation rates. This helps identify countries where the national average masks this strong regional variation. While the map above provides a visual overview of the regions that have the lowest and highest at-risk rates, it is difficult to discern in which countries the variation is the highest. Countries with high regional variation have a higher dispersion rate in Table 23 below, meaning that some regions within a Member State have much higher (but also lower) proportions of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, i.e. higher regional inequality. It shows Spain has the highest regional dispersion, followed by Czechia and Austria. Spain's national average is slightly higher than the EU average of 13.7% (see Figure 26), whereas the Czech and Austrian national averages are well below the EU average.

Table 23. Regional dispersion<sup>491</sup> in the material and social deprivation rate (2017)

Member State	National rate for 2017 (%)	Dispersion of material and social deprivation rate in 2017 (%)	Number of regions
Spain	14.7	53.2	19
Czechia	7.8	45.1	8
Austria	6.7	43.2	9
Hungary	25.1	29.7	8
Sweden	2.8	27.2	8
Croatia	14.7	26.2	2
Netherlands	6.3	25.7	12
Romania	46.8	23.1	8
Denmark	7.3	18.4	5
Slovakia	13.3	18.3	4
Bulgaria	44.4	13.6	6
Ireland	14.1	10.9	3
Finland	5.3	9.0	4

Source: Eurostat, *Material and social deprivation rate by NUTS regions [ilc\_md08]*, extracted on 17 June 2019. Data by NUTS2 regions is not available for Belgium,

<sup>491</sup> Regional dispersion has been measured by firstly calculating the relative distance of the regional rate to the national mean. The standard deviation for all regional relative distances for each Member State is used to show regional dispersion.

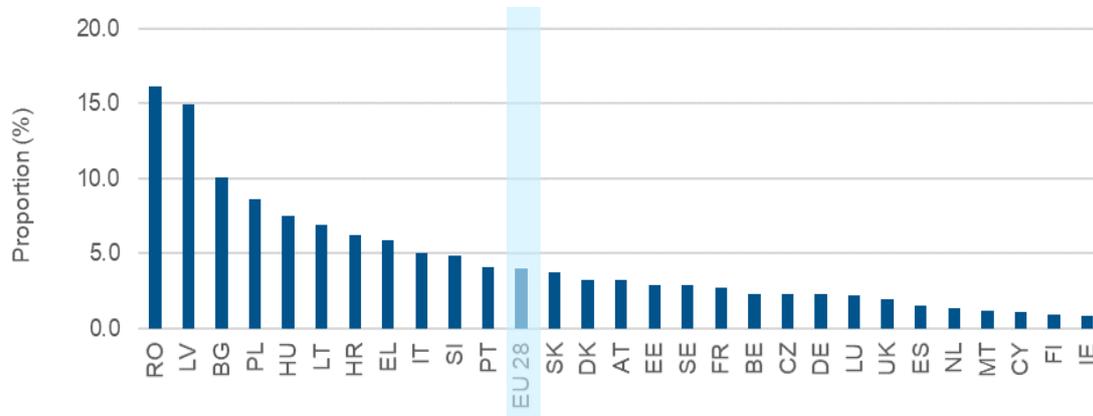
Germany, Estonia, Greece, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and the UK. Data for the Hungarian regions Budapest (HU11) and Pest (HU12) are for 2018, as 2017 data was not available.

### Indicator 3: Severe housing deprivation

Decent housing, with appropriate accommodation for daily life is a fundamental need. Ensuring this basic need is met can help support people who are in poverty or are socially excluded to break down barriers to social inclusion and move out of poverty. Therefore, appropriate housing contributes to reducing poverty and social exclusion.

In 2017, 4.0% of the EU population experienced severe housing deprivation. Particularly, Romania (17.2%), Hungary (15.9%) and Latvia (15.2%) had the highest proportions of people in severe housing deprivation, as illustrated in Figure 30.

Figure 30. Proportion of people suffering from severe housing deprivation by Member State, 2017

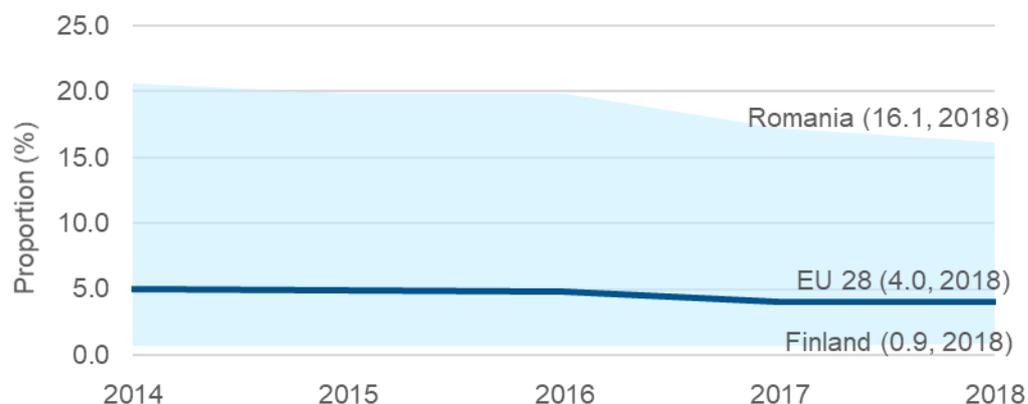


Source: Eurostat, *Severe housing deprivation rate by age, sex and poverty status [ilc\_mdho06a]*, extracted on 18 December 2019.

### Trends overtime

The proportion of people experiencing severe housing deprivation declined steadily over the period between 2014 to 2017 from 5.0% to 4.0%, i.e. by 1.0 percentage point, representing a decline of 20% from 2014 to 2017. The proportion of people experiencing severe housing deprivation more than doubled in that time in Belgium, from 0.9% in 2014 (one of the lowest rates) to 2.3% in 2017. The rate for Romania, Hungary and Latvia declined from 2014, but at a slow rate ranging from 1.4 percentage points (Hungary and Latvia) to 3.4 percentage points (Romania).

Figure 31. Proportion of the EU population suffering from severe housing deprivation between 2014 and 2017



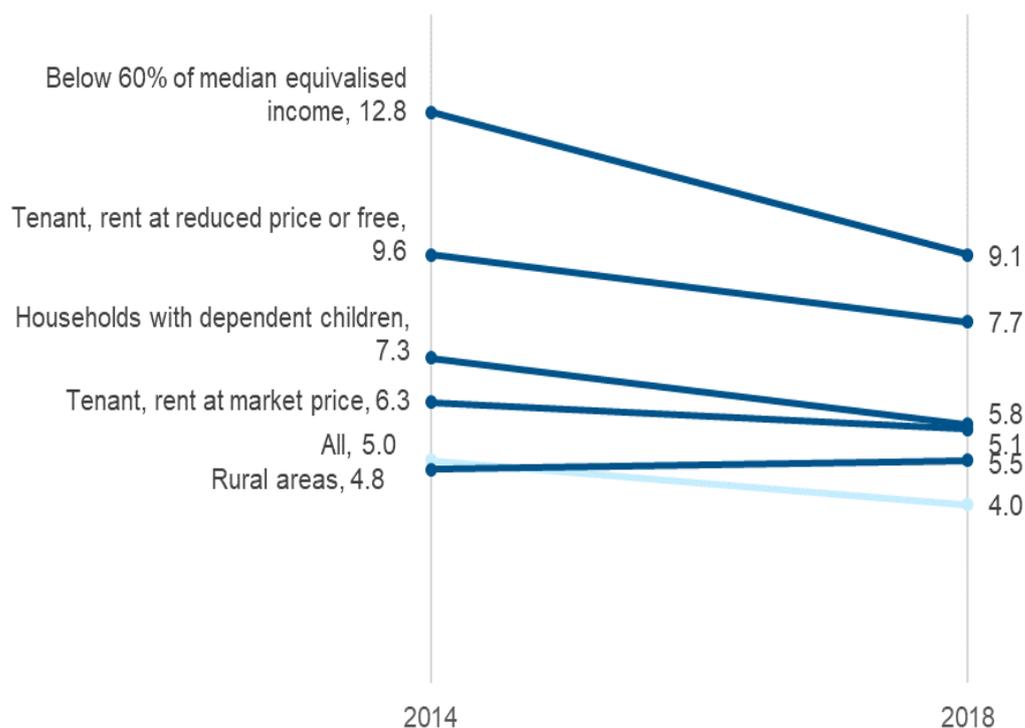
Source: Eurostat, *Severe housing deprivation rate by age, sex and poverty status [ilc\_mdho06a]*, extracted on 18 December 2019.

Notes: The line is the EU28 average; the light blue area represents the variation around the average.

### Groups suffering most from severe housing deprivation

Severe housing deprivation is significantly higher among people with lower incomes (i.e. those who earn less than 60% of the median equivalised income), households with dependent children, people living in rural areas, people living in rented property paying rent at a reduced price or renting for free, and Roma. The rates of housing deprivation for these groups are presented in Figure 32.

Figure 32. Groups suffering most from severe housing deprivation (proportion of group suffering from severe housing deprivation in 2014 and 2017)



Source: Eurostat, *Severe housing deprivation rate by age, sex and poverty status [ilc\_mdho06a]*, extracted on 18 December 2019 (All, Below 60% of median equivalised income); *Severe housing deprivation rate by household type [ilc\_mdho06b]*, extracted on 18 December 2019 (Households with dependent children); *Severe housing deprivation rate by tenure status [ilc\_mdho06c]*, extracted on 18 December 2019 (Tenant, rent at reduced price or free, Tenant, rent at market price); *Severe housing deprivation rate by degree of urbanisation [ilc\_mdho06d]*, extracted on 18 December 2019 (Rural areas).

**People who earn less than 60%:** Within the EU, 9.1% of people who earn less than 60% of median equivalised income, experienced severe housing deprivation in 2017.<sup>492</sup> This is more than three times higher than the rate for people earning more than 60% of median equivalised income. The absolute disparity in severe housing deprivation rate between the two income groups was the highest in Romania, where 36.7% of the population earning less than 60% of median equivalised income were in severe housing deprivation, compared to 11.2% of those earning above 60% of median equivalised income. However, there has been some progress over the years: between 2014 and 2017 the proportion of people with an earning below 60% of median equivalised income experiencing from severe housing deprivation declined by 3.7 percentage points from 12.8%.

**Households with dependent children** also experience severe housing deprivation at a higher rate than households with no dependent children. In 2017, 5.8% of EU households with dependent children experienced severe housing deprivation compared to 2.2% of households without dependent children.<sup>493</sup> In recent years, the proportion of households with dependent children in the EU has even increased, by 2.4 percentage points from 3.4% in 2014.

**People living in rural areas** are somewhat more likely to experience severe housing deprivation than people living in cities, towns and suburbs. In 2017, 5.5% of the EU population living in rural areas experienced severe housing deprivation. For those in cities, towns and suburbs, less than 4.0% of the population experienced severe housing deprivation.<sup>494</sup> In contrast to the general trend, severe housing deprivation in rural areas also seems to have increased between 2014 and 2017 by 0.7 percentage points.

**People renting at a reduced price or for free** experience severe housing deprivation at a much greater rate. In 2017, 7.7% of tenants renting property at a reduced price or for free experienced severe housing deprivation. Tenants renting at market prices also

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<sup>492</sup> Eurostat EU SILC dataset ilc\_mdho06a "Severe housing deprivation rate by age, sex and poverty status", available from:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_mdho06a&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_mdho06a&lang=en)

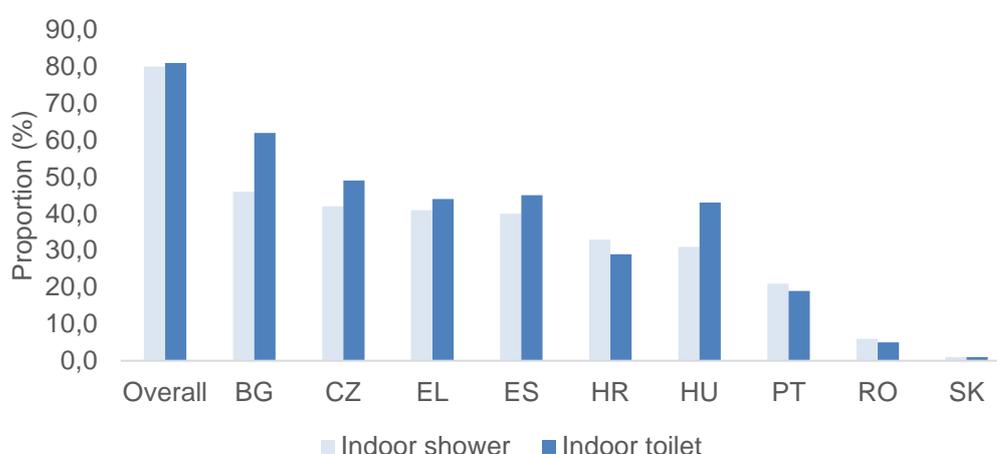
<sup>493</sup> Eurostat EU SILC dataset ilc\_mdho06b "Severe housing deprivation rate by household type", available from:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_mdho06b&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_mdho06b&lang=en)

<sup>494</sup> Eurostat EU SILC dataset ilc\_mdho06d "Severe housing deprivation rate by degree of urbanisation", available from:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_mdho06d&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_mdho06d&lang=en)

experience somewhat higher rates of housing deprivation than homeowners (5.1% in 2017).<sup>495</sup>

**The Roma population** experience a significant lack of adequate accommodation within their households. The 2016 EU FRA survey<sup>496</sup> estimates the proportion of Roma population living without an indoor flushing toilet, as well as an indoor shower or bathroom. Across the European Member States with data, 81.0% of Roma lack access to an indoor toilet and 80.0% live without an indoor shower or bathroom within their households. This compares to respectively 2.3% of the total EU population not having an indoor flushing toilet for the sole use of their household<sup>497</sup> and 2.1% of the total EU population having neither a bath, nor a shower in their dwelling.<sup>498</sup>

Figure 33. Proportion of Roma population who lack access to an indoor shower and an indoor toilet in 2016



Source: Eurostat, *Second Survey on Minorities and Discrimination in EU (2016)*, extracted on 17 June 2019.

### Access to services

Providing people with public services is important in helping lift people out of poverty. The Social Scoreboard monitoring the European Pillar of Social Rights therefore monitors health care and early childhood education and care indicators. Access to, for example,

<sup>495</sup> Eurostat EU SILC dataset ilc\_mdho06c "Severe housing deprivation rate by tenure status", available from: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_mdho06c&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_mdho06c&lang=en)

<sup>496</sup> FRA Survey on Minorities and Discrimination in EU (2016). Available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-second-eu-minorities-discrimination-survey>

<sup>497</sup> Eurostat EU SILC dataset ilc\_mdho03 "Total population not having indoor flushing toilet for the sole use of their household", available from: [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_mdho03&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_mdho03&lang=en)

<sup>498</sup> Eurostat EU SILC dataset ilc\_mdho02 "Total population having neither a bath, nor a shower in their dwelling", available from: [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_mdho02&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_mdho02&lang=en)

health care services may help break vicious cycles of poor health that contribute to, and result from, poverty and social exclusion.<sup>499</sup> Barriers to or lack of access to adequate services perpetuates or may even exacerbate poverty. The challenge to breaking vicious cycles of poor health is that people in poverty often experience more barriers to accessing services. Childcare can also support people out of poverty in two ways. Firstly, it supports parents into employment. This is particularly important for women who are more likely to experience poverty and are often in a primary care role. Secondly, appropriate formalised early childhood education helps set young people up with a good start, which is particularly important for children coming from households at-risk of or experiencing poverty. It provides them with a route to upwards social mobility

### **Health care services**

This section discusses health care services by firstly looking at people's self-perceived health in order to provide insight into the extent of the problem: it provides information on the proportion of people who rate their health as poor, and Member States where high proportions of the population rate their health as poor. Then, this section discusses self-reported unmet needs for medical care, and the reasons for the unmet needs. This latter indicator is also used in the Social Scoreboard and the Social Protection committee's social protection monitoring framework.

### **Self-perceived health**

Just under one in ten of people in the EU rate their health as bad or very bad. In 2017, 8.3% of the EU population aged 16 or older rated their own health as bad or very bad.<sup>500</sup> This rate is higher for people with lower incomes: 13.2% of people falling in the first income quintile (20% of lowest incomes) report bad or very bad health.<sup>501</sup> Hungary had the highest proportion of people rating their health as bad or very bad, as illustrated in Figure 34, with nearly one in five people (18.4%) doing so.

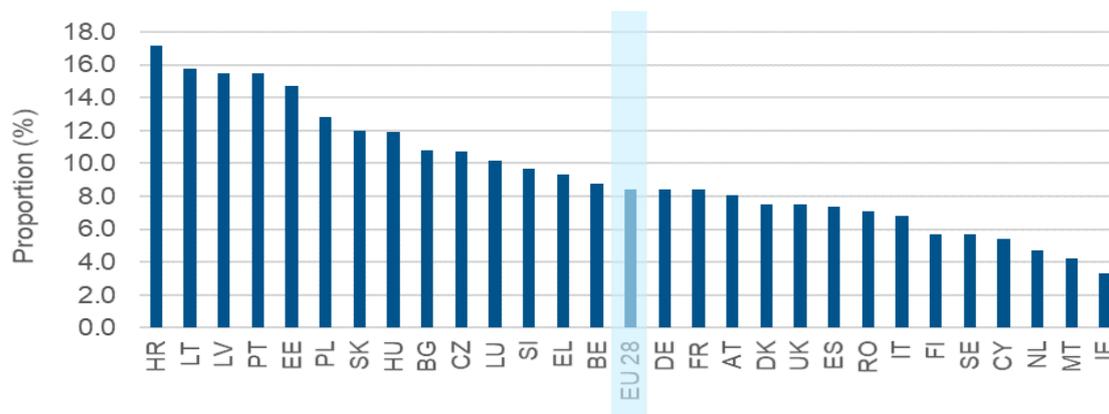
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<sup>499</sup> Eurostat Statistics Explained – SDG 1 – No poverty, available from: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=SDG\\_1\\_-\\_No\\_poverty](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=SDG_1_-_No_poverty)

<sup>500</sup> Eurostat dataset hlth\_silc\_01 "Self-perceived health by sex, age and labour status", available from: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth\\_silc\\_01&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth_silc_01&lang=en)

<sup>501</sup> Eurostat dataset hlth\_silc\_10 "Self-perceived health by sex, age and income quintile", available from: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth\\_silc\\_10&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth_silc_10&lang=en)

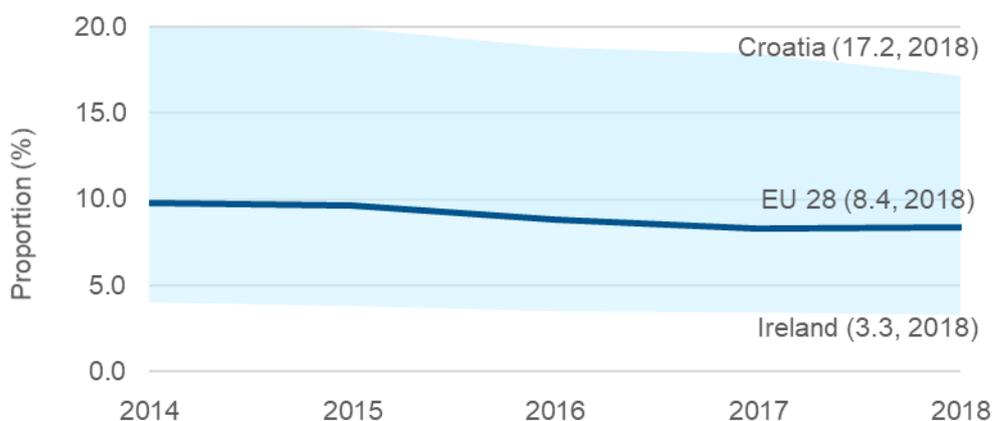
Figure 34. Proportion of people aged 16 or older rating their health as bad or very bad by Member State, 2018



Source: Eurostat, *Self-perceived health by sex, age and labour status [hlth\_silc\_01]*, extracted on 18 December 2019.

The proportion of people in the EU rating their health as bad or very bad declined from 9.9 in 2014 to 8.3 in 2017. This represents a decline of 1.6 percentage points. Figure 35 illustrates the trend between 2014 and 2017 for the EU average and the Member States with lowest (Ireland) and highest (Croatia) proportion of people rating their health as bad or very bad.

Figure 35. Proportion of people aged 16 or older rating their health as bad or very bad between 2014 and 2018



Source: Eurostat, *Self-perceived health by sex, age and labour status [hlth\_silc\_01]*, extracted on 18 December 2019.

Notes: The line is the EU28 average; the light blue area represents the variation around the average

Data show substantial inequalities in the proportion of people who rate their health as bad or very bad between different groups. Older people, people who are inactive, not employed, or retired and people with low educational attainment are more likely to rate their health bad or very bad.

**Older people** (65 years of age or older) are for more likely to report bad or very bad health, which is associated with old age. In 2017, 18.5% of the EU population aged 65 or older reported they were in bad or very bad health.<sup>502</sup>

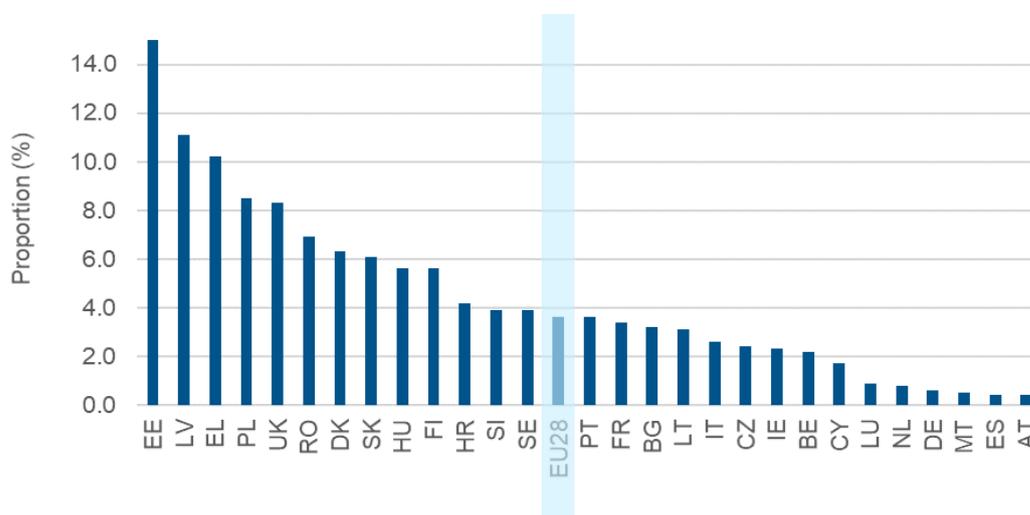
**People who are retired, not employed and inactive people** are five to seven times more likely to report bad health (17.6%, 14.5% and 11.9% respectively, 2017) than people who are employed (2.5% in 2017).<sup>503</sup>

**People with low educational attainment** form another group of the population who report bad or very bad health more often than the population in general. In 2017, 13.8% of the EU population aged 16 or older and having at most lower secondary education reported they had bad or very bad health. This compares to 7.3% of people with upper secondary education and 3.8% of people with tertiary education.<sup>504</sup> As discussed in the section on poverty and social exclusion, people with low educational attainment and people who are not in employment also experience more deprivation and poverty, in addition to poor health.

### Unmet needs for health care

In 2017, 3.1% of the EU population aged 16 or older indicated that they had unmet need for medical examination. Estonia has the largest proportion of its population reporting unmet needs (13.3%). Greece and Latvia also have over 10% of their populations reporting unmet needs (10.9% and 10.3% respectively). In Luxembourg, Germany, Malta, Austria, the Netherlands and Spain less than 1% of the population reported unmet needs. These findings are illustrated in Figure 36.

Figure 36. Proportion of people aged 16 or older self-reporting unmet needs for medical examination by Member State, 2018



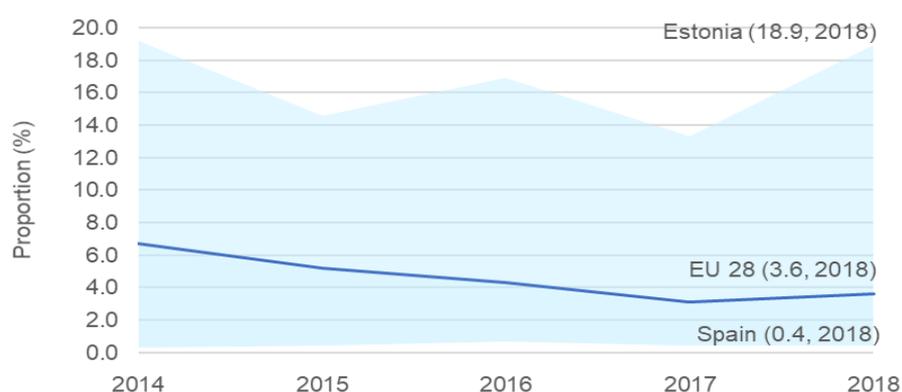
<sup>503</sup> Eurostat dataset hlth\_silc\_01 "Self-perceived health by sex, age and labour status", available from:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth\\_silc\\_01&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth_silc_01&lang=en)

<sup>504</sup> Eurostat dataset hlth\_silc\_02 "Self-perceived health by sex, age and educational attainment level", available from:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth\\_silc\\_02&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth_silc_02&lang=en)

Source: Eurostat, *Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination by sex, age, main reason declared and income quintile [hlth\_silc\_08]*, extracted on 18 December 2019.

The proportion of people in the EU self-reporting unmet needs for medical examination strongly declined between 2014 and 2017 from 6.7% to 3.1%. This represents a decline of 3.6 percentage points. Figure 37 illustrates the trend between 2014 and 2017 for the EU average and the Member States variation around the EU average. In 2017, Estonia had the highest proportion (13.3%) while Spain and Austria had the lowest proportion (0.3% and 0.4% respectively). This has changed over time: in previous years, Austria and the Netherlands had the lowest proportions (0.3%-0.7%) and in 2014, Latvia had the highest proportion (19.2%).

Figure 37. *Proportion of people aged 16 or older reporting unmet needs for medical examination between 2014 and 2017*



Source: Eurostat, *Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination by sex, age, main reason declared and income quintile [hlth\_silc\_08]*, extracted on 10 September 18 December 2019.

Notes: The line is the EU28 average; the light blue area represents the variation around the average

Within certain groups, a greater proportion of people report unmet needs for medical examination. People in lower income groups, unemployed persons, people with low educational attainment and people in rural areas are more likely to report unmet needs for medical examination.

**People in lower income groups** report the highest unmet needs. Of those earning in the first quintile bracket, 5.1% report unmet needs for medical examination and of those in the second quintile bracket, 3.5% report unmet needs compared to 3.1% of the EU population overall.<sup>505</sup>

<sup>505</sup> Eurostat dataset hlth\_silc\_08 "Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination by sex, age, main reason declared and income quintile", available from: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth\\_silc\\_08&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth_silc_08&lang=en)

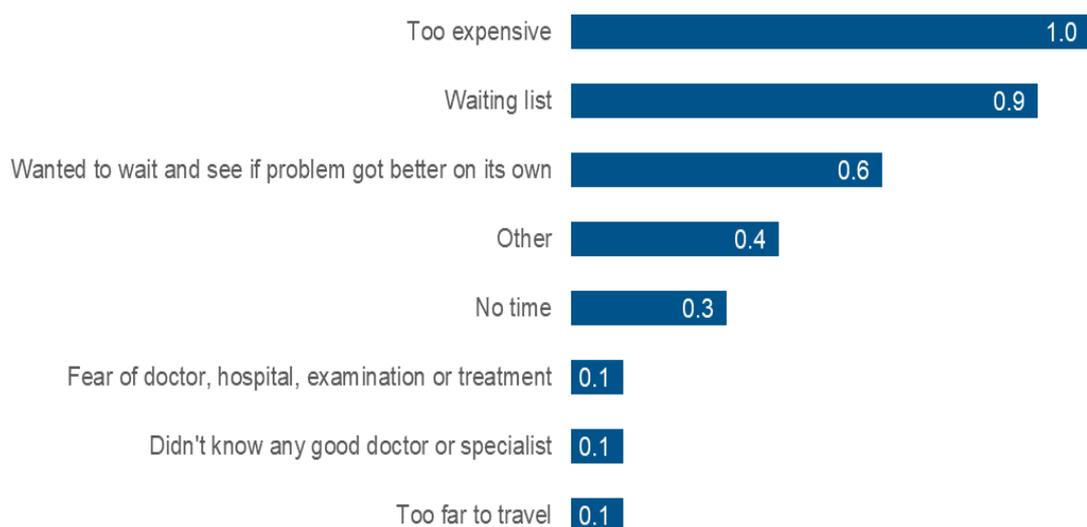
**Unemployed persons** more often than average report having unmet needs for medical examination. In 2017, 4.6% reported having unmet needs.<sup>506</sup>

**People with low educational attainment** are also more likely to report unmet needs for medical examination. In 2017, 3.8% of people who had at most completed lower secondary education reported this.<sup>507</sup>

**People in rural areas** also report they have unmet needs for medical examination at a higher rate than people in cities, towns and suburbs, at 3.7% in 2017.<sup>508</sup>

Across the EU-28, the most often cited reason for these unmet needs for medical examination is that the medical attention is too expensive (1.0% of 3.1% reporting unmet needs) followed by waiting lists (0.7% of 3.1%) and wanting to wait and see if the problem got better on its own (0.6% of 3.1%). These findings are summarised in Figure 38.

Figure 38. *Proportion of people aged 16 or older across the EU reporting unmet needs for medical examination in 2018 by main reason*



Source: Eurostat, *Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination by sex, age, main reason declared and income quintile [hlth\_silc\_08]*, extracted on 18 December 2019.

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<sup>506</sup> Eurostat dataset hlth\_silc\_13 "Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination by sex, age, main reason declared and labour status", available from: [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth\\_silc\\_13&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth_silc_13&lang=en)

<sup>507</sup> Eurostat dataset hlth\_silc\_14 "Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination by sex, age, main reason declared and educational attainment level", available from: [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth\\_silc\\_14&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth_silc_14&lang=en)

<sup>508</sup> Eurostat dataset hlth\_silc\_21 "Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination by sex, age, main reason declared and degree of urbanisation", available from: [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth\\_silc\\_21&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth_silc_21&lang=en)

For at least half of people reporting unmet needs for medical examination in Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Portugal and Romania, the main barrier is that the health care is too expensive. For over half of people reporting unmet needs for medical examination in Estonia, Spain Slovenia, Finland and the UK, waiting lists are the main barrier. Half or more than half of people indicating they had unmet health needs in Czechia and Luxembourg said they wanted to wait and see if problem got better on its own.

### **Access to childcare**

Childcare has two important functions for helping reduce poverty.<sup>509</sup> Firstly, it supports parents into employment. This is in particular important for women who are still by and large primary carers, and links in with the EU Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality Strategy in stimulating women's economic self-sufficiency and lifting them out of poverty. Secondly, good quality childcare ensures that children have a good start, which is important in particular for children from households in poverty, such as low work intensity households. Good childcare is a first gateway to social mobility, i.e. higher educational attainment, better employment and higher wages, all which help eliminate poverty.

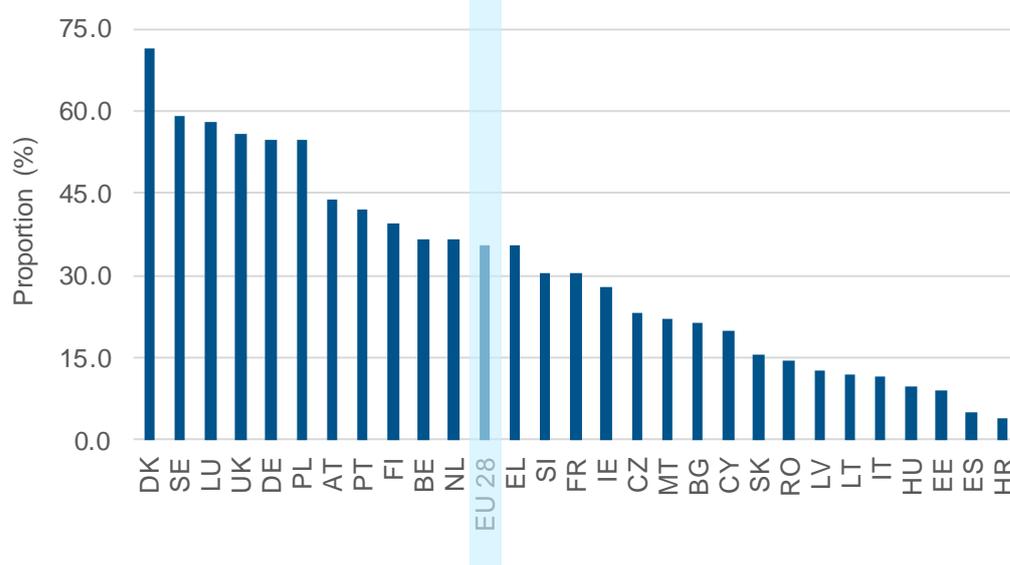
In 2016, 45.0% of EU children aged 3 to the minimum compulsory school age received formal childcare services, which is generally a proxy for adequate childcare provided by trained professionals. There is significant country variation, however, with 95.9% of Danish children receiving formal childcare services compared to 1.0% in Estonia.<sup>510</sup> As Figure 39 shows, the variation is regional, with low proportions in the south, east and central area of Europe (except Poland and Portugal) while high proportions of children receiving formal childcare in the north and west of Europe.

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<sup>509</sup> For example, see "Investing in children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage – A study of national policies" by DG EMPL (2014), available from: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&langId=en&newsId=2061&moreDocuments=yes&tableName=news>

<sup>510</sup> The figures presented for this indicator diverge from those for TPS00185, which are based on the EU Survey on Income and Living Standards. For example, the share of children 3-7 years of age in formal childcare in Estonia was 8.7% in 2016.

Figure 39. Proportion of children from 3 years to minimum compulsory school age receiving formal childcare services by Member State, 2016



Source: Eurostat, *Children receiving formal childcare services by age, income group and degree of urbanisation [ilc\_ats01]*, extracted on 21 June 2019.

There are also significant inequalities in children who are receiving formal childcare services. The proportion of children from households with lower incomes (below 60% of median equivalised income) who receive formal childcare services is lower than that of children from households with higher incomes (above 60% of median equivalised income). In 2016, 22.6% of children from households with lower incomes received formal childcare compared to 37.0% of children from households with higher incomes.<sup>511</sup> Exceptions are Estonia, Austria and Ireland, where the proportion of children from households with lower income is at least more than one percentage point higher than the proportion of children from households with higher incomes. Data also show that a smaller proportion of children aged between 3 years and the compulsory school age and living in rural areas are in receipt of formal childcare services (30.7% in 2016) compared to their peers in cities (36.1% in 2016) and towns and suburbs (34.5% in 2016).<sup>512</sup>

## Inclusion in the labour market

Employment is generally seen as a route out of poverty. For example, this is the assumption made as part of the EU 2020 targets (see for example the latest Eurostat statistical book on the EU 2020 indicators).<sup>513</sup> This is not always the case, however. This section discusses the unemployed, i.e. the proportion of the population who are looking

<sup>511</sup> Eurostat dataset ilc\_ats01 "Children receiving formal childcare services by age, income group and degree of urbanisation", available from: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_ats01&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_ats01&lang=en)

<sup>512</sup> Ibid.

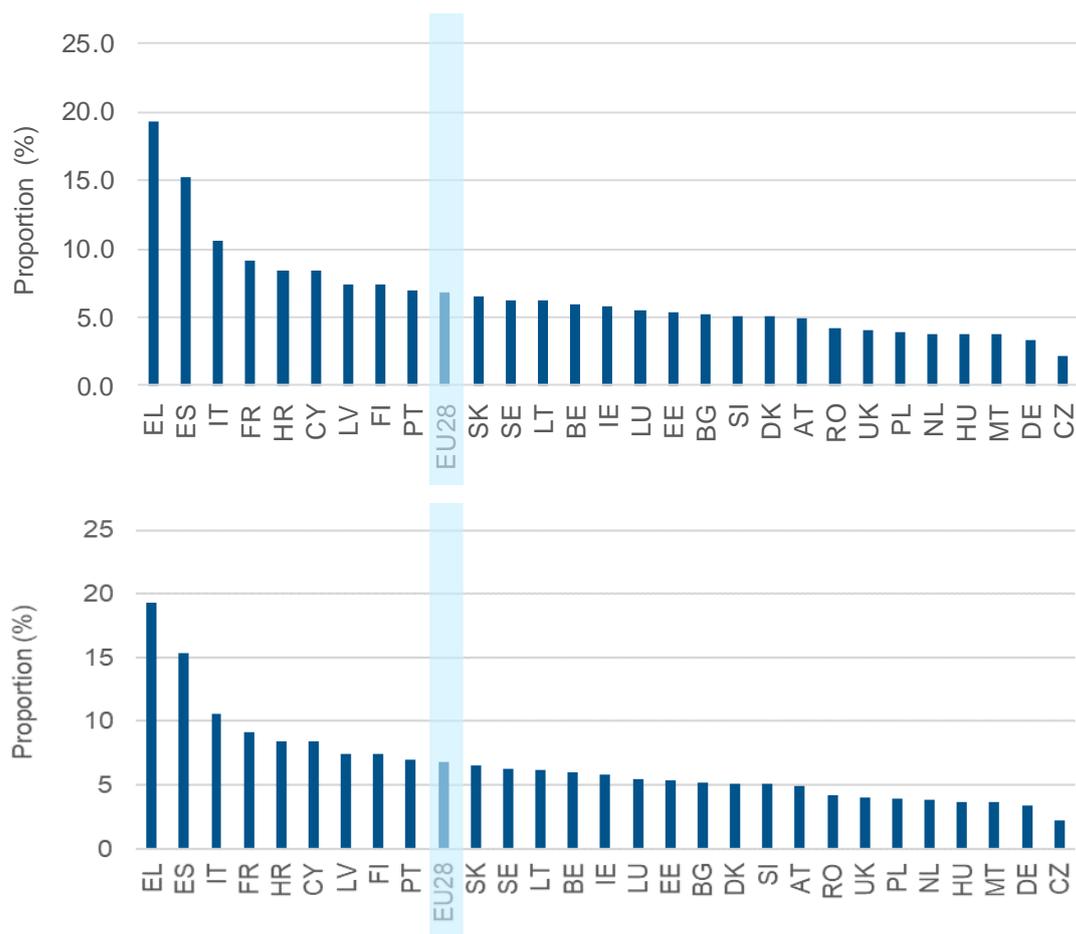
<sup>513</sup> Eurostat, 2018, *Smarter, greener, more inclusive? — Indicators to support the Europe 2020 strategy — 2018 edition*, available online from: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-statistical-books/-/KS-02-18-728>

for employment but cannot find it, as well as those who have found a job, but still experience in-work poverty.

### Unemployment

The average unemployment rate in the EU-28 in 2018 was 6.8%. This means that 6.8% of the EU-28 population who are available for work cannot find a job. Figure 40 shows that unemployment rates in some Member States (with Member States in south Europe being overrepresented) are higher than the EU-28 average, up to 19.3% and 15.3% in Greece and Spain respectively.

Figure 40. Unemployment rate by Member State, 2018

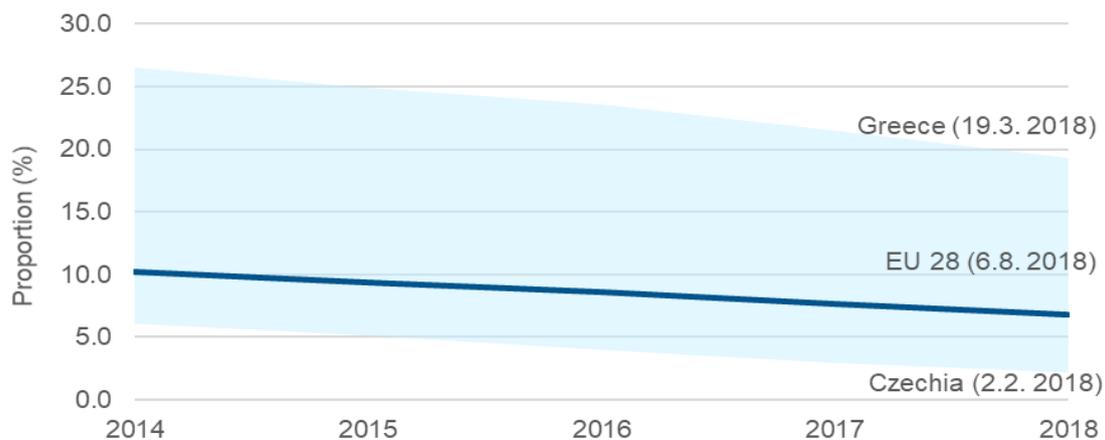


Source: Eurostat, *Unemployment by sex and age - annual average [une\_rt\_a]*, extracted on 16 August 18 December 2019.

### Trends over time

As Figure 41 illustrates, the unemployment rate declined gradually between 2014 and 2018 to pre-recession levels (in 2008, the unemployment rate was 7.0%). In total, the decline was 3.4 percentage points.

Figure 41. Unemployment rate from 2014 to 2018



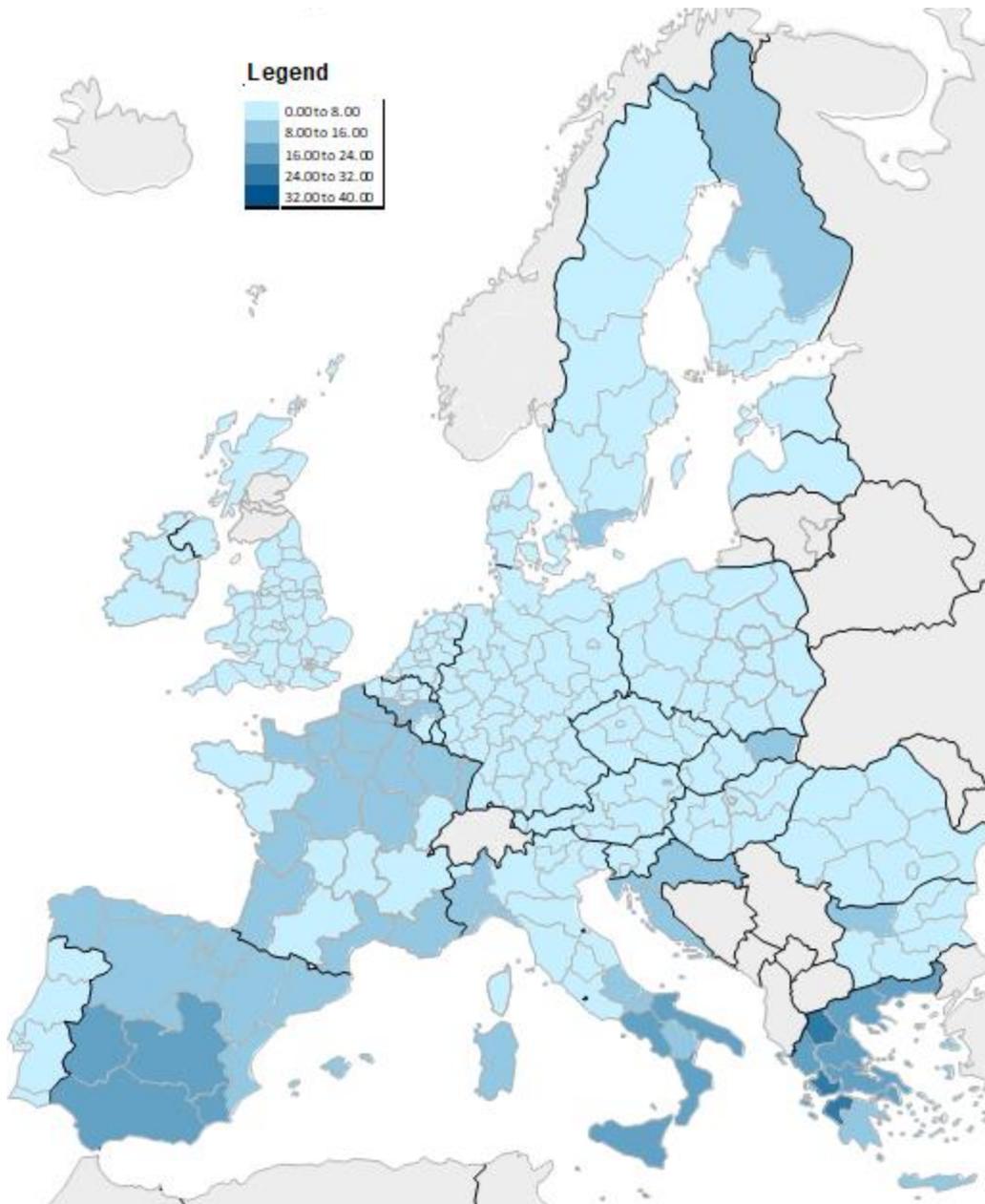
Source: Eurostat, *Unemployment by sex and age - annual average [une\_rt\_a]*, extracted on 16 August 18 December 2019.

Notes: The line is the EU-28 average; the light blue area represents the variation around the average

### Regions experiencing high unemployment rates

Certain regions experience higher unemployment rates, as is shown in the map below which presents the unemployment rate by NUTS2 region, where data are available at the regional level. Darker shaded areas represent areas with higher unemployment rates. Regions in the south of Europe in Spain and Italy show higher rates and more variability, illustrated by the different shades.

Figure 42. Unemployment rate by NUTS2 region, 2018



Source: Eurostat, *Unemployment rates by sex, age and NUTS 2 regions (%) [lfst\_r\_lfu3rt]*, extracted on 21 September 2019. Regional data was not available for Åland (Finland). Data for Corsica (France) is for 2017).

Despite the map showing the highest unemployment rates in the south of Europe, the country with the highest regional variation is France, as shown in Table 24. This is exclusively due to high rates in its overseas territories, with unemployment rates in Mayotte being almost four times that of France. Other countries with high dispersion rates are Belgium, Bulgaria and Italy. Belgium and Bulgaria have lower national rates than the EU-28 average. In Belgium and Italy, the high dispersion rate can be explained by the north-south divide, with the south experiencing higher unemployment rates than the north. In addition, in Belgium, Brussels has the highest rate at more than twice that of the national rate (13.2%). In Bulgaria, the high dispersion rate is driven partly by large differences between two regions: Severozapaden on the one hand (unemployment

rate of 11.3%), a region that is more generally economically struggling, and Yugozapaden which includes capital city Sofia (here, the unemployment rate is only 2.6%).

Table 24. Regional dispersion<sup>514</sup> of unemployment rates (2018)

Member State	National rate for 2018 (%)	Dispersion of unemployment rates in 2018 (%)	Number of regions
France	9.1	72.3	27
Belgium	6	53.8	11
Bulgaria	5.2	52.8	6
Italy	10.6	50.6	21
Hungary	3.7	43.7	8
Austria	4.9	43.5	9
Slovakia	6.5	43.1	4
Spain	15.3	37.9	19
Czechia	2.2	35.9	8
Poland	3.9	35.0	17
Romania	4.2	33.3	8
Germany	3.4	29.9	38
United Kingdom	4	24.7	41
Greece	19.3	19.3	13
Netherlands	3.8	19.1	12
Lithuania	6.2	18.5	2
Sweden	6.3	16.6	8
Portugal	7.1	15.8	7
Croatia	8.5	8.2	2
Slovenia	5.1	6.9	2
Finland	7.4	5.8	4
Denmark	5	5.7	5
Ireland	5.8	4.9	3

Source: Eurostat, *Unemployment rates by sex, age and NUTS 2 regions (%) [lfst\_r\_lfu3rt]*, extracted on 21 September 2019. Countries without NUTS2 regions have

<sup>514</sup> Regional dispersion has been measured by firstly calculating the relative distance of the regional rate to the national mean. The standard deviation for all regional relative distances for each Member State is used to show regional dispersion.

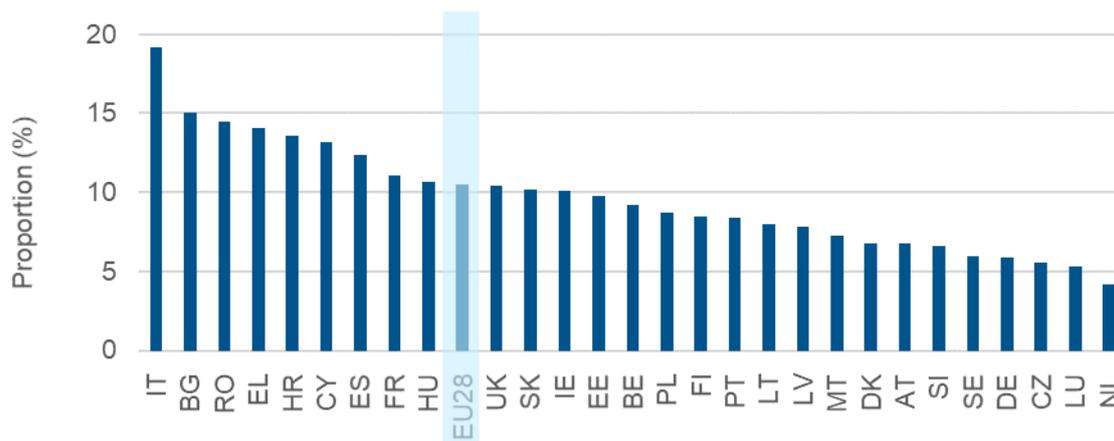
been excluded (Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg and Malta). Regional data was not available for Åland (Finland). Data for Corsica (France) is for 2017).

### Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) are a specific group at risk, not only because they are at an increased risk of poverty and social exclusion, but also considering this group has got their entire working life ahead of them. Early negative experience in the labour market may discourage participation for a significant part of their lives. In a context of an ageing working population, this presents a second challenge: ensuring this generation of workers is engaged in the labour market in order to be able to generate enough productivity and revenue to keep current welfare systems in place. And young people's experiences in the labour market have been, comparatively to the generations before them, fairly negative, with youth unemployment and inactivity reaching peaks during the recession.<sup>515</sup>

In 2018, 10.5% of young people aged between 15 and 24 were neither in employment nor in education and training.<sup>516</sup> The highest rates occur in Italy, where 19.2% of young people aged 15 to 24 were unemployed and not in education or training.

Figure 43. NEET rates by Member State, 2018



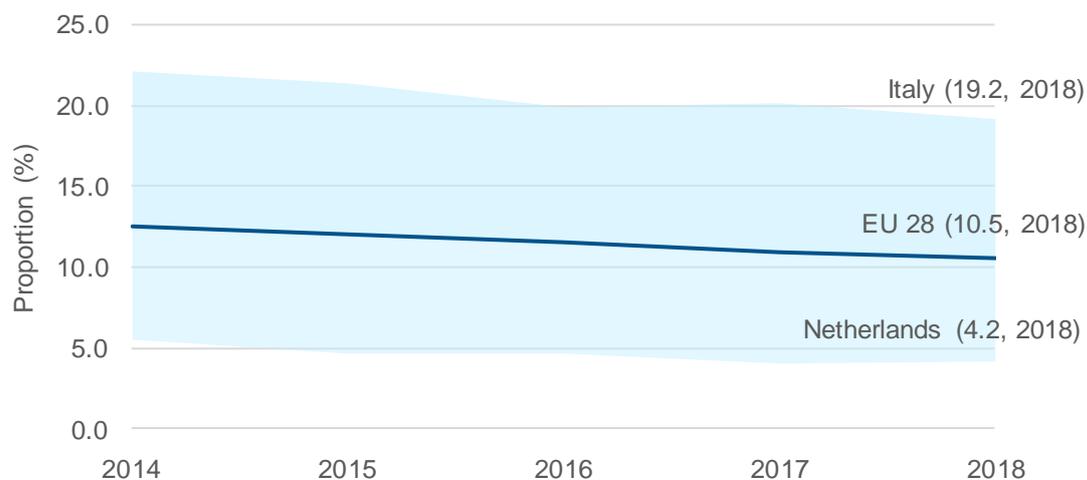
Source: Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and educational attainment level (NEET rates) [edat\_ifse\_21], extracted on 16 August 18 December 2019.

Between 2014 and 2018 the situation has improved. The proportion of young people aged 15 to 24 and not in education, employment or training decreased from 12.5% to 10.5% (a decrease of 2 percentage points).

<sup>515</sup> OECD, 2016, Society at a Glance 2016, available online from: [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/soc\\_glance-2016-4-en.pdf?expires=1565960449&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=145386E778E1D6C098463EBF9D7B90A5](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/soc_glance-2016-4-en.pdf?expires=1565960449&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=145386E778E1D6C098463EBF9D7B90A5)

<sup>516</sup> In Portugal, NEET statistics encompasses youth up to 29 years of age.

Figure 44. NEET rates from 2014 to 2018



Source: *Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and educational attainment level (NEET rates) [edat\_lfse\_21]*, extracted on 16 August 2019.

Notes: The line is the EU-28 average; the light blue area represents the variation around the average

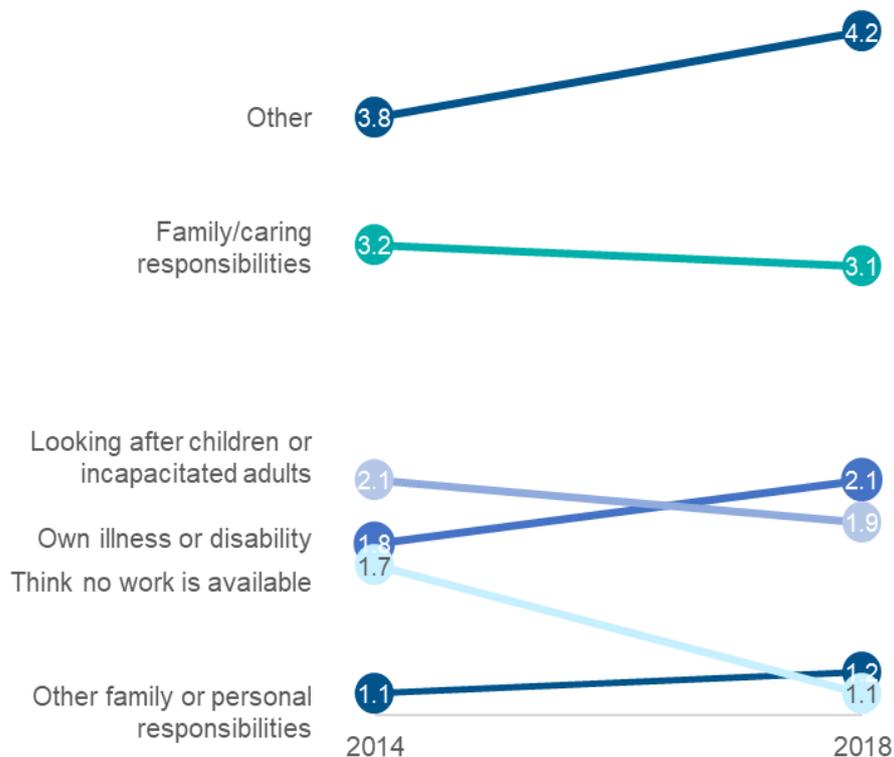
However, this decrease is predominantly driven by lower youth unemployment rates (from 22.2% in 2014 to 15.2% in 2018)<sup>517</sup> while youth inactivity rates have remained stable (58.3% in both 2014 and 2018).<sup>518</sup> The most often cited reason why young people are inactive, other than being in education, are 'Other' reasons and family/caring responsibilities. The proportions of young people being inactive for 'Other' reasons and because of their "Own illness or disability" both increased from 2014 to 2018 by 0.3 percentage points. These are fairly low proportions but could indicate that young people with disabilities increasingly experience barriers to participating in the labour market and are therefore at a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion.

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<sup>517</sup> Eurostat dataset une\_rt\_a "Unemployment by sex and age - annual average", available from:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une\\_rt\\_a&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une_rt_a&lang=en)

<sup>518</sup> Eurostat dataset lfsa\_ipga "Inactive population as a percentage of the total population, by sex and age (%)", available from:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa\\_ipga&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa_ipga&lang=en)

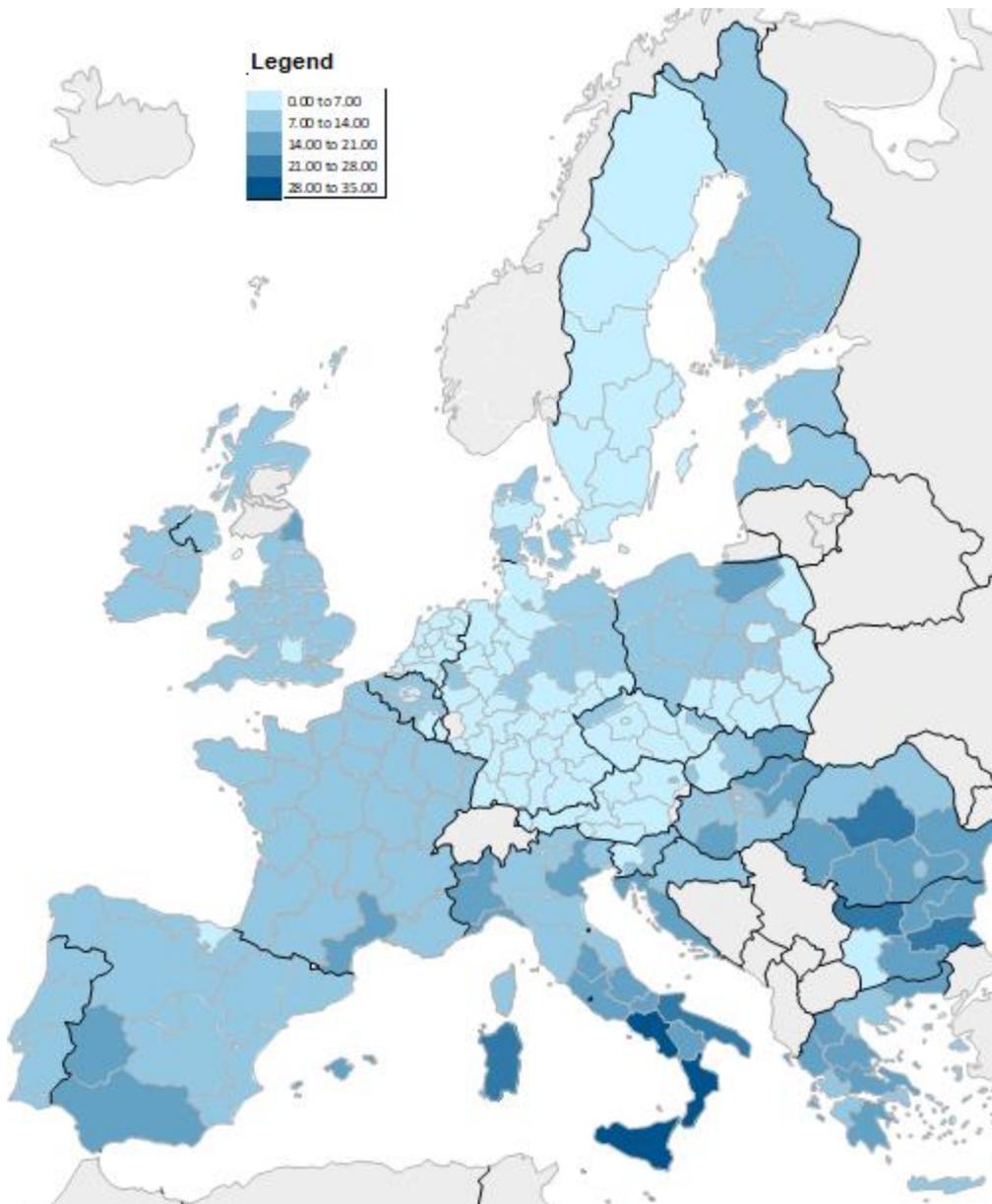
Figure 45. Inactive young people (aged 15 to 24 years) by main reason for not seeking employment, 2014 to 2018



Source: Eurostat, *Inactive population not seeking employment by sex, age and main reason [lfsa\_igar]*, extracted on 16 August 18 December 2019.

NEET rates also have an important regional component. Figure 46 represents NEET rates by NUTS2, with darker areas representing regions with higher NEET rates.

Figure 46. NEET rates by NUTS2 region, 2018



Source: Eurostat, *Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex and NUTS 2 regions (NEET rates) [edat\_lfse\_22]*, extracted on 16 August 2019. Regional data was not available for Trier (Germany), Burgenland (Austria) and Åland (Finland). Data for Dresden (Germany), Vorarlberg (Austria) and Bratislavský kraj (Slovakia) is for 2017. Data for Niederbayern and Oberpfalz (Germany) and the Algarve and Madeira (Portugal) are for 2016. Data for the Highlands and Islands (UK) are for 2014.

While the map above provides a visual overview of the regions that have the lowest and highest rates of material and social deprivation, it is difficult to discern in which countries the variation is the highest. The table below summarises which Member States have the highest variation in NEET rates in their various regions, at the NUTS2 level. France has the highest amount of regional dispersion, followed by Czechia and Portugal. The latter have generally got lower national rates than on average in the EU-28. The French rate is slightly higher than the EU-28 average NEET rate and the high dispersion can be

partly explained by very high NEET rates in its overseas regions, where it ranges between 20% and 30%. In Czechia, the NEET rate of one of its regions explains most of the variation: Severozápad, where the proportion of young people who are NEET is more than twice that in the country as a whole. It also has a lower GDP than other Czech regions. The high variation for Portugal can be partly explained by a higher rate in Madeira (20.1% in 2014 and 16.1% in 2016) and a higher rate in Algarve (13.0% in 2016).

Table 25. Regional dispersion<sup>519</sup> of NEET rates (2018)

Member State	National rate for 2018 (%)	Dispersion of NEET rates in 2018 (%)	Number of regions
France	11.1	53.6%	26
Czechia	5.6	47.9%	8
Portugal	8.4	47.0%	7
Bulgaria	15.0	39.1%	6
Hungary	10.7	36.9%	8
Lithuania	8.0	35.0%	2
Romania	14.5	34.9%	8
Slovakia	10.2	33.6%	4
Italy	19.2	32.1%	21
Poland	8.7	30.8%	17
Spain	12.4	29.2%	19
Greece	14.1	28.8%	13
Belgium	9.2	25.1%	11
Austria	6.8	23.3%	8
Germany	5.9	21.6%	37
United Kingdom	10.4	19.2%	41
Netherlands	4.2	15.9%	12
Denmark	6.8	10.9%	5
Finland	8.5	10.2%	4
Slovenia	6.6	9.8%	2
Sweden	6.1	8.7%	8
Croatia	13.6	6.6%	2
Ireland	10.1	3.2%	3

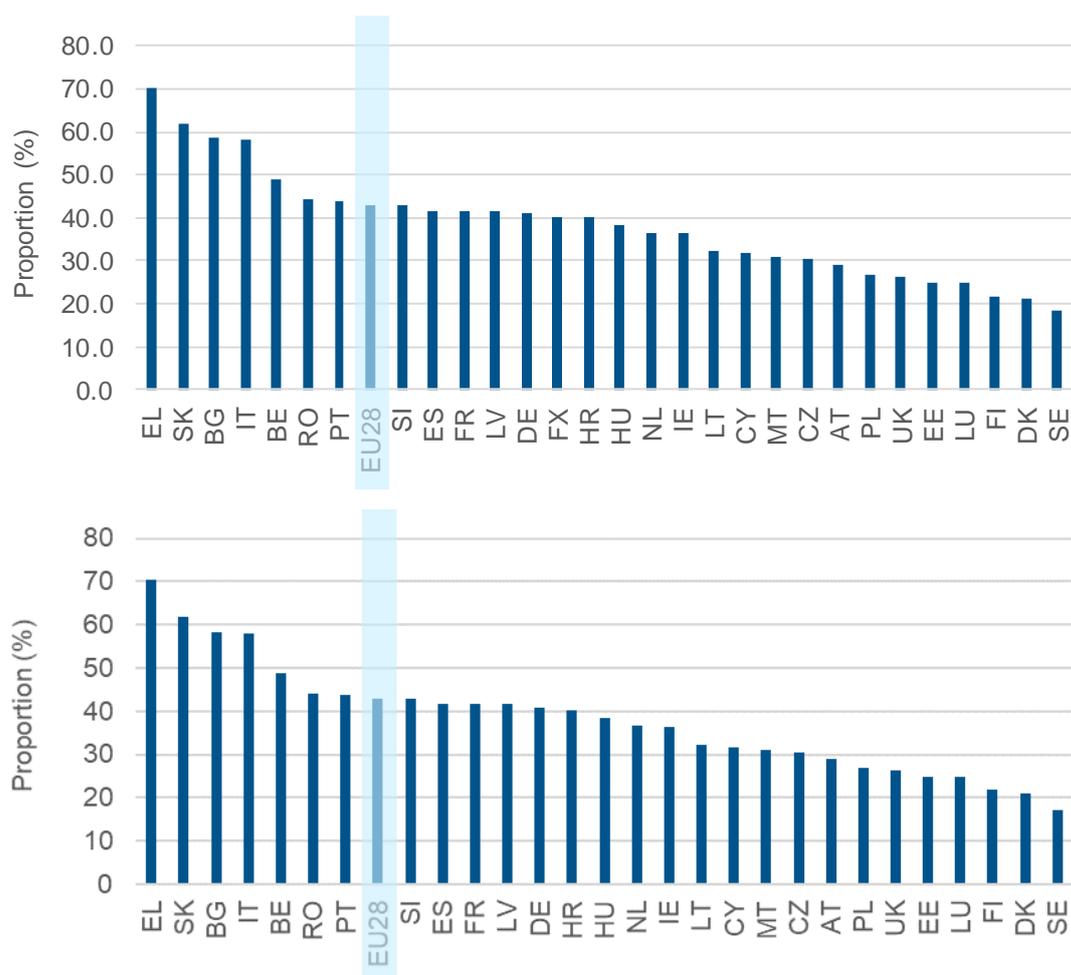
<sup>519</sup> Regional dispersion has been measured by firstly calculating the relative distance of the regional rate to the national mean. The standard deviation for all regional relative distances for each Member State is used to show regional dispersion.

Source: Eurostat, *Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex and NUTS 2 regions (NEET rates) [edat\_lfse\_22]*, extracted on 16 August 2019. Countries without NUTS2 regions have been excluded (Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg and Malta). Regional data was not available for Trier (Germany), Burgenland (Austria) and Åland (Finland). Data for Dresden (Germany), Vorarlberg (Austria) and Bratislavský kraj (Slovakia) is for 2017. Data for Niederbayern and Oberpfalz (Germany) and the Algarve and Madeira (Portugal) are for 2016. Data for the Highlands and Islands (UK) are for 2014.

### Long-term unemployment

On average, 43.2% of unemployed people in the EU-28 have been long-term unemployed, meaning they have been unable to find a job – despite being available for work – for a year or longer. In Greece, 70.3% of unemployed people had been unemployed for a year or more in 2018. Countries in the north of Europe have the lowest rates, as can be observed in Figure 47.

Figure 47. *Proportion of people who are unemployed for 12 months or longer, as a share of all unemployment by Member State, 2018*



Source: Eurostat, *Long-term unemployment by sex - annual average [une\_ltu\_a]*, extracted on 16 August 18 December 2019.

Long-term unemployment is associated with higher poverty rates and longer periods of unemployment are also associated with returns to inactivity (i.e. exiting the labour market), which is also associated with higher poverty and social exclusion rates. For

example, The Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2015 report found that one in five long-term unemployed people stops looking for work and becomes inactive, due to their negative experience unsuccessfully looking for a job.<sup>520</sup>

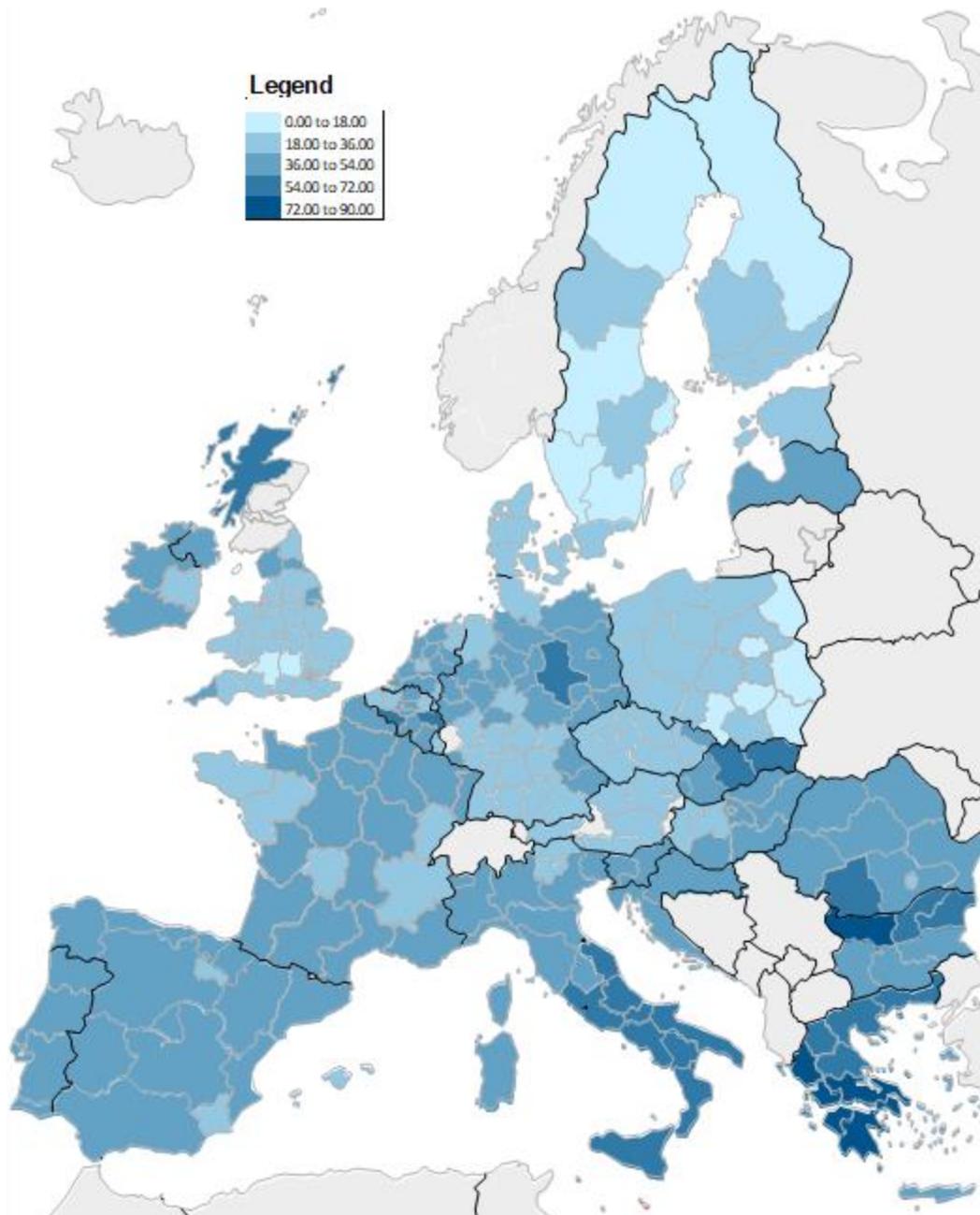
The proportion of people in long-term unemployment has declined from 2014 to 2018 by 6.1 percentage points from 49.3% to 43.2%. This is a proportionally smaller decline (14.1%, taking 2014 as the base year) than the decline in the unemployment rate, where a 3.4 percentage point decline represents a reduction of 33.3% (taking 2014 as the base year). This suggests that people in a vulnerable situation are not benefiting equally from improvements in the labour market.

Long-term unemployment also has an important regional component. Figure 48 represents long-term unemployment rates by NUTS2, with darker areas representing regions with higher long-term unemployment rates.

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<sup>520</sup> Ibid.

Figure 48. Long-term unemployment by NUTS2 region, 2018



Source: Eurostat, *Long-term unemployment (12 months and more) by NUTS 2 regions [lfst\_r\_lfu2ltu]*, extracted on 17 June 2019. Regional data was not available for Trier (Germany), Burgenland, Salzburg, Vorarlberg (Austria) and North East Scotland (UK). Data for Oberfranken and Mittelfranken (Germany), Podlaskie (Poland), Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Devon and East Wales (UK) is for 2017, data for Unterfranken (Germany), Tirol (Austria), Lubuskie (Poland) and Dorset and Somerset are for 2016. Data on Opolskie (Poland), Cumbria and Cheshire (UK) are for 2015. Data for the UK regions Lincolnshire, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, and Highlands and Islands are for 2014.

The table below summarises which Member States have the highest variation in long-term unemployment rates in their various regions, at the NUTS2 level. It shows the UK has the highest amount of regional dispersion, followed by France and Poland, although all have a lower long-term unemployment rate than the EU average. The populations of

some of the regions of these Member States experience, within the relative context of their Member State, much higher rates of risk of poverty or social exclusion, whereas other regions experience much lower rates. In the UK, these are generally the rural regions (in Wales and Scotland). In France, long-term unemployment in the overseas regions is very high and causes the high rate of regional variation.

Table 26. Regional dispersion<sup>521</sup> in the long-term unemployment rate (2018)

Member State	National rate for 2018 (%)	Dispersion of the long-term unemployment rate in 2018 (%)	Number of regions
United Kingdom	26.2	36.3%	39
France	42.0	31.0%	21
Poland	26.9	28.8%	17
Belgium	48.7	24.7%	10
Spain	41.7	22.1%	17
Italy	58.1	20.4%	21
Austria	28.9	18.5%	6
Germany	40.9	18.3%	28
Romania	44.1	18.1%	7
Greece	70.3	17.7%	12
Finland	21.8	16.9%	4
Bulgaria	58.4	16.6%	6
Sweden	18.6	15.5%	8
Czechia	30.5	15.4%	8
Slovakia	61.8	13.9%	4
Hungary	38.5	11.5%	8
Ireland	36.3	9.7%	3
Slovenia	42.9	8.6%	2
Netherlands	36.6	7.8%	12
Portugal	43.7	6.7%	5
Denmark	21.1	5.1%	5
Croatia	40.2	4.7%	2
Lithuania	32.2	0.2%	2

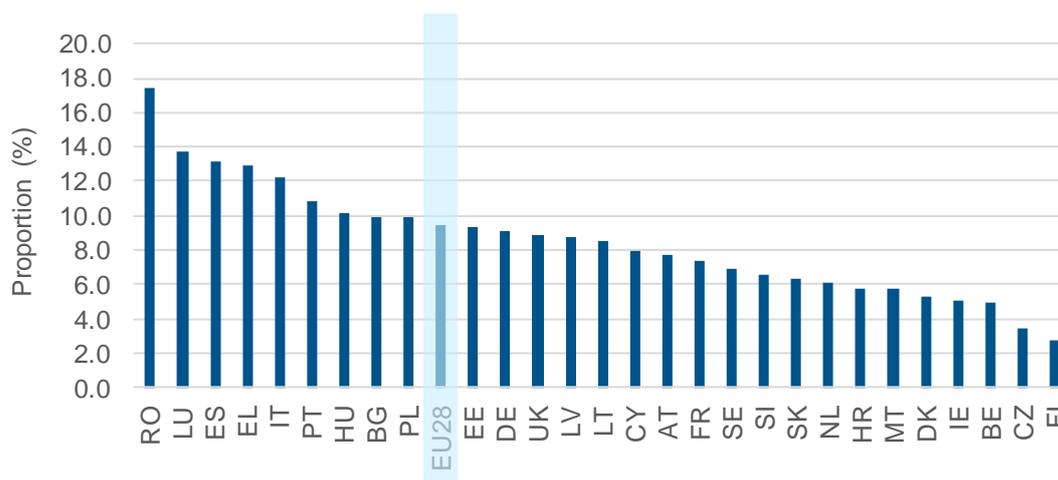
<sup>521</sup> Regional dispersion has been measured by firstly calculating the relative distance of the regional rate to the national mean. The standard deviation for all regional relative distances for each Member State is used to show regional dispersion.

Source: Eurostat, *Long-term unemployment (12 months and more) by NUTS 2 regions [lfst\_r\_lfu2ltu]*, extracted on 17 June 2019. Countries without NUTS2 regions have been excluded (Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg and Malta). Regional data was not available for Trier (Germany), Burgenland, Salzburg, Vorarlberg (Austria) and North East Scotland (UK). Data for Oberfranken and Mittelfranken (Germany), Podlaskie (Poland), Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Devon and East Wales (UK) is for 2017, data for Unterfranken (Germany), Tirol (Austria), Lubuskie (Poland) and Dorset and Somerset are for 2016. Data on Opolskie (Poland), Cumbria and Cheshire (UK) are for 2015. Data for the UK regions Lincolnshire, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, and Highlands and Islands are for 2014.

### In-work poverty

A proportion of employed people are still at risk of poverty. In 2017, this affected 9.4% of employed people aged 18 or over. As Figure 49 illustrates, the highest rates of in-work poverty are found in Romania (17.4% in 2017).

Figure 49. *In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate for the population aged 18 or over, by Member State, 2014 to 2018*

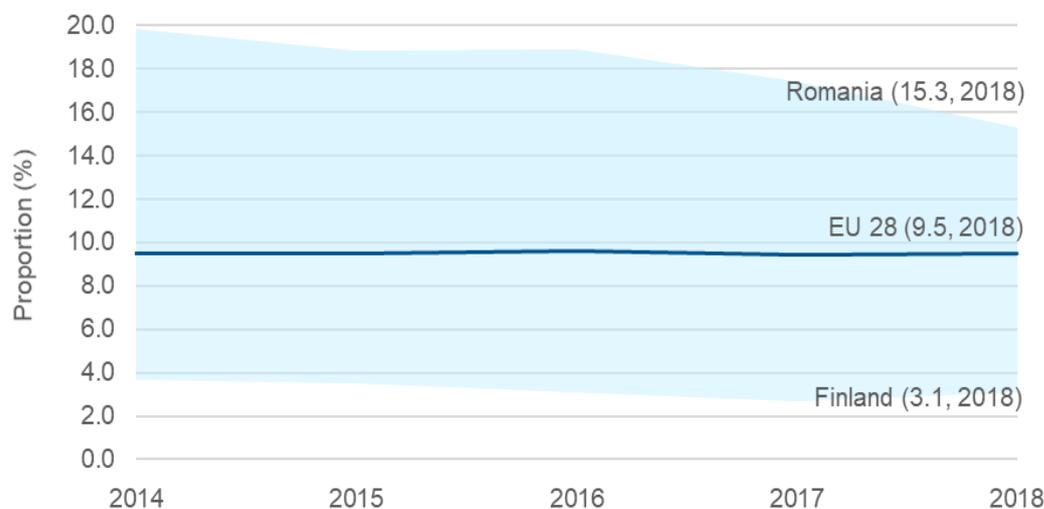


Source: Eurostat, *In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by age and sex - EU-SILC survey [ilc\_iw01]*, extracted on 16 August 2019.

### Trends over time

The in-work poverty rate remained stable between 2014-2017, with 9.5% of employed people aged 18 or older in-work and at-risk-of-poverty in 2014, while in 2017 this was 9.4%, i.e. a small decrease of 0.1 percentage points. This picture masks some of the variance in trends for individual Member States. In Hungary and Luxembourg, the in-work at-risk-of-poverty rate increased substantially. In Hungary it increased from 6.7% in 2014 to 10.2% in 2017 and in Luxembourg it increased from 11.1% in 2014 to 13.7% in 2017. On the other hand, good progress has been made by Finland and Romania (having the lowest and highest rates), as well as Estonia. In Finland, the rate declined from 3.7% in 2014 to 2.7% in 2017 and in Romania it declined from 19.8% in 2014 to 17.4% in 2017. In Estonia the rate in 2014 was 11.8% while in 2017 it was 9.3%.

Figure 50. *In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate for the population aged 18 or over from 2014 to 2018*



Source: Eurostat, *In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by age and sex - EU-SILC survey [ilc\_iw01]*, extracted on 18 December 2019.

### Groups most at risk of in-work poverty

Several groups of people are at a higher risk of in-work poverty. This includes people in households with low work intensity, single parents with dependent children, people with low education, migrants, people with disabilities and young people.

**People in households with low work intensity** are at the highest risk of in-work poverty. In 2017, 37.3% of people aged 18 to 59 years of age in households with low work intensity were in-work but at-risk of poverty. People in households with medium work intensity are also at higher risk, with 22.1% of people in these households being at risk.<sup>522</sup>

**Single parents with dependent children** are also at a very high risk of being in-work but at-risk of poverty. 21.9% of people in this group were at-risk in 2017. People in single person households are generally more at risk: Of all households with single persons generally, 13.5% were at risk.<sup>523</sup>

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<sup>522</sup> Eurostat dataset ilc\_iw03 "In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by work intensity of the household (population aged 18 to 59 years)", available from: [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_iw03&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_iw03&lang=en)

<sup>523</sup> Eurostat dataset ilc\_iw02 "In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by household type", available from: [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_iw02&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_iw02&lang=en)

**People with low educational attainment** are a structural risk group and are also at a higher risk of in-work poverty. Of all persons with low educational attainment who were in work in 2017, 20.2% were at risk of poverty.<sup>524</sup>

**Migrants** are another group that are at a higher risk. Using the definition of country of birth (rather than citizenship), especially those born outside of the EU are at risk. In 2017, 21.4% of people living and working in the EU but born outside of the EU were at risk of in-work poverty and 12.2% of people from born in another EU-28 Member State than the reporting country were at risk.<sup>525</sup>

**People with a disability**, defined as people with some or severe activity limitation, are also at a relatively higher risk. In 2017, 11.2% of people with some or severe activity limitation were in-work at-risk of poverty.<sup>526</sup>

**Young people** are a group that experience an in-work at-risk of poverty rate that is higher than the population as a whole. In 2017, 11.1% of 16-to-24-year-olds were in-work and at risk of poverty.<sup>527</sup>

One reason that employment may not function as a steppingstone out of employment is the nature of the contract. Firstly, the certainty of the employment contract can affect whether work. Precarious work is temporary in nature and does not provide the employee with certainty of work, and is also associated with low pay.<sup>528</sup> The temporary nature of the work also comes at a cost of some employee rights and working conditions typically reserved for permanent (unionised) employees.<sup>529</sup> Data show that in 2017, 16.2% of employees with a temporary contract were in-work and at-risk-of-poverty compared to 5.8% of employees with a permanent contract.<sup>530</sup> Secondly, part-time work

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<sup>524</sup> Eurostat dataset ilc\_iw04 "In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by educational attainment level - EU-SILC survey", available from:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_iw04&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_iw04&lang=en)

<sup>525</sup> Eurostat dataset ilc\_iw16 "In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by broad group of country of birth", available from:  
[https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_iw16&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_iw16&lang=en)

<sup>526</sup> Eurostat dataset hlth\_dpe050 "In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by level of activity limitation, sex and age", available from:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth\\_dpe050&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth_dpe050&lang=en)

<sup>527</sup> Eurostat dataset ilc\_iw01 "In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by age and sex - EU-SILC survey", available from:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_iw01&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_iw01&lang=en)

<sup>528</sup> For example: International Labour Organization, 2011, Policies and regulations to combat precarious employment, available online from:  
[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_dialogue/---actrav/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_164286.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---actrav/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_164286.pdf)

<sup>529</sup> Ibid.

<sup>530</sup> Eurostat dataset ilc\_iw05 "In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by type of contract - EU-SILC survey", available from:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_iw05&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_iw05&lang=en)

is also associated with a higher risk of poverty. Indeed, in 2017 15.6% of part-time workers were in-work at-risk-of-poverty compared to 7.7% of full-time workers.<sup>531</sup>

The groups found to be at a higher risk of in-work and at-risk of poverty are also groups who are more likely to be in temporary and/or part-time employment.<sup>532</sup> A greater focus on ensuring positive in-work transitions (i.e. stepping stones) for these groups may help combat poverty and ensure these groups are not captured in a vicious cycle of poverty.

## Socioeconomic Index – Defining clusters of regions

The problem definition and baseline assessment (see Sections 1 and 2) uncover substantial differences in the socio-economic context across Member States, as well as within Member States at the beginning of the 2014-2020 programming period. To investigate this variation further, the evaluation team defined four clusters of regions at the NUTS-2 level in the EU. These clusters were defined on the basis of a set of selected indicators, for which data was available at the NUTS-2 level, at two time points – 2014 and 2018. The indicators were used to construct a socio-economic index at each time point.

Initially, we explored the possibility of using the Regional Human Poverty Index (RHPI) score, developed by the JRC, to assess changes in the socio-economic context over time.<sup>533</sup> The score reflects four dimensions: social exclusion, knowledge, a decent standard of living and a long and healthy life. The index was used to decompose the ESF monitoring data to the NUTS-2 regional level (see Annex 4 for more information). The JRC index was available for NUTS-2 regions using 2014 data. While the index could potentially be replicated with 2018 data, the evaluation team was unable to replicate certain procedures (such as multiple imputation for missing values) without further instruction. For this reason, we opted to pursue an alternative approach to develop a separate socioeconomic index, using Eurostat indicators.

In total, six indicators available at the NUTS-2 level were initially considered for the construction of the socioeconomic index. These indicators were:

- Share of population that has a low educational achievement (primary to lower secondary) (*tps00197*);
- Prevalence of unemployment (*lfst\_r\_lfu3rt*);
- Prevalence of long-term unemployment (*lfst\_r\_lfu2ltu*);
- Prevalence of material and social deprivation (*ilc\_md08*); and
- Share of population ages 15 to 24 years not in education nor employment (NEET) (*edat\_lfse\_22*); and

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<sup>531</sup> Eurostat dataset *ilc\_iw07* "In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by full-/part-time work - EU-SILC survey", available from:  
[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc\\_iw07&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_iw07&lang=en)

<sup>532</sup> For example: International Labour Organization, 2011, Policies and regulations to combat precarious employment, available online from:  
[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_dialogue/---actrav/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_164286.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---actrav/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_164286.pdf)

<sup>533</sup> Weziak-Bialowolska D and Dijkstra L, 2014. Regional Human Poverty Index Poverty in the regions of Europe. JRC Science and Policy Reports.

- People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (*ilc\_peps11*).

All the indicators were defined such that higher values suggest poorer outcomes. For this reason, the share of the population with a low educational achievement was considered rather than the share of the population with a high educational achievement. Housing deprivation and early school leavers were also considered, but not available at the NUTS-2 level. Three of the variables used in the index– risk of poverty or social exclusion, material and social deprivation and NEETs - are also reflected in the Social Pillar Scoreboard.<sup>534</sup>

Pair-wise correlation coefficients among the six variables was estimated using the 2014 data. The correlation coefficient ranges from 0 (no correlation) to 1 (full correlation). The correlation coefficients reflect the extent to which the variables are related. An index should ideally include indicators that have low pair-wise correlations. A high pair-wise correlation would suggest that an indicator is not adding information to the index that is already being provided by another indicator.

Table 27 presents the estimated pair-wise correlation coefficients using 2014 data for the NUTS-2 regions in the EU-28. The estimated correlation between long-term unemployment and employment was high (0.69), which is expected given that both indicators are related to unemployment. The estimated correlations were also high between NEETs and the other indicators (at least 0.50).

Table 27. Correlation coefficients of NUTS-2 level indicators, EU-28 regions in 2014

	Low educational attainment	Unemployment	Long-term unemployment	Material and social deprivation	Not in education nor employment	At risk of poverty or social exclusion
Low educational attainment	1	0.61	0.43	0.21	0.53	0.48
Unemployment	0.61	1	0.69	0.09	0.82	0.51
Long-term unemployment	0.43	0.69	1	0.46	0.78	0.50
Material and social deprivation	0.21	0.09	0.46	1	0.60	0.84
Not in education nor employment	0.53	0.82	0.78	0.60	1	0.73
At risk of poverty or social exclusion	0.48	0.51	0.50	0.84	0.73	1

Source: Estimated from Eurostat 2014 data

The final set of indicators for the socioeconomic index was selected based on three criteria:

- The estimated correlation coefficients using the 2014 data;
- The focus of the indicator (e.g. education, employment); and

<sup>534</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-pillar-of-social-rights/indicators/social-scoreboard-indicators>

- The availability of data.

The NEETs indicator was not selected due to the high correlation coefficients with the other indicators. As both unemployment and long-term unemployment related to the labour market, only one was selected, namely long-term unemployment, as the estimated correlation coefficients were lower. The estimated correlation coefficient was also very high between the risk of poverty or social exclusion and material and social deprivation (0.84). Of the two, at risk of poverty and social exclusion was selected because the indicator was available for more regions (36% as compared with 28% for material and social deprivation). The selection process led to the identification of three indicators for the socioeconomic index: share of the population with a low educational achievement; the prevalence of long-term unemployment, and; the share of the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion. For some regions, recorded values of the indicator were not available at the two points in time. ICF did not use imputation to fill in these gaps.

Each NUTS-2 region was ranked in terms of each of these three indicators identified for the socioeconomic index using 2014 data to the extent that the data was available. Data for all three indicators was available for 45% of regions. Data for two of the three indicators was available for 47% of regions.

A lower rank indicated a more favourable situation (e.g. lower prevalence of long-term unemployment, less risk of poverty or social exclusion, lower share of the population with a low educational achievement). The simple average of the ranks across the three variables was estimated for each region.<sup>535</sup> These averages were considered as the score for the index. The distribution of the index score across the regions was reviewed and broken down into quartiles. Regions in the lowest quartile can be understood to have the most favourable socioeconomic context while regions in the highest quartile can be understood to have the least favourable socioeconomic context.

The classification of regions with the ICF socioeconomic index were benchmarked against the classification of NUTS-2 regions using the JRC index, which was based also on 2014 data. The JRC index ranked from 9.2 to 69.3, which lower values indicating a less favourable socioeconomic context. The range of the index was lower than the ICF index, which ranged from 18.0 to 263.6 (see Table 29). NUTS-2 regions were classified into four clusters (most to least favourable) based on the quartiles of the JRC index score, following the approach taken for the ICF socioeconomic index. The classification of regions in the four clusters defined using ICF's socioeconomic index and the JRC index were then compared. In total, 97 of the 278 regions were classified in the same cluster with the ICF socioeconomic index and the JRC index. An additional 122 regions were classified in an adjacent cluster. Thus, in total about 80% of regions (four out of five) were classified similarly with the two indices. The benchmarking exercise suggests that the ICF socioeconomic index is largely aligned with the JRC index and can be used to assess the socioeconomic position of regions over time.

The ICF socioeconomic index was then constructed using the 2018 data for the same three indicators. The correlation between the 2014 and 2018 indicators was very high at 0.89 suggesting that most regions remained in the same cluster over the period. In

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<sup>535</sup> A simple average weights each indicator equally in calculating the mean. An alternative approach would be to weight one or more indicators higher than the others. If data was missing for a variable, the simple average was calculated for the variables for which there was data.

fact, over half of regions – 174 out of 278 regions (63%) - remained within the same cluster over time. Among the remaining 104 regions, about half (53 regions, 51 %) transitioned to a worse socio-economic context while the others (51 regions, 49 %) improved over time.

Table 28 indicates the number of regions that were classified in each cluster in 2014 and 2018. The table shows that 52 regions were in the most favourable socio-economic context at both time points while 57 regions were in the least favourable socio-economic context at both time points. The table also indicates the number of regions that changed cluster over time – for example 20 regions improved their socio-economic from cluster 3 to cluster 2 over time. Success rates at the NUTS-2 level were estimated for sets of regions in this classification for which there were at least 20 regions – the estimated success rates are presented in the assessment of Effectiveness (E.Q. 1.2)

*Table 28. Classification of regions (n=278) by cluster in 2014 and 2018*

		2018 clusters			
		1 – most economically favourable	2	3	4 – least economically favourable
2014 clusters	1 – most economically favourable	52	18	0	0
	2	16	30	22	1
	3	2	20	35	12
	4 – least economically favourable	0	1	12	57

The classification of regions by the ICF socioeconomic index clusters in 2014 and 2018 as well as the classification of regions by the JRC index clusters in 2014 are presented in Table 29. Table 30 presents the classification of each region by the ICF index in 2014 and 2018 as well as the JRC index in 2014.

*Table 29. Distribution of ICF socioeconomic index and JRC Regional Human Poverty Index*

	Minimum	Quartile 1	Quartile 2	Quartile 3	Maximum
ICF index – 2014	18.0	77.2	121.6	164.6	263.6
JRC index – 2014	9.2	20.9	27.2	35.9	69.3
ICF index – 2018	5.0	73.01	113.8	162.3	271.0

As a last step, we computed the AROPE population in each cluster. The computation drew on NUTS-2 level data on AROPE and population levels. When NUTS-2 data were available in the NUTS-2 region, the percentage AROPE was multiplied by the population

level to approximate the AROPE population in the NUTS-2 region. When the percentage AROPE was not available for the NUTS-2 region, we used the country-level AROPE estimate weighted by the RHPI score. The sum of the AROPE population across the NUTS-2 region using this approach was 122,092,404 as compared with the Eurostat figure of 122 million.

Table 30. Rankings of NUTS-2 regions by ICF index in 2014 and 2018 and JRC index in 2014

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI			2018 – ICF Index					
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
			BE10					BE10			BE10
			BE2 1					BE2 1			BE2 1
			BE2 2		BE22						BE2 2
			BE2 3					BE2 3			BE2 3
			BE2 4		BE24						BE2 4
			BE2 5		BE25						BE2 5
			BE3 1					BE3 1			BE3 1
			BE32					BE32			BE32
			BE33					BE3 3			BE33
			BE34					BE3 4			BE34
			BE35					BE3 5			BE35
			BG3 1					BG31			BG31

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
			BG32					BG32			BG32
			BG33					BG33			BG33
			BG34					BG34			BG34
		BG41						BG41			BG41
			BG42					BG42			BG42
CZ01						CZ01					CZ01
CZ02						CZ02					CZ02
CZ03						CZ03					CZ03
		CZ04						CZ04			CZ04
CZ05						CZ05					CZ05
CZ06						CZ06					CZ06
CZ07							CZ07				CZ07
		CZ08						CZ08			CZ08
DK01							DK01				DK01

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
		DK02						DK02		DK02	
		DK03						DK03		DK03	
		DK04						DK04		DK04	
DK05								DK05		DK05	
		DE11			DE11					DE11	
DE12					DE12					DE12	
DE13					DE13					DE13	
		DE14			DE14					DE14	
DE21					DE21				DE21		
DE22					DE22					DE22	
		DE23			DE23					DE23	DE23
DE24					DE24				DE24		

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
						DE25					DE 25
						DE26				DE26	
						DE27				DE27	
			DE30					DE30			DE 30
		DE40						DE40			DE 40
		DE50						DE50			DE 50
		DE60						DE60			DE 60
		DE71				DE71					DE 71
		DE72				DE72					DE 72
DE73						DE73					DE 73
		DE80						DE80			DE 80
		DE91						DE91			DE 91

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
			DE9 2				DE9 2				DE 92
		DE9 3					DE9 3				DE 93
		DE9 4					DE9 4				DE 94
			DEA 1				DEA 1				DEA1
			DEA 2				DEA 2				DE A2
		DEA 3					DEA 3				DE A3
		DEA 4					DEA 4				DE A4
			DEA 5				DEA 5				DEA5
		DEB 1			DEB1						DE B1
DEB2					DEB2					DEB2	
		DEB 3					DEB 3				DE B3
			Dec- 00				Dec- 00				Dec -00



2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
			EL61					EL61			EL61
			EL62					EL62			EL62
			EL63					EL63			EL63
			EL64					EL64			EL64
			EL65					EL65			EL65
			EL30					EL30			EL30
			EL41					EL41			EL41
			EL42					EL42			EL42
			EL43					EL43			EL43
			ES11					ES11			ES11
			ES12					ES12			ES12
			ES13					ES13			ES13
			ES21					ES21			ES21
			ES22		ES22						ES22
			ES23					ES23			ES23

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
			ES24					ES24			ES24
			ES30					ES30			ES30
			ES41					ES41			ES41
			ES42						ES42		ES42
			ES43						ES43		ES43
			ES51					ES51			ES51
			ES52						ES52		ES52
			ES53					ES53			ES53
			ES61						ES61		ES61
			ES62						ES62		ES62
			ES63						ES63		ES63
			ES64						ES64		ES64
			ES70						ES70		ES70
			FR10		FR10						FR10
			FRB0					FRB0			FRB0

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
			FRC 1				FRC 1				FRC 1
			FRC 2				FRC 2				FRC 2
				FRD1			FRD 1				FRD1
				FRD2				FRD 2			FRD2
				FRE1			FRE1				FRE1
				FRE2			FRE2				FRE2
				FRF1			FRF1				FRF 1
				FRF2				FRF2			FRF2
				FRF3			FRF3				FRF3
		FRG 0			FRG0					FRG0	
FRH0					FRH0					FRH0	
		FRI1					FRI1				FRI 1
			FRI2				FRI2			FRI 2	
			FRI3		FRI3						FRI 3

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
			FRJ1				FRJ1				FRJ1
		FRJ2			FRJ2					FRJ2	
			FRK1				FRK1				FRK1
		FRK2			FRK2					FRK2	
			FRL0				FRL0				FRL0
			FRM0				FRM0				FRM0
			FRY1				FRY1				FRY1
			FRY2				FRY2				FRY2
			FRY3				FRY3				FRY3
			FRY4				FRY4				FRY4
		HR03					HR03			HR03	
			HR04				HR04			HR04	
			ITC1				ITC1				ITC1
		ITC2					ITC2			ITC2	
			ITC3				ITC3				ITC3

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
			ITC4				ITC4				ITC4
		ITH1			ITH1					ITH1	
		ITH2			ITH2					ITH2	
		ITH3					ITH3				ITH3
		ITH4					ITH4				ITH4
		ITH5			ITH5						ITH5
			ITI1				ITI1				ITI1
			ITI2		ITI2						ITI2
			ITI3		ITI3						ITI3
			ITI4				ITI4				ITI4
			ITF1				ITF1				ITF1
			ITF2				ITF2				ITF2
			ITF3					ITF3			ITF3
			ITF4					ITF4			ITF4
			ITF5					ITF5			ITF5

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
			ITF6					ITF6			ITF6
			ITG1					ITG1			ITG1
			ITG2					ITG2			ITG2
			CY00					CY00			CY00
		LV00						LV00			LV00
		LT01						LT01		LT01	
		LT02						LT02		LT02	
		LU00					LU00				LU00
		HU11						HU11		HU11	
		HU12						HU12		HU12	
		HU21						HU21		HU21	
HU22								HU22			
		HU23						HU23			HU23
		HU31						HU31			HU31

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
			HU3 2					HU32			HU 32
		HU3 3						HU33			HU 33
			MT00					MT0 0			MT00
			NL1 1					NL1 1			NL1 1
			NL1 2					NL1 2			NL1 2
			NL1 3		NL13						NL1 3
			NL2 1		NL21						NL2 1
			NL2 2		NL22						NL2 2
			NL2 3					NL2 3			NL2 3
		NL3 1			NL31						NL3 1
			NL3 2		NL32						NL3 2
			NL3 3		NL33						NL3 3

2014 – ICF Index				2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index			
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
			NL3 4			NL34					NL3 4
			NL4 1			NL41					NL4 1
			NL4 2				NL4 2				NL4 2
AT11								AT1 1			AT1 1
AT12					AT12					AT12	
AT13								AT1 3			AT1 3
AT21					AT21					AT21	
AT22					AT22					AT22	
AT31					AT31					AT31	
AT32					AT32					AT32	
AT33					AT33					AT3 3	
		AT3 4			AT34						AT3 4
		PL21						PL21		PL21	
		PL22						PL22		PL22	
PL41								PL41		PL41	

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
		PL42						PL42		PL42	
								PL43		PL43	
								PL51		PL51	
								PL52		PL52	
								PL61		PL61	
			PL62					PL62		PL62	
		PL63						PL63		PL63	
		PL71						PL71		PL71	
		PL72						PL72		PL72	
		PL81						PL81		PL81	PL81
		PL82						PL82		PL82	PL82
		PL84						PL84		PL84	
								PL91		PL91	
								PL92		PL92	
			PT11					PT11			PT11
			PT15					PT15			PT15
			PT16					PT16			PT16
			PT17					PT17			PT17
			PT18					PT18			PT18

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
			PT20					PT20			PT20
			PT30					PT30			PT30
		RO11						RO11			RO11
		RO12						RO12			RO12
		RO21						RO21			RO21
		RO22						RO22			RO22
		RO31						RO31			RO31
RO32							RO32				
		RO41						RO41			RO41
		RO42						RO42			RO42
		SI03					SI03				SI03
	SI04				SI04				SI04		
SK01					SK01				SK01		
	SK02						SK02			SK02	

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
		SK03						SK03		SK03	
		SK04						SK04			SK04
FI19					FI19					FI19	
FI1B					FI1B					FI1B	
FI1C							FI1C			FI1C	
FI1D							FI1D			FI1D	
			FI20		FI20						FI20
SE11					SE11					SE11	
SE12					SE12					SE12	
SE21					SE21					SE21	
SE22					SE22					SE22	
SE23					SE23					SE23	
SE31					SE31					SE31	
SE32					SE32					SE32	
SE33					SE33					SE33	
			UKC1					UKC1			UKC1

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
		UKC 2						UKC 2			UK C2
		UKD 1						UKD 1			UK D1
		UKD 3							UKD3		UK D3
		UKD 4						UKD 4			UK D4
		UKE 1						UKE 1			UKE1
UKE2								UKE 2		UKE2	
			UKE 3					UKE 3			UK E3
		UKE 4							UKE4		UK E4
		UKF 1						UKF 1			UKF 1
UKF2								UKF 2			UKF 2
		UKF 3						UKF 3			UKF 3
UKG1								UKG 1		UKG1	

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
		UKG 2						UKG 2		UKG2	
			UKG3					UKG3			UK G3
UKH1							UKH 1				UK H1
UKH2							UKH 2			UKH2	
		UKH 3					UKH 3				UK H3
UKI3								UKI3		UKI3	
UKI4								UKI4		UKI4	
		UKI5						UKI5		UKI5	
UKI6								UKI6			UKI 6
UKI7								UKI7		UKI7	
UKJ1							UKJ1			UKJ1	
UKJ2							UKJ2			UKJ2	
UKJ3					UKJ3					UKJ3	
UKJ4							UKJ4				UKJ 4
UKK1							UKK 1			UKK1	

2014 – ICF Index			2014- JRC RHPI				2018 – ICF Index				
Cluster 1- Most economically favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least economically favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable	Cluster 1- Most favourable	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4- Least favourable
							UKK2				UKK2
							UKK3			UKK3	
							UKK4			UKK4	
			UKL1					UKL1			UKL1
								UKL2			UKL2
								UKM5			UKM5
			UKM6				UKM6				UKM6
								UKM7			UKM7
			UKM8						UKM8		UKM8
			UKM9						UKM9		UKM9
								UKN0			UKN0

Source: ICF index constructed based on the simple average of the ranking of three indicators: share of population with a low educational achievement (ISCED 0-2), long-term unemployment and the share of the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

## ANNEX 4 - DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF MONITORING DATA

### Overview

This annex presents findings from a descriptive analysis of data extracted from the SFC2014. The data received included "financial" and "physical" indicators with a cut-off date for the end of the 2018 calendar year.

The analysis of the SFC extraction covers financial and physical indicators reported by the Managing Authorities, including common and programme-specific indicators. The findings generated from the analysis of the SFC2014 extend from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2018. The quantitative data provides an indication of the financial resources committed to T09, the outputs and results generated.

The research team encountered some inconsistencies in an initial data extraction provided by the European Commission, which were reviewed against other sources including the AIRS and the ESF Synthesis Report of the 2018 Annual Implementation Reports, which includes an analysis of recorded entries into the SFC that were made by the end of 2017<sup>536</sup>. For example, no data for outputs and results was available for Estonia in the 11 July 2019 extraction from the SFC2014. Most of these inconsistencies were resolved with the subsequent extraction, which was received on 10 December 2019. The analysis of the data from this more recent extraction from SFC2014 is reflected in the Final Report.

### T09 operations

The research team in consultation with the European Commission identified a total of 145 OPs that foresaw T09 actions. Table 31 presents the breakdown of the number of OPs by Member State and also the number of operations planned for by the end of December 2018. As stated in Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013: '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. The breakdown includes within its scope operations carried out under T09 in 'Multiple Thematic Objectives Priority Axes'.

Table 76 at the end of this Annex shows OPs under T09 operations and number of operations by OP.

T09 operations are complex, highly diverse and delivered to a range of vulnerable groups as well as entities. T09 promotes social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination through its six investment priorities (IPs):

- i. Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability;
- ii. Socio-economic integration of marginalized communities such as the Roma;
- iii. Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities;

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<sup>536</sup> European Commission (2018). Final ESF Synthesis Report of Annual Implementation Reports 2017 submitted in 2018. This report finds that the allocated costs overall were 15,697 million euros. Of this, 7,764 million euros were in more developed regions, 5,536 million euros in less developed regions and 2,396 million euros in transition regions.

- iv. Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest;
- v. Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment; and
- vi. Community-led local development (CLLD) strategies.

Table 31 shows that the most OPs covered IP9i. The definition of IP9i is broad and actions may more easily fit within it than under other more narrowly defined investment priorities such as IP9v or IP9vi.<sup>537</sup> The table also shows that operations under IP9i addressed all types of operation 1-6, which implies that this IP was used as a 'catch-all' for a wide variety of actions. The definition of IP9i is broad in comparison with priorities such as IP9v or IP9vi. The same applies, albeit to a lesser extent, to IP9ii and IP9iii. IP9iv and IP9v included actions that fell under two types of operations only. A more granular mapping of TO9 operations (by type of operation and target group) can be found in Annex 2.

Table 31 shows that Type 1 operations were the most common (being reflected in 136 OPs) while Type 3 operations were the least common (being reflected in 25 OPs). Most of the Type 1 operations fell under IP9i while most of Type 4 operations fell under IP9iv and most of Type 5 operations fell under IP9v. The overall correspondence is in line with the definitions of the IPs and the types of operations. Actions aimed at influencing attitudes and systems (Type 6) were found in each IP, whilst most of the IPs included operations focussing on access to services (Type 4).

*Table 31. Number of TO9 operations by type of operation and IP*

Type of operation	Number of OPs:	IP9i	IP9ii	IP9iii	IP9iv	IP9v	IP9vi
Type 1 Employment-focused actions	136	129	16	8	2		12
Type 2 Enhance basic skills	29	20	5	4			
Type 3 Basic school education	25	8	12	5			
Type 4 Access to services	97	52	21	20	66	1	2
Type 5 Social entrepreneurship	75	19				50	9
Type 6 Actions influencing attitudes and systems	79	37	15	13	32	20	7

<sup>537</sup> ESF Transnational Platform, 2018. Social inclusion indicators for ESF investments - areas for development in addressing the 20% social inclusion target

*Note:* Project team assessment of the 145 OPs that planned for TO9 operations. One OP can include multiple types of operations.

## **Analyses carried out**

A descriptive analysis was carried out with respect to: ESF financial allocation to TO9, common output indicators from TO9 operations, and common result indicators generated from TO9 operations. The descriptive analysis was carried out for TO9 operations overall as well as by Member State, IP, and category of region. For more information on the types of TO9 operations which were defined for the evaluation, please see Annex 2.

The analysis constructed several measures relevant for the evaluation. These included the following:

- Absorption rate (financial indicators) – This rate was defined in three ways (1) the percentage of planned fund that were allocated, (2) the percentage of planned funds that were declared by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities and (3) the percentage of allocated funds that were declared by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities. The methodology for the calculation is presented in Section 2 of this Annex. Definition (1) is also known as the project selection rate and was the primary definition of absorption rate used in the Final Report.
- Success rate (output and result indicators) – The share of participations that generate a result. Success rates were estimated for each of the nine common result indicators. The methodology for the calculation is presented in Section 4 of this Annex.
- Achievement rate (programme-specific indicators) – The level of recorded values for specific output and specific results in relation to target values set for the end of the programming period. The methodology for the calculation is presented in Section 0 of this Annex.

The financial, output and result indicators were also broken down by two variables that were not available in the SFC2014: (1) NUTS-2 level regions and (2) type of operation. The methodology taken for each is presented below.

## **Breakdown of ESF monitoring data – type of operation**

Section 3 of the Final Report presents a typology for TO9 operations and a mapping of operations recorded in SFC2014 until 31 December 2018. More information about the definition of the typology can be found in Annex 2.

The ESF monitoring data was reviewed alongside this mapping and the indicators were broken down accordingly. TO9 operations mapped to one or more types of operations. In cases where it mapped to one type, all of the recorded values (financial, output, result) were allocated to that type of operation. In cases where the TO9 operation mapped to more than one type, the recorded values (financial, output, result) were broken down evenly. For example, if an operation mapped to three types, the planned and allocated amounts were divided by three, where each share was allocated to one type of operation. This methodology assumed an even breakdown of the recorded values by type of operation. In practice this may not be the case – some types of operations may have generated higher recorded values. Nevertheless, in the absence of more detailed information, this provided the only practical way to go about this work.

## **NUTS-2 regions**

The ESF financial data (planned, allocated and declared expenditures by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities) and participations data was broken down at the NUTS-2 region level. The decomposition was carried out through the following steps:

- Each NUTS-2 region with recorded ESF data was mapped to the category of region variable, available in the extraction from SFC2014 – less developed; more developed; transition. This was carried out by reviewing the coverage of NUTS-2 regions indicated in the OPs.
- Each NUTS-2 region was assigned a Regional Human Poverty Index (RHPI) score, which was presented in a study by the JRC.<sup>538</sup> The score reflects four dimensions: social exclusion, knowledge, a decent standard of living and a long and healthy life. The score was produced in 2014 with six indicators – life expectancy at birth, infant mortality rate, percentage of population aged 25-64 years with low educational attainment, percentage of population aged 18-24 neither employed nor in education or training (NEET), long-term unemployment rate and percent of population below the income poverty line. A key advantage of this index is that, it is available for all regions of the EU. However, it has only been produced in 2014.<sup>539</sup> The region codes used in the JRC paper were based on the 2010 classification of regions. These codes needed to be cross-checked against the 2018 classification. In the few cases where NUTS-2 regions from 2010 were split into multiple regions in 2018, the same RHPI score was assigned to the 'new' regions.
- Each NUTS-2 region was given a weighting based on the total RHPI scores in its region category (i.e. less developed; more developed; transition). The weighting was then applied to the total amount of planned funds, allocated funds and recorded participations in TO9 operations in the country for each of the three categories of region. The values for two NUTS-2 regions in the UK could not be transferred to NUTS-2 level due to missing RHPI scores.

The result of these steps was the ESF data decomposed to the NUTS-2 regional level.

### **Targeting analysis – Implementation of ESF TO9 in relation to the socio-economic context (NUTS 2 level analysis)**

The baseline analysis in Annex 3 included a NUTS-2 level analysis for a selection of indicators available from Eurostat. A NUTS-2 level socio-economic index was constructed using some of these indicators. Regions in the EU were classified into four clusters in 2014 and 2018 based on the estimated value of the socio-economic index.

The alignment of ESF TO9 operations to the socio-economic context was investigated by analysing the monitoring data at the NUTS-2 level alongside the classification of

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<sup>538</sup> Weziak-Bialowolska D and Dijkstra L, 2014. Regional Human Poverty Index Poverty in the regions of Europe. JRC Science and Policy Reports.

<sup>539</sup> The authors note that it can be replicated for subsequent years using the same methodology for more recent values of the same indicators. However, the methodology highlights procedures such as multiple imputation that cannot be accurately replicated without further information.

regions into the clusters defined by the socio-economic index.<sup>540</sup> For example, the percentage of planned expenditure, spent expenditure and participations was calculated for each of the four categories of regions based on socio-economic level, using both the 2014 and 2018 rankings. This allowed us to see, for example, the proportion of TO9 funding which was spent in economically less favourable regions.

### **Descriptive analysis of financial indicators**

This section presents an overview of financial amounts that were planned, allocated and spent on OPs and operations identified as being relevant for TO9. Table 32 presents the planned amounts for ESF TO9 by Member State, broken down into the EU and national components. These amounts reflect the latest valid OPs that were available by the end of December 2018.

*Table 32. Planned ESF amounts for TO9 operations (€, million)*

<b>Country</b>	<b>EU amount</b>	<b>National amount</b>
AT	137.6	136.8
BE	336.8	376.3
BG	459.9	80.4
CY	54	9.5
CZ	854.3	196.5
DE	2 396.6	1 638.7
DK	42.8	39.7
EE	139.4	26.9
ES	2, 016.5	950.1
FI	100.5	100.5
FR	1, 897.6	1, 530.9
GR	917	268.9
HR	328	57.9
HU	1, 081.3	212.5
IE	148.8	148.8
IT	2, 279.9	1, 468.6
LT	241.9	42.7
LU	4	4
LV	225.2	39.7
MT	32	8
NL	363.1	363.1

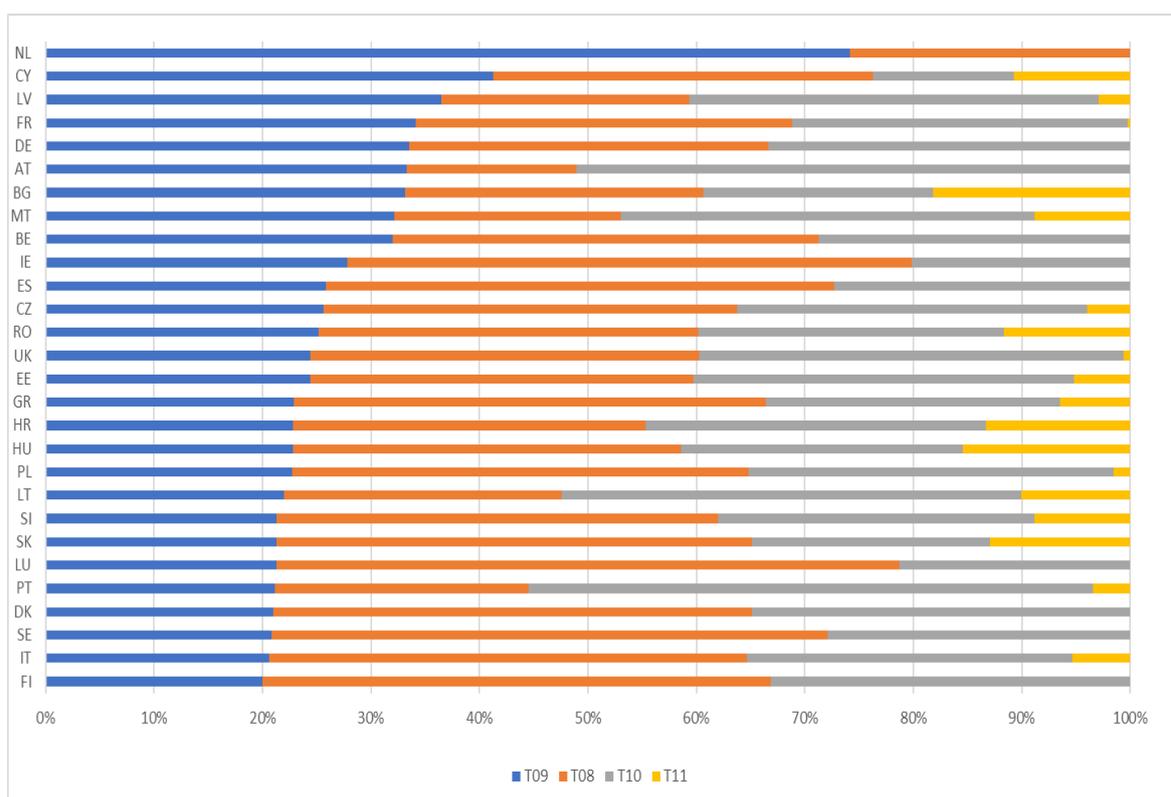
<sup>540</sup> This index was constructed using three indicators available at the NUTS-2 level:

Country	EU amount	National amount
PL	2, 719.4	478.2
PT	1, 557.7	334.5
RO	1, 141.6	180.6
SE	152.5	152.5
SI	152.5	38.1
SK	433.7	98.5
UK	1, 187.4	951.5
EU-28	21, 402.2	9, 934.6

Source: OP Extraction 01 July 2019; variable used: Planned – Total amount

Figure 51 provides breakdowns by Member State and Thematic Objective for planned amounts.

Figure 51. Planned amount by Member State and TOs



Source: OP Extraction 01 July 2019; variable used: Planned – Total amount

Table 33 shows changes in planned amounts by Thematic Objective between the last available, which was extracted from the SFC2014 in July 2019, and the first approved versions of Operational Programmes.

Table 33. Changes in planned amounts by Thematic Objective over time (€, thousands)

MS	TO8	TO9	TO10	TO11	TA	Total
AT	0	0	0	0	0	0
BE	29.9	-5.6	-1.1	-	-3.6	19.5
BG	-68.9	68.9	0	-	-1.8	-1.8
CY	-27.7	31.8	-10.6	10.6	-	4.1
CZ	-34.2	34.2	0	0	0	0
DE	198.7	-156.8	-72.5	0	0	-31.6
DK	22.8	2.4	-13.4	0	0	11.7
EE	-27.3	9.0	10.5	-0.5	-	-8.4
ES	577.2	94.8	264.0	0	80.9	1,017.0
FI	2.5	1.2	2.2	0	0	5.8
FR	75.1	-37.7	-98.4	0	-508.6	-61.5
EL	290.0	168.2	182.5	-29.5	-6.9	604.3
HR	0	0	0	0	0	0
HU	-33.5	0	0	0	0	-33.5
IE	94.2	-90.0	0	0	0	4.2
IT	410.3	10.2	-116.4	0.9	-16.8	288.2
LT	8.2	25.0	13.3	-46.9	0	0
LU	0	0	0	0	0	0
LV	6.8	-	-6.8	-	0	0
MT	0	0	0	0	0	0

MS	TO8	TO9	TO10	TO11	TA	Total
NL	1.5	4.2	-	-	0.3	6.0
PL	71.7	-61.8	-23.4	9.3	9.5	5.2
PT	-13.0	-94.3	75.0	15.6	-17.7	-34.4
RO	0	0	0	0	0	0
SE	-9.0	-4.8	-5.9	-	-0.8	-20.5
SI	3.8	9.1	-	1.0	-	13.8
SK	0	0	0	0	0	0
UK	47.9	155.2	-322.7	52.8	5.9	-60.9
EU-28	1,626.8	163.4	-123.9	13.4	48.7	1,728.4

Source: SCF2014, based on the first approved (OP2014) and the last approved (OP2018) versions of Operational Programmes, which were obtained from the extraction. The data for the first versions was extracted on 4 July 2019 and for the last versions on 1 July 2019. The dates of the first approved and the last approved versions varied by OP. When there are several versions of each OP, the latest version is always used. Amounts include EU and national co-financing.

Table 34 shows planned amounts by MS and IP.

Table 35 and Figure 52 present the allocated financial amounts<sup>541</sup> by Member State and IP. The ESF Regulation notes that Member States should plan at least 20% of ESF funds for TO9. Figure 52 shows share of amount that was allocated to TO9 out of the overall ESF allocated amount and the progress made in each Member State.

<sup>541</sup> Allocated amount refers to Total eligible cost of selected projects

The overall and MS figures for planned and allocated amounts are roughly comparable with the findings from the ESF Synthesis Report of the 2017 Annual Implementation Reports submitted in 2018,<sup>542</sup> as well as figures from the AIRs 2018 to be published in 2020.

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<sup>542</sup> European Commission (2018). Final ESF Synthesis Report of Annual Implementation Reports 2017 submitted in 2018; The report does not present estimated figures for Declared Expenditures.

Table 34. Planned amounts (EU and national amounts) for TO9 operations, by MS and IP (€, million)

Country	IP9i	IP9ii	IP9iii	IP9iv	IP9v	IP9vi	Total
AT	274.4						274.4
BE	682.0	4.7	7.2		19.2		713.1
BG	99.4	168.2		239.8	33.0		540.3
CY	14.1		49.4				63.6
CZ	441.2	236.1	26.6	279.7		67.3	1,050.8
DE	3,987.7		3.0	10.0		34.5	4,035.3
DK	82.5						82.5
EE	37.8			128.5			166.3
ES	2,562.3	59.7	178.7	90.0	75.9		2,966.7
FI	201.1						201.1
FR	3,335.5	12.6	15.5	17.5	37.0	10.5	3,428.5
GR	374.8	130.5	186.9	337.4	136.1	20.3	1,185.9
HR	136.5			211.8	37.6		385.9
HU	450.2	485.5		277.5	32.1	48.7	1,293.9
IE	275.9		21.7				297.6
IT	2,679.4	161.0		769.3	113.9	24.9	3,748.6
LT	68.1			143.7	49.6	23.3	284.6
LU	8.0						8.0
LV	108.3			156.6			264.9
MT	35.0			5.0			40.0

Country	IP9i	IP9ii	IP9iii	IP9iv	IP9v	IP9vi	Total
NL	726.3						726.3
PL	1,392.6			1,301.1	441.9	62.1	3,197.6
PT	1,498.7		56.3	122.5	72.5	142.2	1,892.1
RO		437.8		541.2	131.1	212.0	1,322.2
SE	289.0					16.0	305.0
SI	112.7			40.4	37.6		190.6
SK	193.2	163.5		175.4			532.2
UK	2,031.7				21.8	85.3	2,138.9
EU-28	22,098.2	1,859.7	545.3	4,847.3	1,239.3	747.0	31,336.9

Source: AIR extraction 10 December 2019, variable used: Planned – Total Amount; Note: i) Active inclusion, ii) Socio-economic integration of marginalised, iii) Non-discrimination and equal opportunities, iv) Access to services, v) Social entrepreneurship and vi) Community-led local development strategies. Allocated funds include both EU and national amounts.

Table 35. Allocated amounts (EU and national amounts) for TO9 operations, by MS and IP (€, million)

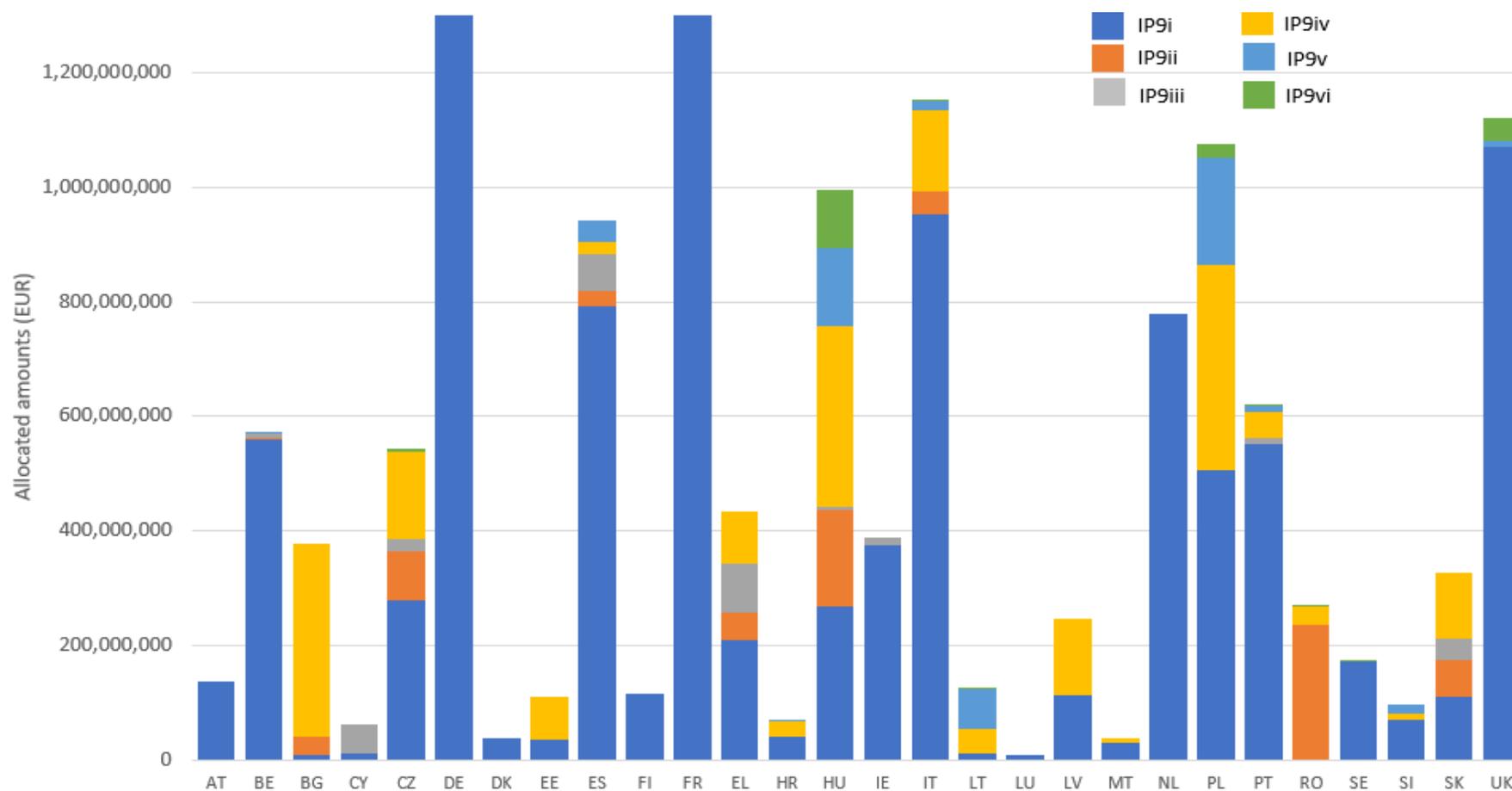
Country	IP9i	IP9ii	IP9iii	IP9iv	IP9v	IP9vi	Total
AT	185.4						185.4
BE	586.5	2.5	7.5		3.6		600.1
BG	8.6	30.8		250.4			289.8
CY	9.7		52.2				61.9
CZ	327.4	44.2	22.4	228.2		25.6	647.8
DE	3376.7		2.4	3.8		18.6	3401.5
DK	57.8						57.8

Country	IP9i	IP9ii	IP9iii	IP9iv	IP9v	IP9vi	Total
EE	38.6			87.5			126.1
ES	1831.1	28.1	92.8	26.0	41.5		2019.5
FI	134.0						134.0
FR	2616.8	5.0	7.1	5.5	7.6	.0	2642.1
GR	277.2	54.3	133.0	127.0		4.7	596.2
HR	173.9			102.6	1.7		278.2
HU	446.7	285.0		372.3	142.0	.0	1246.1
IE	297.6						297.6
IT	1269.6	118.6		348.2	49.9	17.2	1803.5
LT	27.4			73.2	70.3	6.7	177.6
LU	7.8						7.8
LV	114.0			128.0			242.0
MT	32.6			7.9			40.5
NL	831.1						831.1
PL	731.8			743.2	256.3	30.7	1762.0
PT	943.1		14.2	71.7	28.9	6.7	1064.5
RO		492.4		943.7	.1	12.8	1449.0
SE	210.9					8.2	219.1
SI	76.9			28.8	19.1		124.7
SK	123.8	124.3		174.9			423.0
UK	1520.0				11.5	64.8	1596.4

Country	IP9i	IP9ii	IP9iii	IP9iv	IP9v	IP9vi	Total
EU-28	16257.1	1185.2	331.6	3722.7	632.6	196.0	22325.1

Source: AIR extraction 10 December 2019, variable used: Total Eligible Cost of selected projects; Note: i) Active inclusion, ii) Socio-economic integration of marginalised, iii) Non-discrimination and equal opportunities, iv) Access to services, v) Social entrepreneurship and vi) Community-led local development strategies. Allocated funds include both EU and national amounts.

Figure 52. Allocated funds for TO9 operations, by MS and IP



Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018 (data extracted on 10 December 2019). Allocated funds include both EU and national amounts.

Table 36. Share of eligible costs selected for TO9 operations from the ESF operations (€, million)

Country	Eligible costs selected for TO9 operations	Eligible costs selected for ESF operations	Share of Eligible costs selected for TO9 operations from Eligible costs selected for ESF operations
AT	185.4	334.2	55
BE	600.1	1 494.3	40
BG	289.8	1 063.4	27
CY	61.9	28.7	216
CZ	647.8	2 396.7	27
DE	3 401.5	8 195.8	42
DK	57.8	201.1	29
EE	126.1	515.9	24
ES	2 019.5	3 861.1	52
FI	134.0	581.2	23
FR	2 642.1	5 544.4	48
GR	596.2	2 293	26
HR	278.2	343.6	81
HU	1 246.1	4 991.3	25
IE	297.6	951.2	31
IT	1 803.5	5 941.6	30
LT	177.6	582.6	30
LU	7.8	32.1	24

Country	Eligible costs selected for TO9 operations	Eligible costs selected for ESF operations	Share of Eligible costs selected for TO9 operations from Eligible costs selected for ESF operations
LV	242.0	583.3	41
MT	40.5	106.3	38
NL	831.1	975	85
PL	1762.0	5 972.7	30
PT	1 064.5	4 316.7	25
RO	1 449.0	651.8	222
SE	219.1	761.2	29
<i>SI</i>	<i>124.7</i>	<i>671.9</i>	<i>19</i>
SK	423.0	1424.1	30
UK	1 596.4	4566.6	35
EU-28	22 325.1	59381.6	38

Source: AIR extraction 10 December 2019; Note: allocated amount refers to Total Eligible Cost of selected projects. Allocated amounts include total amount (EU + national); Note: countries that have not met the 20% target are displayed in italics.

The overall and MS figures for planned and allocated amounts are roughly comparable with the findings from the ESF Synthesis Report of the 2018 Annual Implementation Reports submitted in 2019,<sup>543</sup> as well as figures from the AIRs 2018 to be published in 2020.

<sup>543</sup> European Commission (2020). Final ESF Synthesis Report of Annual Implementation Reports 2018 submitted in 2019; The report does not present estimated figures for Declared Expenditures.

Table 37 gives an overview of declared expenditures under TO9 operations by Member State and IP.

Financial data disaggregated by IP and type of operation can be found in Table 38, the breakdown by category of region in Table 39 and by multi- and mono-fund OPs in Table 40.

*Table 37. Expenditures declared by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities (EU and national funding amounts) for TO9 operations, by MS and IP (€, million)*

Country	IP9i	IP9i	IP9i	IP9i	IP9i	IP9i	Total
AT	69.7						69.7
BE	199.5	2.0	0.5		0.4		202.4
BG <sup>544</sup>	8.0	16.2		149.6			173.8
CY	4.6		19.1				23.7
CZ	140.3	17.3	9.4	48.4		1.9	217.3
DE	1674.2		1.9	1.9		7.2	1685.2
DK	18.2						18.2
EE	15.5			33.0			48.5
ES	535.2	19.2	28.7	6.3	8.2		597.5
FI	77.9						77.9
FR	1670.5	1.3	2.0	0.3	4.1	0.0	1678.3
GR	239.7	12.2	53.6	30.0		0.4	336.0
HR	30.0			13.1	1.4		44.6

<sup>544</sup> Inconsistencies were noted in BG for one of the two OPs - 2014BG05M9OP001 – in reporting under different IPs.

Country	IP9i	IP9i	IP9i	IP9i	IP9i	IP9i	Total
HU	92.5	44.1		60.4	6.7	0.0	203.7
IE	14.5						14.5
IT	359.0	11.0		143.6	14.4	0.9	528.9
LT	6.3			20.1	67.0	1.3	94.8
LU	5.4						5.4
LV	37.4			16.8			54.2
MT	1.9			9.0			10.9
NL	356.2						356.2
PL	232.7			153.9	102.1	3.9	492.7
PT	438.9		5.4	21.3	4.0	0.8	470.4
RO		33.1		487.8	.0	1.3	522.2
SE	88.3					1.7	90.0
SI	29.4			6.1	1.2		36.7
SK	37.4	19.3		63.1			119.8
UK	580.7				0.1	0.9	581.7
EU-28	6964.5	175.6	120.6	1264.8	209.7	20.3	8755.5

Source: AIR extraction 10 December 2019, variable used: Total expenditure declared; Note: i) Active inclusion, ii) Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities, iii) Non-discrimination and equal opportunities, iv) Access to services, v) Social entrepreneurship and vi) Community-led local development strategies;

The Commission Implementing Regulation (CIR)<sup>545</sup> for the 2014-2020 programming period requires Member States to set physical and financial targets at priority axes level. Targets are set both as mid-term goals (Milestones), to be achieved by the end of 2018, and as final targets to be achieved by the end of 2023.

*'all indicators included in the performance framework have achieved at least 85% of the milestone value by the end of 2018 or at least 85% of the target value by the end of 2023. By way of derogation, the indicator, which does not achieve 85% of its milestone or target value, shall not achieve less than 75% of its milestone or target value'*<sup>546</sup>

An analysis of the milestones was carried out for OPs and Priority Axis under TO9 operations. Cases of overlaps between a milestone/target under the same OP and Priority Axis under TO9 and other Thematic Objectives were excluded from the analysis. The countries that had some values omitted included Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Germany, Spain, Finland, Hungary, Poland, Sweden and the UK<sup>547</sup>. Figure 53 presents the estimated declared expenditures as a share of financial milestones 2018 and of financial targets 2023 by Member State.

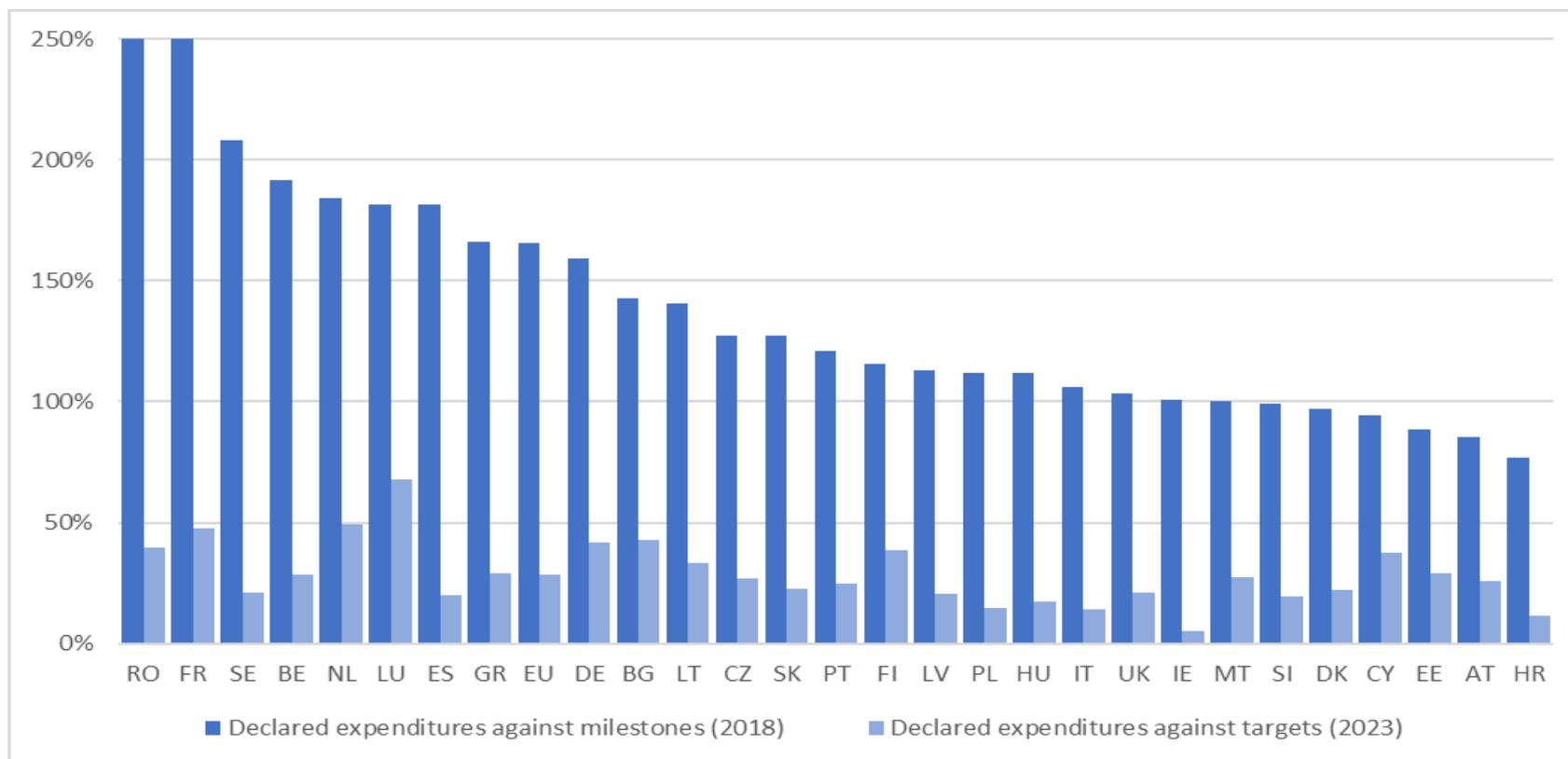
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<sup>545</sup> Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 215/2014 of 7 March 2014 laying down rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L69, 8.3.2014 Art. 5(2)

<sup>546</sup> Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 215/2014 Art. 6(2)

<sup>547</sup> The overlaps included some values in the following OPs: a) partially left out 2014AT05SFOP001, 2014BE05SFOP002, 2014DE16M2OP001, 2014ES05SFOP011, 2014FI05M2OP001, b) completely left out: 2014CZ05M2OP001, 2014HU16M2OP001, 2014HU16M2OP002, 2014PL05M9OP001, 2014SE05M9OP001, 2014UK05M9OP001

Figure 53. Declared expenditures as a share of financial milestones 2018 and of financial targets 2023



Source: SFC2014, based on OP2018 (data extracted on July 1, 2019) and AIR2018 (data extracted on 10 December 2019). Allocated funds include both EU and national amounts; Note: Declared expenditures as a share of milestones 2018 were 371% for Romania and 362% for France.

Table 38. Allocated funds and declared expenditures by IP and type of operation (€, million)

	IP9i	IP9ii	IP9iii	IP9iv	IP9v	IP9vi	All IPs	
Allocated funds	Type 1	9,572.4	256.0	44.9	30.3	1.6	98.5	10,003.7
	Type 2	1,586.9	19.4	3.1			1.1	1,610.5
	Type 3	227.0	246.7	55.8			1.1	530.6
	Type 4	1,524.5	432.8	148.0	2,219.6	0.1	7.7	4,332.7
	Type 5	343.1				484.9	53.6	881.7
	Type 6	3,003.3	230.2	79.8	1,472.8	145.9	33.9	4,965.9
	<b>All types</b>	16,257.1	1,185.2	331.6	3,722.7	632.6	196.0	22,325.1
Declared expenditures	Type 1	4,149.6	32.9	16.3	11.6	1.0	13.0	4,224.4
	Type 2	543.7	3.4	0.9			0.2	584.2
	Type 3	97.8	31.2	22.9			0.2	152.1
	Type 4	536.5	66.2	56.3	791.4		0.9	1,451.3
	Type 5	138.6				139.7	2.2	280.5
	Type 6	1,498.3	42.0	24.2	461.8	69.0	3.8	2,099.0
	<b>All types</b>	6,964.5	175.6	120.6	1,264.8	209.7	20.3	8,755.5

Note: SFC2014, based on AIR2018 (data extracted on 10 December 2019) and OP2018 (data extracted on July 1, 2019). Allocated funds include both EU and national amounts. The allocated funds were broken down by type of operation using the methodology presented.

Table 39. Financial indicators for TO9 operations, category of region (€, billion)

Category of region	Planned funds	Allocated funds	Expenditures
Less developed	13.5	8.8	2.7
Transition	4.7	3.6	1.5
More developed	13.2	9.9	4.6

Source: SFC2014, based on OP2018 (data extracted on July 1, 2019) and AIR2018 (data extracted on 10 December 2019). Allocated funds include both EU and national amounts.

Table 40 presents financial implementation of Multi-fund and Mono-fund OPs under TO9. Multi-fund OPs are OPs that are financed by ESF and other EU funds (e.g. Cohesion Funds and ERDF). Mono-fund OPs under TO9 are financed exclusively by ESF.

Table 40. Financial implementation of Multi-fund and Mono-fund OPs with ESF funds under TO9

	Multi-fund OPs under TO9	Mono-fund OPs under TO9
Number of OPs	71	74
Planned funds (EUR)	16.4 billion	14.9 billion
Allocated funds (EUR)	11.4 billion	10.9 billion
Declared expenditures by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities (EUR)	3.8 billion	4.9 billion
Share of planned funds that were allocated (%)	70 %	73 %
Share of planned funds that were declared expenditures (%)	23%	33%

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018 (10 December 2019) and OP2018 (data extracted on July 1, 2019). Allocated funds include both EU and national amounts; Note: Multi-fund OPs are OPs that are financed by ESF and other EU funds (e.g. Cohesion Funds and ERDF). Mono-fund OPs under TO9 are financed exclusively by ESF.

Table 41 presents the absorption rates for TO9 funds by Member State which was defined in three ways. The first was the percentage of planned fund that have been allocated, so-called project selection rate, which is considered as a preferred measure to evaluating financial implementation of TO9 operations. The second was the percentage of planned funds that were declared by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities. The third one represents share of allocated funds that were declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authorities.

The absorption rate for countries with multiple OPs was calculated by dividing a sum of planned amount for all OPs by a sum of the allocated amount for all OPs. The same methodology was applied for the planned funds that were declared by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities. Breakdowns of the absorption rates by category of region can be found in Table 42, while Figure 1 presents a breakdown by socio-economic context for the share of planned funds that were allocated based on the NUTS2-level analysis.

As Table 41 shows, the projection selection rate is higher than 100% in three Member States (MT, NL, RO). In the Netherlands, the estimated overspend is preliminary - the Managing Authority assumes (based on experience) that upon the final declaration, part of the allocated amount will not be eligible for funding under TO9. Therefore, the final allocated amount is anticipated to be lower than what is provided here and is expected to be nearer to the planned amount.

*Table 41. Absorption rates – three different measures, by MS (%)*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Measure 1 – Project selection rate (Share of planned funds that were allocated)</b>	<b>Measure 2 – Share of planned funds that were declared by beneficiaries Managing Authorities</b>	<b>Measure 3 – Share of allocated funds (eligible costs for selected operations) that were declared expenditures</b>
AT	68	25	38
BE	84	28	34
BG	54	32	60
CZ	97	37	38
CY	62	21	34
DE	84	42	50
DK	70	22	31
EE	76	29	38
ES	68	20	30
FI	67	39	58
FR	77	49	64
GR	50	28	56
HR	72	12	16
HU	96	16	16
IE	100	0.05	5
IT	48	14	29
LT	62	33	53

<b>Country</b>	<b>Measure 1 – Project selection rate (Share of planned funds that were allocated)</b>	<b>Measure 2 – Share of planned funds that were declared by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities</b>	<b>Measure 3 – Share of allocated funds (eligible costs for selected operations) that were declared expenditures</b>
LU	97	68	70
LV	91	20	22
MT	101	27	27
NL	114	49	43
PL	55	15	28
PT	56	25	44
RO	110	39	36
SE	72	30	41
SI	65	19	29
SK	79	23	28
UK	75	27	36
EU-28	71	28	39

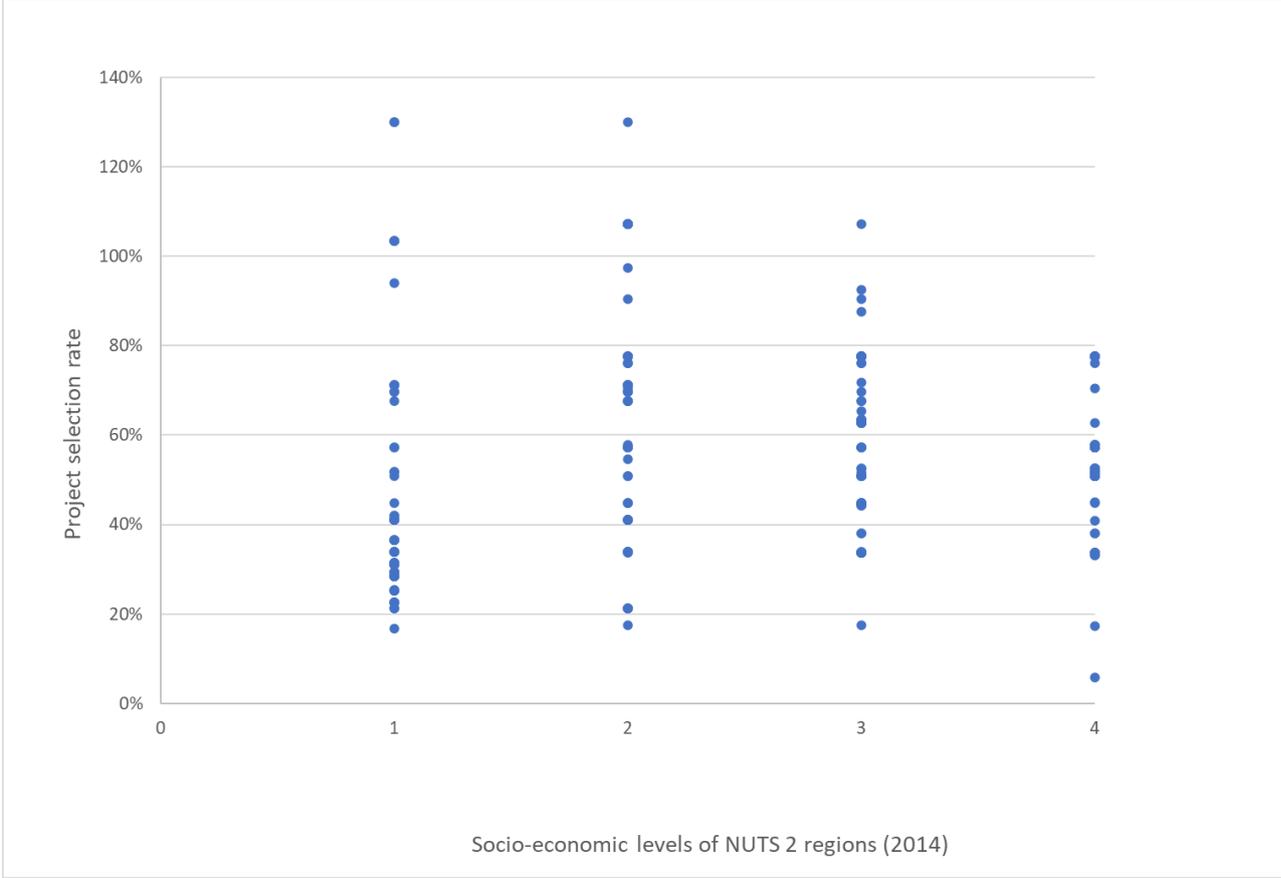
Source: Planned amount - OP extraction 1 July 2019, allocated amount and expenditures declared by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities - AIR extraction 10 December 2019

Table 42. Absorption rates – three different measures, by category of region (%)

<b>Category of region</b>	<b>Measure 1 – Projection selection (Share of planned funds that were allocated)</b>	<b>Measure 2 – Share of planned funds that were declared by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities</b>	<b>Measure 3 – Share of allocated funds (eligible costs for selected operations) that were declared expenditures</b>
Less developed	66	20	30
More developed	75	35	46
Transition	76	32	42
EU-28	71	28	39

Source: Planned amount - OP extraction 1 July 2019, allocated amount and expenditures declared by beneficiaries to Managing Authorities - AIR extraction 10 December 2019; allocated amount refers to total amount (EU + national)

Figure 54. Project selection rate by socio-economic context (planned funds that were allocated)



Source: ICF NUTS-2 level analysis based on extraction from SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019. The four clusters of regions (very low socio-economic level to very high socio-economic level) were defined based on an index developed by ICF.

## Descriptive analysis of common output indicators

This section reports on the common output indicators under ESF T09. The indicators are available by IP.

### Participations

One of the key indicators for the evaluation is participations. A participation is the unit of measurement and reflects the engagement of a participant in one operation. A participant could benefit from more than one ESF operation and each engagement would be understood as a participation.<sup>548</sup>

The total number of participations was estimated as the sum of three common output indicators: *Unemployed, including long-term unemployed* (CO01), *Inactive* (CO03) and *Employed, including self-employed* (CO05). Table 43 presents the breakdown by gender while Table 46 presents the breakdown by IP. This section also provides breakdowns by type of operation (Table 48 and Table 49) and by category of region (Table 50).

Table 43. Recorded participations in T09 operations by MS and gender (thousands)

Country	Men	Women	Total
AT	41.1	26.0	67.1
BE	137.8	133.6	271.4
BG	64.1	82.6	146.7
CY	0.9	0.5	1.3
CZ	13.9	27.5	41.4
DE	296.8	196.0	492.7
DK	1.3	1.4	2.8
EE	6.8	13.1	19.9
ES	400.3	430.8	831.1
FI	13.9	17.3	31.1
FR	830.6	826.2	1,656.8
GR	10.8	158.8	169.7
HR	7.1	12.3	19.5
HU	36.3	68.0	104.2
IE	25.7	22.0	47.7
IT	340.6	363.0	703.6
LT	31.0	70.5	101.5
LU	0.9	0.5	1.4

<sup>548</sup> European Commission (2018). 2014-2020 European Growth Programme: Output and Result Indicator Definitions Guidance for the European Social Fund.

Country	Men	Women	Total
LV	21.7	39.6	61.3
MT	1.8	1.4	3.1
NL	286.9	230.4	517.3
PL	129.0	194.4	323.4
PT	73.1	111.2	184.3
RO	14.4	18.0	32.4
SE	5.4	6.7	12.0
SI	4.6	3.5	8.1
SK	24.0	38.8	62.7
UK	155.0	80.1	235.2
EU-28	2,975.7	3,174.1	6,149.7

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019

Table 44 and Table 45 present estimated yearly costs per participation by Member States and IP. The costs were calculated by dividing sum of declared expenditures by sum of total participations for each year.<sup>549</sup> The results show that there is a trend of general convergence over time for all Member States except for Belgium, i.e. the difference between 2018 and 2017 cost per participation is lower than the difference between 2016 and 2015. This is also due to declared expenditures being only reported in nine Member States in 2015 and some Member States starting to report them only in 2017, or even 2018. The same tendency can be observed for IP9i, IP9v and IP9vi and the opposite is true for the remaining IPs under TO9 (IP9ii, IP9iii, IP9iv).

Table 44. Cost per participation, by year and Member State (€)

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018
AT			390	1,040
BE		57	527	746
BG	586	996	1,082	1,185
CY				17,796
CZ		32,768	7,683	5,245
DE	1,437	2,678	2,834	3,420

<sup>549</sup> The figures for both declared expenditures and total participations were cumulative values for each year.

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018
DK		3,862	7,115	6,606
EE	1,512	1,546	1,995	2,347
ES			107	719
FI	912	1,939	2,178	2,503
FR		710	773	1,013
GR		1,209	2,083	1,980
HR			3,458	2,290
HU			2,778	1,954
IE				304
IT	153	910	1,104	752
LT		3,218	2,316	870
LU		3,467	6,544	3,875
LV	8	1,518	1,966	884
MT				3,474
NL		575	813	689
PL	145	2 491	1 755	1 523
PT		3 258	4 012	2 553
RO			68	16 098
SE	2 686	4 108	6 767	7 493
SI		6 766	146	4 547
SK		4 123	2 189	1 910
UK	1 947	2 601	2 324	2 476
EU-28	202	888	1 288	1 422

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019.

Table 45. Cost per participation, by IP and Member State (€)

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018
IP9i	196	859	1 294	1 343
IP9ii		97	591	791
IP9iii		479	469	1 147
IP9iv	555	1 026	1 429	2 378

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018
IP9v	2	3 282	2 470	2 302
IP9vi			2 495	1 037

Source: SFC2014 based on AIR2018 data extracted on 10 December 2019.

Table 46. Recorded participations in TO9 operations by MS and IP (thousands)

Country	IP9i	IP9ii	IP9iii	IP9iv	IP9v	IP9vi	Total
AT	67.1						67.1
BE	270.7	0.6	-		0.06		271.4
BG	16.3	53.1		75.6	1.7		146.7
CY	1.3		-		-		1.3
CZ	23.3	1.4	0.01	9.2	7.5		41.4
DE	492.3		0.4	-		-	492.7
DK	2.8						2.8
EE	7.9			12.0			19.9
ES	663.5	19.9	90.6	37.2	19.9	-	831.1
FI	31.1						31.1
FR	1 646.7	3.6	4.7	0.6	1.2	-	1 656.8
GR	148.9	17.7	3.1	-	-	-	169.7
HR	16.1			2.5	0.9		19.5
HU	47.2	32.3		24.6	0.2	-	104.3
IE	44.8		3.2				47.7
IT	593.5	10.3		89.3	7.5	3.0	703.6
LT	7.1			72.1	20.3	2.0	101.5
LU	1.4						1.4
LV	20.5			40.8			61.3
MT	3.1			0.04			3.1
NL	517.3						517.3
PL	125.5			151.9	39.5	6.6	323.4
PT	179.8		3.2	1.1	-	0.2	184.3
RO		31.2		0.5	-	-	32.4
SE	11.9					0.09	12.0
SI	7.9			-	0.02		8.1

Country	IP9i	IP9ii	IP9iii	IP9iv	IP9v	IP9vi	Total
SK	4.1	51.3		7.3			62.7
UK	235.2				-	-	235.2
EU-28	5 187.1	222.1	105.2	524.7	91.4	19.3	6 149.7

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019.

Table 47. Common output indicators recorded for TO9 operations by IP (thousands)

Common output indicator	IP9i	IP9ii	IP9iii	IP9iv	IP9v	IP9vi	Total
CO01	3 090.8	70.2	46.9	50.6	24.5	3.1	3 286.1
CO02	1 382.7	29.0	20.6	19.7	8.8	0.9	1 461.7
CO03	1 458.3	117.3	34.0	303.6	7.3	5.4	1 925.9
CO04	824.7	31.4	13.1	105.3	1.2	1.0	976.6
CO05	638.0	34.5	24.3	170.4	59.6	10.8	937.6
CO07	496.3	26.7	16.8	142.9	19.8	2.4	704.9
CO08	334.6	15.4	7.7	87.5	4.0	0.7	449.9
CO09	2 915.1	151.2	44.2	210.6	21.5	3.7	3 346.2
CO12	475.1			0.8	-		475.9
CO14	-			0.7	-		0.7
CO15	1 512.8	124.2	40.3	40.0	5.4	0.3	1 722.9
CO16	862.4	4.1	11.8	102.9	32.6	1.2	1 014.9
CO17	2 031.4	41.6	57.9	122.5	20.1	3.2	2 276.8
CO18	213.7	12.6	1.8	3.3	1.5	0.1	233.1
CO19	711.6	82.8	10.1	167.0	21.9	8.2	1 001.7
CO23	49.5	0.4	0.06	0.08	2.3	0.1	52.4

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019.

Table 48. Recorded participations in TO9 operations by type of operation (thousands)

	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5	Type 6
Total participations	3 062.3	350.4	100.8	948.0	123.7	1 564.5

Source: SCF2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019. The total number of participations was estimated as the sum of three common output indicators: Unemployed, including long-term unemployed (CO01), Inactive (CO03) and Employed, including self-employed (CO05).

Table 49. Recorded common output indicators for TO9 operations by type of operation (thousands)

Indicator	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5	Type 6
CO01	1 792.4	259.3	49.7	335.7	57.0	792.0
CO02	823.9	154.5	22.3	100.6	23.1	337.3
CO03	876.4	74.0	45.9	441.5	18.0	470.1
CO04	472.5	33.2	8.5	123.7	6.8	331.9
CO05	393.4	17.1	5.2	170.9	48.7	302.4
CO07	293.2	22.0	11.5	198.0	21.1	159.1
CO08	200.9	19.5	9.7	101.7	9.6	108.6
CO09	1 698.5	162.2	67.7	477.0	47.4	893.5
CO12	233.5	3.4		232.2	3.4	3.4
CO14				0.7		0
CO15	912.6	121.5	31.2	120.5	14.2	522.8
CO16	559.0	26.4	4.5	126.0	40.8	258.1
CO17	1 118.0	113.0	21.1	219.6	36.5	768.6
CO23	24.7	1.6		0.3	1.8	23.9

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019.

Table 50. Recorded participations in TO9 operations by category of region (thousands)

Total Participations	
Less developed	1 540.8
Transition	1 166.9
More developed	3 442.0

Source: SCF2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019. The total number of participations was estimated as the sum of three common output indicators: Unemployed, including long-term unemployed (CO01), Inactive (CO03) and Employed, including self-employed (CO05).

Table 51 presents the labour market status of participations. The different categories are not mutually exclusive and therefore each row does not sum to the total number of

participations. The total number of participations are calculated by summing CO01, CO03, and CO05. The category "Long-term unemployed" is a subgroup of "Unemployed", while "Inactive, not in education nor training" is a subgroup of "Inactive".

Table 51. Labour market status of participations in TO9 operations by MS (thousands)

Country	Unemployed (CO01)	Long-term unemployed within unemployed (CO02)	Inactive (CO03)	Inactive, not in education training (CO04)	Employed nor self-employed (CO05) including
AT	49.5	21.6	12.2	10.6	5.4
BE	233.6	141.1	29.9	23.7	7.9
BG	10.4	7.6	126.8	43.1	9.5
CY	1.3	0.4	-	-	-
CZ	8.2	4.3	13.6	7.9	19.6
DE	344.3	217.8	128.9	73.8	19.6
DK	1.9	1.3	0.8	0.4	-
EE	3.1	1.7	3.7	3.3	13.2
ES	498.7	175.5	204.3	127.6	128.0
FI	14.2	10.4	10.4	5.9	6.6
FR	839.8	382.4	541.2	513.2	275.7
GR	95.8	46.4	6.0	4.1	67.9
HR	13.7	10.0	4.3	0.8	1.5
HU	24.6	12.7	37.3	17.2	42.3
IE	19.8	10.6	20.1	10.0	7.7
IT	389.0	46.1	262.9	20.8	51.7
LT	9.7	5.4	37.8	12.5	53.9
LU	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.1

Country	Unemployed (CO01)	Long-term unemployed within unemployed (CO02)	Inactive (CO03)	Inactive, not education training (CO04)	in Employed nor self-employed (CO05) including
LV	20.7	16.9	24.9	2.4	15.7
MT	1.5	1.1	0.7	0.1	0.9
NL	284.2	177.4	125.7	21.3	107.4
PL	95.9	29.9	153.0	27.8	74.5
PT	138.1	71.6	41.7	2.3	4.4
RO	2.4	1.8	26.8	10.6	3.3
SE	8.3	5.1	3.7	3.1	-
SI	3.6	2.1	4.3	0.1	0.2
SK	28.6	7.8	18.5	1.9	15.7
UK	144.4	52.2	85.8	31.8	5.0
EU-28	3286.1	1461.7	1925.9	976.6	937.6

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019.

Table 52 presents the breakdown of participations by educational status. The sum of all educational statuses in each row corresponds with the total number of participations<sup>550</sup>, except for Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Luxembourg and Malta, where data for Common indicator 'CO11a: Without education' is not provided.

<sup>550</sup> As indicated in Table 43 and Table 46

Table 52. Educational status of participations by MS (thousands)

Country	Primary (ISCED 1) or lower education (CO09)	secondary Upper secondary (ISCED 2) 3) or post-secondary (ISCED 4) (CO10)	Tertiary education (ISCED 5-8) (CO11)	Without (CO11a) education
AT	36.1	16.4	8.4	6.1
BE	140.7	58.9	17.9	53.9
BG	102.9	21.8	5.3	16.7
CY	0.1	0.8	0.4	-
CZ	12.6	16.2	8.2	4.3
DE	277.6	146.4	44.4	24.4
DK	2.0	0.5	0.3	-
EE	2.9	7.1	9.7	0.1
ES	438.2	195.9	87.1	110.0
FI	8.9	13.4	7.2	1.6
FR	1083.5	289.9	190.4	92.9
GR	26.2	95.4	42.3	5.8
HR	9.6	6.5	2.0	1.3
HU	40.9	41.7	17.2	4.5
IE	20.9	15.6	10.4	0.7
IT	460.3	142.5	32.0	68.9
LT	33.3	34.0	33.0	1.2
LU	0.7	0.5	0.2	-

Country	Primary (ISCED 1) or lower education (CO09)	secondary (ISCED2) 3) or post-secondary (ISCED 4) (CO10)	Tertiary education (ISCED 5-8) (CO11)	Without (CO11a)	education
LV	9.9	19.0	13.3	19.1	
MT	2.0	0.7	0.5	-	
NL	300.4	137.2	37.2	42.5	
PL	105.3	130.8	62.6	24.7	
PT	109.5	50.0	17.9	6.9	
RO	19.0	6.5	0.7	6.2	
SE	7.3	2.6	2.1	-	
SI	4.7	2.8	0.5	0.2	
SK	42.7	11.8	5.3	2.9	
UK	48.0	72.1	16.5	98.6	
EU28	3346.2	1536.8	672.9	593.7	

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019.

Table 53 presents the breakdown of recorded participations in TO9 operations by target groups in vulnerable situations. As these groups are not mutually exclusive, each row does not sum to the total participations.

Table 53. Recorded participations in T09 operations by specific targeted groups by MS (thousands)

Country	Participants who live in jobless households (CO12)	Participants who live in a single household with dependent children (CO14)	Participants who live in a single adult household with a foreign background, migrants, participants with minorities marginalised communities such as the Roma (CO15)	Participants with disabilities (incl. with disabilities) (CO16)	Other disadvantaged (CO17)	Homeless affected housing exclusion (CO18)	or by
AT			52.8	1.0	11.8	1.9	
BE			92.6	17.3	59.2	0.1	
BG			52.3	48.0	11.7	0.5	
CY			-	0.1	-	-	
CZ			4.3	6.8	11.9	8.4	
DE			257.1	16.0	137.2	25.4	
DK			0.5	1.2	0.3	-	
EE			10.0	1.8	3.4	0.4	
ES			225.2	351.4	243.6	24.3	
FI	-		5.8	1.7	10.0	0.6	
FR			678.4	128.2	1227.8	131.5	
GR			30.5	1.6	10.6	0.5	
HR			1.3	3.7	3.0	-	
HU			13.6	17.7	5.4	0.5	
IE			10.4	4.2	27.9	0.5	
IT	475.9	0.7	33.3	50.3	123.4	8.1	

<b>Country</b>	<b>Participants who live in jobless households (CO12)</b>	<b>Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children (CO14)</b>	<b>Migrants, participants with a foreign background, marginalised communities such as the Roma (CO15)</b>	<b>Participants with disabilities (incl. with disabilities) (CO16)</b>	<b>Other disadvantaged (CO17)</b>	<b>Homeless affected housing exclusion (CO18)</b>	<b>or by</b>
LT			0.7	22.5	6.4	0.4	
LU			0.8	0.5	-	0.0	
LV			12.1	12.2	12.7	0.7	
MT			0.2	0.8	1.3	-	
NL			174.0	162.4	15.1	3.7	
PL			3.8	74.3	170.5	7.1	
PT			-	12.8	43.9	-	
RO			15.4	0.6	8.2	0.7	
SE			9.3	2.8	3.2	-	
SI			0.5	0.3	1.1	-	
SK			35.6	1.0	5.6	0.3	
UK			2.7	73.7	121.5	17.6	
EU-28	475.9	0.7	1722.9	1014.9	2276.8	233.1	

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019.

Table 54 presents the breakdown of total recorded participations by age group. Each row sums up to the total number of recorded participations. Table 55 shows the breakdown by rural and non-rural areas.

*Table 54. Participations by age group by MS (thousands)*

<b>Country</b>	<b>&lt;25 years of age (C006)</b>	<b>25-54 years of age (C006a)</b>	<b>&gt;54 years of age (C007)</b>
AT	19.1	37.2	10.8
BE	67.3	194.6	9.5
BG	82.2	24.7	39.8
CY	0.03	0.5	0.8
CZ	5.3	30.7	5.4
DE	190.1	274.2	28.5
DK	1.2	1.4	0.2
EE	1.3	16.2	2.4
ES	99.5	629.8	101.7
FI	8.1	18.0	5.1
FR	163.2	1352.5	141.0
GR	5.9	156.8	6.9
HR	2.4	11.4	5.6
HU	27.8	54.0	22.5
IE	18.6	24.3	4.9
IT	226.5	358.2	118.9
LT	28.7	45.8	27.0
LU	0.3	1.1	0.1
LV	20.2	24.2	16.9
MT	0.6	1.9	0.7
NL	214.7	261.4	41.2
PL	87.8	166.6	69.0
PT	49.2	110.8	24.2
RO	14.2	15.0	3.2
SE	1.7	9.2	1.1
SI	5.4	2.5	0.2
SK	18.1	35.6	9.1

Country	<25 years of age (C006)	25-54 years of age (C006a)	>54 years of age (C007)
UK	4.9	222.0	8.2
EU-28	1364.2	4080.6	704.9

Source: SCF2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019.

Table 55. Participations by rural and non-rural areas, by MS (thousands)

Country	Rural areas (C019)	Non-rural areas
AT	0.7	67.1
BE	4.6	271.4
BG	67.9	146.7
CY	0.002	1.3
CZ	13.4	41.4
DE	33.8	492.7
DK	1.8	2.8
EE	4.5	19.9
ES	73.2	831.1
FI	3.8	31.1
FR	297.0	1 656.8
GR	64.1	169.7
HR	10.1	19.5
HU	80.3	104.3
IE	1.5	47.7
IT	30.0	703.6
LT	0.8	101.5
LU	0.5	1.4
LV	30.8	61.3
MT	-	3.1
NL	32.6	517.3
PL	141.9	323.4
PT	64.0	184.3
RO	21.9	32.4
SE	-	12.0

Country	Rural areas (CO19)	Non-rural areas
SI	2.3	8.1
SK	2.5	62.7
UK	17.5	235.2
EU-28	1001.7	6149.7

Source: SCF2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019.

The table below presents common output indicators by Thematic Objective.

Table 56. Common output indicators by Thematic Objective

	TO8	TO9	TO10	TO11
Participations	8,074,479	6,149,739	9,111,229	307,172
Long-term unemployed (CO02)	1,769,369	1,461,737	285,749	451
With primary or lower secondary education (CO09)	2,792,970	3,346,236	5,602,937	18,073
Migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (CO15)	1,056,947	1,722,898	833,349	2,726
Participants with disabilities (CO16)	542,776	1,014,861	228,442	3,518
Other disadvantaged (CO17)	914,743	2,276,769	962,101	4,308
Homeless or affected by housing exclusion (CO18)	42,472	233,102	38,140	176
Participants from rural areas (CO19)	1,793,077	1,001,667	2,077,059	27,135
Women	<sup>a</sup>	3,174,087	4,643,424	192,779
Men	<sup>a</sup>	2,975,652	4,467,805	114,393

Source: SCF2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019. Note: the figures could not be estimated for the gender dimension for TO8 due to the structure of the data extraction file used for the study.

## Entity indicators under T09 operations

Table 57 presents the common output indicators for entities by Member State.

*Table 57. Recorded entity indicators for T09 operations, by MS*

Country	Number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or non-governmental organisations (CO20)	Number of projects dedicated at participation progress of employment (CO21)	Number of projects targeting sustainable and services in regional or local level administrations or public services at national, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (CO22)	Number of supported enterprises (CO23)
AT	65	19	-	-
BE	681	15	11	315
BG	129	-	-	-
CY	-	-	-	1097
CZ	1032	137	175	662
DE	1646	860	197	4639
DK	14	-	9	-
EE	103	103	103	20
ES	1112	388	275	791
FI	83	4	30	820
FR	592	1295	544	41276
GR	24	91	289	284
HR	350	240	3	45

Country	Number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or non-governmental organisations (CO20)	Number of projects dedicated at participation progress of employment (CO21)	Number of projects targeting sustainable and services in regional or local level administrations or public at national, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (CO22)	Number of supported enterprises (CO23)
HU	1898	309	495	46
IE	-	-	-	-
IT	1543	1062	1310	1923
LT	16	0	0	0
LU	0	1	0	2
LV	0	3	15	32
MT	4	0	9	0
NL	0	0	0	0
PL	1291	820	325	253
PT	59	0	2	0
RO	28	2	1	0
SE	18	21	18	3
SI	79	11	0	10
SK	6	0	138	0
UK	190	0	0	218
EU-28	10963	5381	3949	52436

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019.

## Descriptive analysis of common result indicators

This section reports on the common result indicators under T09.

The extraction from SFC2014 from December 2019 were affected by duplicity of some rows for some OPs and common result indicators. ICF has accounted for this issue to prevent from presenting biased estimates in terms of double counting of common result indicators in these cases. This issue affected the following OPs: 2014BE05M9OP001, 2014CZ05M9OP001, 2014DE05SFOP014, 2014ES05SFOP006, 2014ES05SFOP008, 2014ES05SFOP011, 2014ES05SFOP014, 2014ES05SFOP021, 2014ES05SFOP022, 2014FI05M2OP001, 2014HR05M9OP001 and 2014UK05M9OP001.

Table 58 presents findings by Member State for the immediate results while Table 59 presents findings for the longer-term results (6 months following the intervention). The same participation may generate more than one result. The result indicators are not mutually exclusive. In addition, this section also provides breakdowns by type of operation (Table 58), by IP (Table 60 and Table 61) and by category of region (Table 62 and Table 63).

Table 58. Recorded immediate results upon leaving T09 operations, by MS (thousands)

Country	Engaged in job searching (previously inactive) (CR01)	In education or training (CR02)	Gained qualification (CR03)	In employment a (including self-employment) (CR04)	Total	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, in education/training, gained a qualification, in employment (incl. self-empl.) (CR05)
AT	0.6	4.0	7.6	5.5	17.7	14.5
BE	1.5	32.1	9.9	43.0	86.5	48.4
BG	2.8	28.8	0.6	0.6	32.9	21.6
CY	-	0.001	-	0.1	0.1	0.1
CZ	-	0.4	2.2	1.5	4.1	1.6
DE	12.8	53.6	91.3	69.4	227.1	110.4

<b>Country</b>	<b>Engaged in job searching (previously inactive) (CR01)</b>	<b>In education or training (CR02)</b>	<b>Gained qualification (CR03)</b>	<b>In employment a (including self-employment) (CR04)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, in education/training, gained a qualification, in employment (incl. self-empl.) (CR05)</b>
DK	0.041	0.3	0.0005	0.3	0.7	0.4
EE	0.014	1.5	0.4	1.0	2.9	2.1
ES	53.0	48.9	98.4	183.9	384.1	274.4
FI	0.2	1.0	0.6	1.5	3.3	2.3
FR	204.3	69.0	79.2	292.7	645.1	539.6
GR	1.0	2.7	0.2	8.7	12.5	3.9
HR	0.003	0.4	0.01	1.4	1.8	0.7
HU	0.3	0.6	4.8	4.6	10.3	4.8
IE	1.4	2.0	3.1	3.3	9.8	4.5
IT	5.3	6.8	12.2	9.1	33.4	21.3
LT	0.003	0.002	3.8	0.2	4.1	0.5
LU	0.1	-	-	0.1	0.2	0.001
LV	0.3	0.8	0.002	4.7	5.7	0.1
MT	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.2	0.9	0.3
NL	5.1	15.6	8.1	58.3	87.2	65.4
PL	6.6	0.6	34.7	22.7	64.6	37.7
PT	0.5	9.6	-	19.7	29.8	7.9

<b>Country</b>	<b>Engaged in job searching (previously inactive) (CR01)</b>	<b>In education or training (CR02)</b>	<b>Gained qualification (CR03)</b>	<b>In employment a (including self-employment) (CR04)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, in education/training, gained a qualification, in employment (incl. self-empl.) (CR05)</b>
RO	0.0001	0.1	0.002	0.1	0.2	0.2
SE	0.2	0.8	0.5	1.9	3.4	3.0
SI	0.004	0.4	1.0	0.2	1.7	0.004
SK	-	0.001	0.0003	-	0.0001	0.001
UK	12.7	8.5	6.4	17.6	45.2	35.7
EU-28	308.8	288.8	365.5	752.3	1715.5	1201.5

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December.

Table 59. Recorded longer-term (6 months after leaving) results from T09 operations, by MS (thousands)

Country	In employment (including self-employment) – All (CR06)	In improved labour market situation (CR07)	Total	In employment (including self-employment) – sub-groups	
				Aged more than 54 years (CR08)	Disadvantaged participations (CR09)
AT	16.4	1.6	18.0	2.7	15.1
BE	13.4	-	13.4	0.2	5.9
BG	0.5	0.0003	0.5	-	0.4
CY	0.1	-	0.1	0.1	0.001
CZ	0.8	0.3	1.1	0.1	0.7
DE	34.4	1.8	36.2	1.9	18.3
DK	0.2	0.0003	0.2	0.003	0.1
EE	1.0	0.1	1.1	0.01	0.9
ES	85.3	8.1	93.4	07.4	63.7
FI	3.4	1.3	4.8	0.4	2.0
FR	797.4	97.1	894.5	37.5	540.3
GR	7.1	2.2	9.4	0.003	1.1
HR	4.3	0.003	4.3	1.2	0.7
HU	2.5	2.5	5.0	0.5	1.1
IE	2.6	0.4	3.0	0.1	1.8
IT	15.8	0.6	16.5	0.8	8.5
LT	0.3	4.4	04.7	0.001	0.2
LU	0.1	0.0002	0.1	0.001	0.1
LV	4.3	6.0	10.3	1.2	2.6
MT	-	-	-	-	-
NL	50.1	30.4	80.4	2.0	44.9
PL	35.3	8.9	44.1	1.2	9.1
PT	31.2	0.1	31.3	2.5	2.3
RO	0.001	0.0003	0.001	-	0.001
SE	1.6	0.001	1.6	0.1	1.4
SI	0.3	0.001	0.3	0.001	0.05
SK	-	-	-	-	-

Country	In employment (including self-employment) – All (CR06)	In improved labour market situation (CR07)	Total	In employment (including self-employment) – sub-groups	
				Aged more than 54 years (CR08)	Disadvantaged participations (CR09)
UK	9.6	0.5	10.1	0.004	1.0
EU-28	1117.9	166.6	1284.5	62.0	722.2

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December.

Table 60. Recorded immediate and longer-term results from TO9 operations, by IP (thousands)

IP	Immediate results	Longer-term results
IP9i	1623.2	1236.7
IP9ii	32.1	2.4
IP9iii	29.8	4.8
IP9iv	21.7	25.9
IP9v	7.6	13.9
IP9vi	1.1	0.7

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December. Immediate results are estimated based on results for CR01, CR02, CR03, and CR04. Longer-term results are estimated based on results for CR06 and CR07.

Table 61. Recorded common result indicators for TO9 operations, by IP (thousands)

Common result indicator	IP					
	IP9i	IP9ii	IP9iii	IP9iv	IP9v	IP9vi
CR01	298.7	4.0	5.3	0.8	0.1	0.001
CR02	258.1	21.3	6.9	1.6	0.9	0.002
CR03	335.7	3.2	7.9	14.2	3.5	1.0
CR04	730.7	3.6	9.7	5.1	3.1	0.08
CR05	1138.8	27.9	20.6	10.5	3.5	0.2
CR06	1091.5	2.1	3.7	11.3	8.8	0.4
CR07	145.3	0.2	1.1	14.6	5.1	0.3
CR08	60.6	0.1	0.3	0.7	0.5	0.002
CR09	711.1	2.1	2.9	3.1	3.0	0.004

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December.

Table 62. Recorded immediate and longer-term results for TO9 operations, by category of region (thousands)

Category of region	Immediate results	Longer-term results
Less developed	184.8	112.8
Transition	492.0	334.0
More developed	1,038.6	837.7

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December. Immediate results are estimated based on results for CR01, CR02, CR03, and CR04. Longer-term results are estimated based on results for CR06 and CR07.

Table 63. Recorded common result indicators for TO9 operations, by category of region (thousands)

Common result indicator	Less developed	Transition	More developed
CR01	14.3	98.1	196.5
CR02	48.2	78.4	162.3
CR03	52.9	92.4	220.2
CR04	69.5	223.2	459.6
CR05	92.5	346.6	762.4
CR06	88.7	295.2	734.0
CR07	24.1	38.8	103.7
CR08	6.2	14.9	40.9
CR09	21.0	196.6	504.6

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December.

## Success rates

This section gives an overview of success rates under ESF TO9, which are defined as the share of participants that generate a result. The rates were estimated as a share of the results generated for the indicator and the number of common outputs recorded for the reference population.

Table 64 below links all common result indicators (CR01-CR09) with their respective reference group<sup>551</sup> based on common output indicators. A note on whether a link was indicated in the guidance is also included in the table.

Table 65 gives an overview of estimated success rates for individual level Type of operations (Type 1 to Type 4) with selected common result indicators that were the most aligned with the intervention logic.

Table 66 provides estimated success rates for immediate results, while Table 1 for longer-term results. Both tables are broken down by category of region, IP and type of operation.

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<sup>551</sup> The reference population was identified through the ESF guidance for the definition of output and results indicators: European Commission (2018). 2014-2020 European Growth Programme: Output and Result Indicator Definitions Guidance for the European Social Fund. In one case (for CR0£), the reference population was not explicitly defined. In this case the reference population was defined based on the textual description provided.

Table 64. Overview of common result indicators and their respective reference population to construct success rates

	<b>Common result</b>	<b>Common output (reference group)</b>	<b>Indicated in guidance</b>
CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	CO03	Y
CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	CO01+CO05+(CO03-CO04)	Y
CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	(CO03-CO04)+CO02	N
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	CO01+CO03	Y
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job-searching, education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving.	CO12+CO14+CO15+CO16+CO17	Y
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	CO01+CO03	Y
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving	CO05	Y
CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	CO08	Y
CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participants with disabilities; or</li> <li>• other disadvantaged</li> </ul>	CO12+CO14+CO15+CO16+CO17	Y

Table 65. Success rates for selected type of operation and common result indicators

Type of operation	Common result	Estimated success rate
Type 1 Employment-focused actions	CR04 ( <i>Participants in employment, including self-employment</i> )  CR06+CR07 ( <i>Participants in employment, including self-employment and/or with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving</i> )	in 89% (Immediate)  23% (Longer-term)
Type 2 Enhance basic skills	CR01 ( <i>Inactive participants engaged in job-searching upon leaving</i> ) + CR02 ( <i>Participants in education/training upon leaving</i> ) + CR05 ( <i>Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, in education/training, gaining a qualification or in employment</i> )	19% (Immediate)
Type 3 Basic school education	CR02 ( <i>Participants in education/training upon leaving</i> ) + CR03 ( <i>Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving</i> )	20% (Immediate)
Type 4 Access to services	CR05 ( <i>Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, in education/training, gaining a qualification or in employment</i> )	7% (Immediate)

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019

Table 66. Estimated success rates for recorded immediate results for TO9 operations, by category of region, IP and type of operation

<b>Common result</b>	<b>Inactive participants engaged in job search upon leaving (CR01)</b>	<b>Participants engaged in education/training upon leaving (CR02)</b>	<b>Participants in gaining a qualification upon leaving (CR03)</b>	<b>Participants in employment including self-employment upon leaving (CR04)</b>	<b>Disadvantaged participants engaged in job-searching, education/training/gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment upon leaving (CR05)</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>22%</b>
Category of region:					
Less developed	2%	3%	7%	6%	9%
Transition	31%	9%	23%	25%	32%
More developed	20%	6%	17%	16%	22%
IP:					
IP9i	20%	6%	27%	29%	23%
IP9ii	3%	11%	2%	1%	16%
IP9iii	16%	8%	13%	10%	19%
IP9iv	0%	0%	3%	1%	4%
IP9v	1%	1%	10%	5%	6%
IP9vi	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Type of operation:					
Type 1 Employment-focused actions	9%	17%	23%	89%	23%

<b>Common result</b>	<b>Inactive participants engaged in job search upon leaving (CR01)</b>	<b>Participants engaged in education/training upon leaving (CR02)</b>	<b>Participants in gaining qualification upon leaving (CR03)</b>	<b>Participants a employment including leaving (CR04)</b>	<b>in Disadvantaged participants engaged in job-searching, self-education/training/gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment upon leaving (CR05)</b>
Type 2 Enhance basic skills	2%	32%	39%	234%	28%
Type 3 Basic school education	3%	56%	2%	81%	20%
Type 4 Access to services	3%	15%	7%	24%	7%
Type 5 Social entrepreneurship	3%	12%	28%	109%	11%
Type 6 Actions influencing attitudes and systems	16%	23%	21%	76%	27%
<b>Type of fund:</b>					
Multi fund	4%	6%	8%	10%	15%
Mono fund	22%	6%	19%	17%	24%

Note: Estimated with the common output and common results data from SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December.

Table 67. Estimated success rates for recorded longer-term results under TO9 operations, by category of region, IP and type of operation

Type of operation	Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving (CR06)	Participants with an improved labour situation, six months after leaving (CR07)	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, six months after leaving (CR08)	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving (CR09)
<b>Overall</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>13%</b>
Category of region:				
Less developed	7%	8%	4%	2%
Transition	29%	25%	23%	18%
More developed	25%	21%	17%	15%
IP				
IP9i	20%	6%	27%	29%
IP9ii	3%	11%	2%	1%
IP9iii	16%	8%	13%	10%
IP9iv	0%	0%	3%	1%
IP9v	1%	1%	10%	5%
IP9vi	0%	0%	0%	0%
Type of operation:				
Type 1 Employment-focused actions	41%	37%	30%	15%

Type of operation	Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving (CR06)	Participants with an improved market situation, six months after leaving (CR07)	Participants above 54 years of age, including self-employment, six months after leaving (CR08)	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving (CR09)
Type 2 Enhance basic skills	1%	1%	0%	1%
Type 3 Basic school education	4%	21%	3%	3%
Type 4 Access to services	1%	9%	1%	1%
Type 5 Social entrepreneurship	12%	11%	5%	5%
Type 6 Actions influencing attitudes and systems	0%	0%	0%	1%
Type of fund:				
Multi fund	7%	8%	5%	2%
Mono fund	28%	24%	19%	16%

Note: Estimated with the common output and common results data from the SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December.

Table 69 presents the estimated success rates by socio-economic context in 2014 and 2018. Socio-economic context was defined at the regional level based on a selection of indicators available from Eurostat (for more information, please refer to Annex 3). Regions were classified into four evenly distributed clusters based on the estimated socio-economic level. The findings suggest that the success rate of TO9 operations varies by socio-economic context. For example, the success rate for CR01 is higher in regions with a low or

very low socio-economic context. The relationship between success rate and the socio-economic context is less clear for other indicators (e.g. CR03).

Table 68. ESF indicators by cluster of region

	Planned amounts	Allocated amounts	Expenditures declared	Participations	Absorption rate (allocated planned) / project selection rate	AROPE / population
I – most favourable	5,034,974,843.18		5,034,974,843.18	570,201.14		21,332,676.80
II	(16.1%)	2,633,751,120.93	(16.1%)	(9.3%)	53.4%	(17.5%)
III	(16.7%)	1,364,084,934.40	(16.7%)	1,282,250.82		26,626,440.96
IV – least favourable	(15.6%)		(15.6%)	(20.9%)	58.5%	(21.8%)

Table 69. Estimated success rates common result indicators under TO9 operations, by cluster of socio-economic index

	2018 clusters				2014 clusters			
	Very high	High	Low	Very low	Very high	High	Low	Very low
CR01	8%	14%	20%	17%	12%	13%	19%	17%
CR02	3%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
CR03	19%	12%	19%	13%	22%	18%	13%	14%
CR04	10%	14%	17%	16%	12%	13%	16%	17%
CR05	17%	21%	24%	22%	21%	20%	23%	22%

	2018 clusters				2014 clusters			
	Very high	High	Low	Very low	Very high	High	Low	Very low
CR06	17%	20%	24%	22%	18%	21%	27%	18%
CR07	9%	22%	17%	22%	13%	15%	22%	17%
CR08	9%	14%	15%	14%	14%	13%	15%	13%
CR09	9%	14%	14%	13%	11%	12%	17%	11%

## Achievement rates

This section presents the methodology used to calculate achievement rates, which reflect the progress made towards targets set for the end of the programming period. Achievement rates were calculated for programme-specific output and programme-specific result indicators. The calculation drew on the targets set by the Managing Authorities for the end of the programming period.

The calculation of achievement rates requires identifying the reference population and the target values. This information may not have been reported or may have been reported in different units.<sup>552</sup> The research team found that targets were usually set for specific indicators and only a small share of common indicators. The calculation of achievement rates with small samples may lead to biased estimates that are not reflective of all the OPs relevant to TO9. The achievement rates were estimated as the sum of outputs or results by the end of December 2018, divided by sum of the targets set for the programming period. The calculation was limited to indicators that had a target assigned.

This section on achievement rates is divided into two sub-sections. The first one gives an overview about number of indicators and targets set. The second sub-section provides estimated achievement rates by Member State, IP, category of region and type of operation.

### Overview of number of indicators and target setting

Table 70 provides an overview of the extent to which targets were set for the four types of indicators (e.g. common output, programme-specific output, common result and programme-specific result indicators). It also reviews the extent to which targets were set as a number or a ratio. The results could not be benchmarked against the ESF Synthesis Report of the 2018 Annual Implementation Report<sup>553</sup>, which does not provide number of indicators and targets set broken down by Thematic Objective. The achievement rates were not estimated for common output and common result indicators given the low level of target setting.

*Table 70. Mapping of targets set for common and programme-specific indicators – outputs and results*

	Recorded number values	Number of indicators with a target set	of Target set as a number	Target set as a ratio
Common output indicators	10,258	393	393	0
Specific output indicators	1,025	1,023	1,023	0

<sup>552</sup> In the case of common result indicators, targets may be reported in ratios or numbers.

<sup>553</sup> European Commission (2020). Final ESF Synthesis Report of Annual Implementation Reports 2018 submitted in 2019.

	Recorded number values	Number of indicators with a target set	of Target set as a number	Target set as a ratio
Common result indicators	4,077	135	56	79
Specific result indicators	1,118	1,044	490	555

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

### Common output indicators

Targets were set for only a small share of common output indicators. As Table 70 shows, only 393 indicators have been assigned a target, which represents about 3.8% of all common output indicators. All targets for the end of 2023 have been set as a number.

### Programme-specific output indicators

Targets were set for almost each programme-specific output indicators contrary to the common output indicators. Out of the overall 1,025 specific output indicators, 1,023 had an assigned target to be achieved by 2023.

### Common result indicators

With regards to common result indicators, only a small share had a target set for the end of the 2023. Table 70 shows that only 135 has been assigned a target out of the overall 4,077, which accounts for 3.3% of all common result indicators. 56 targets (of the 135) were set as a number, while 79 targets were set as a ratio.

Among the 79 indicators where a target was set as a ratio, a reference to common output indicators could be made for 41 indicators. Of the remaining 38 indicators where a target was set as a ratio, no reference to common output indicators has been made in the extraction of the SFC Database. Without a reference, the targets could not be converted into absolute figures and compared with the reported results. This concerns seven Member States (CY, DE, ES, FR, IT, PL, SE) and the following common result indicators: CR04, CR05, CR06, and CR09.

### Programme-specific result indicators

With regard to programme-specific result indicators, out of the overall 1,118 indicators, 1,044 have been assigned a target. More targets have been set as a ratio (555) rather than as a number (490).

Among the 555 indicators that had a target set as a ratio, 87 had a reference to a common output indicator while 205 had a reference to a programme-specific output indicator. This reference was used to recalculate the targets for these 293 indicators into absolute values.

The remaining 264 programme-specific result indicators, e. g. those without a reference on which basis targets assigned as a ratio was calculated have been excluded from the analysis. The rate for Austria, Cyprus and Denmark could not be calculated because they report solely indicators as a ratio without indicating a reference.

### Achievement rates by Member State and category of region

This sub-section presents the estimated achievement rates by Member State, category of region and IPs (see Table 71 to Table 74). These tables provide description of the main findings of achievement rates for programme-specific output and programme-specific result indicators. The rate was not estimated for common output and common result indicators given the low number of indicators that had a target assigned (see Table 70 for reference).

The ESF Synthesis Report of the 2018 Annual Implementation Reports does not calculate achievement rates for programme-specific output and programme-specific results indicators for TO9, therefore the estimates could not be benchmarked with this source<sup>554</sup>.

The estimated achievement rates for programme-specific indicators by Member States include very high values (substantially greater than 100%) and very low values (close to 0%) values. The estimated achievement rate is typically higher for programme-specific indicators than common indicators for the EU-28 and by Member State. This finding is consistent for both output and result indicators.

The same methodology for the estimation of achievement rates was applied to the breakdowns by IP and type of operation.

*Table 71. Estimated achievement rates, by Member State (%)*

Country	Specific achievement	output target	Specific achievement	result target
AT	76			
BE	131		53	
BG	74		59	
CY	59			
CZ	29		27	
DE	69		77	
DK	30			
EE	123		103	
ES	55		58	
FI	33		91	

<sup>554</sup> European Commission (2018). Final ESF Synthesis Report of Annual Implementation Reports 2017 submitted in 2018; The report does not present estimated figures for Declared Expenditures. This study notes a common output achievement rate of 43.8 % and a common result achievement rate of 22%.

Country	Specific achievement	output target	Specific achievement	result target
FR	95		12	
GR	38		48	
HR	16		0.4	
HU	9		11	
IE	45		18	
IT	38		208	
LT	57		59	
LU	234		1413	
LV	26		91	
MT	31		68	
NL	580		78	
PL	35		15	
PT	26		0	
RO	1		0.4	
SE	58		48	
SI	34		45	
SK	54		57	
UK	49		36	
EU-28	99		53	

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019; Note: The rate for Portugal is zero, because the cumulative total for specific-programme indicators were not reported.

Table 72. Estimated achievement rates for specific indicators, by category of region (%)

Category of region	of Specific output target achievement
Less developed	23
More developed	92

Category of region	Specific output target achievement
Transition	156
EU-28	99

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Table 73. Specific output-level achievement rates by IP for EU-28 (in %)

IP	Specific output target achievement
i.	118
ii.	35
iii.	34
iv.	19
v.	33
vi.	1

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Table 74. Estimated specific output-level achievement rates, by type of TO9 operation (in %)

Type of operation	Specific output target achievement
Type 1 Employment-focused actions	69
Type 2 Enhance basic skills	130
Type 3 Basic school education	27
Type 4 Access to services	24
Type 5 Social entrepreneurship	34
Type 6 Actions influencing attitudes and systems	27

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Table 43 presents specific output-level achievement rates by Multi-fund and Mono-fund OPs under TO9. Multi-fund OPs are OPs that are financed by ESF and other EU funds (e.g. Cohesion Funds and ERDF). Mono-fund OPs under TO9 are financed exclusively by ESF.

Table 75. Estimated specific output-level achievement rates, by multi- and mono-fund OPs (in %)

Multi-fund/Mono-fund OP	Specific achievement	output	target
Multi-fund OPs	84%		
Mono-fund OPs	100%		

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

### List of OPs under TO9 operations and number of operations

Table 45 below provides an overview of OPs under TO9 operations and number of operations by OP. Number of operations under TO9 were taken from the SFC2014 extraction from December 2019. These figures may diverge from figures reported in the Annual Implementation Reports.

Table 76. TO9 OPs and number of operations by MS

Country	OPs	OP code	OP names	Operations
AT	1	2014AT05SFOP001	Employment - AT - ESF	116
BE	4	2014BE05M9OP001	Wallonie-Bruxelles 2020.eu - ESF/YEI	272
		2014BE05M9OP002	Brussels-Capital Region: Investment for growth and jobs - ESF/YEI	5
		2014BE05SFOP001	German Speaking Community of Belgium - ESF	13
		2014BE05SFOP002	Flanders - ESF	213
BG	2	2014BG05M2OP001	Science and Education for Smart Growth- BG - ESF/ERDF	130
		2014BG05M9OP001	Human Resources Development - BG - ESF/YEI	418
CY	1	2014CY05M9OP001	Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion - CY - ESF/YEI	1129
CZ	3	2014CZ05M2OP001	Research Development and Education - CZ - ESF/ERDF	8242
		2014CZ05M9OP001	Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion - CZ - ESF/YEI	82
		2014CZ16M2OP001	Prague Growth Pole - ERDF/ESF	3306
DE	17	2014DE05SFOP001	Schleswig-Holstein - ESF	46
		2014DE05SFOP002	Federal Germany - ESF	1952

Country	OPs	OP code	OP names	Operations
		2014DE05SFOP003	Baden-Württemberg - ESF	415
		2014DE05SFOP004	Bayern - ESF	217
		2014DE05SFOP005	Berlin - ESF	192
		2014DE05SFOP006	Brandenburg - ESF	91
		2014DE05SFOP007	Hamburg - ESF	24
		2014DE05SFOP008	Hessen - ESF	459
		2014DE05SFOP009	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern - ESF	406
		2014DE05SFOP010	Nordrhein-Westfalen - ESF	882
		2014DE05SFOP011	Saarland - ESF	197
		2014DE05SFOP012	Sachsen - ESF	852
		2014DE05SFOP013	Sachsen-Anhalt - ESF	744
		2014DE05SFOP014	Thüringen - ESF	342
		2014DE05SFOP015	Rheinland-Pfalz - ESF	170
		2014DE05SFOP016	Bremen - ESF	219
		2014DE16M2OP001	Niedersachsen - ERDF/ESF	274
DK	1	2014DK05SFOP001	Educational and Entrepreneurial Growth - DK - ESF	16
EE	1	2014EE16M3OP001	Cohesion Policy Funding - EE - ERDF/ESF/CF	43
ES	21	2014ES05SFOP001	La Rioja - ESF	3
		2014ES05SFOP002	Employment training and education - ES - ESF	0
		2014ES05SFOP003	Murcia - ESF	9
		2014ES05SFOP004	Asturias - ESF	4
		2014ES05SFOP005	Asturias - ESF	8
		2014ES05SFOP006	Baleares - ESF	10
		2014ES05SFOP007	Castilla y León - ESF	20
		2014ES05SFOP008	Cataluña - ESF	25
		2014ES05SFOP009	Ceuta - ESF	36
		2014ES05SFOP010	Galicia - ESF	4
		2014ES05SFOP011	Navarra - ESF	48
		2014ES05SFOP012	País Vasco - ESF	313
		2014ES05SFOP013	Social inclusion and social economy - ES - ESF	5
		2014ES05SFOP014	Canarias - ESF	16

Country	OPs	OP code	OP names	Operations
		2014ES05SFOP015	Castilla-La Mancha - ESF	12
		2014ES05SFOP016	Extremadura - ESF	2
		2014ES05SFOP017	Melilla - ESF	18
		2014ES05SFOP018	Aragón - ESF	6
		2014ES05SFOP019	Cantabria - ESF	5
		2014ES05SFOP020	Valenciana - ESF	45
		2014ES05SFOP021	Madrid - ESF	4
		2014ES05SFOP022	Andalucía - ESF	
FI	2	2014FI05M2OP001	Entrepreneurship and skills Åland 2 - ESF/ERDF	
		2014FI16M2OP001	Sustainable growth and jobs - FI - ERDF/ESF	359
FR	9	2014FR05M0OP001	Île-de-France et Seine - ESF/ERDF/YEI	-22
		2014FR05M2OP001	Guadeloupe et St Martin - ESF/ERDF	-39
		2014FR05M9OP002	Operational Programme Alsace 2014-2020	ESF 54
		2014FR05SFOP001	Employment and Social Inclusion - FR - ESF	8795
		2014FR05SFOP003	Guyane - ESF	7
		2014FR05SFOP004	Martinique - ESF	33
		2014FR05SFOP005	Réunion - ESF	23
		2014FR16M0OP008	Picardie - ERDF/ESF/YEI	14
		2014FR16M2OP012	Mayotte - ERDF/ESF	12
GR	14	2014GR05M9OP001	Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - GR - ESF/YEI	N/A
		2014GR16M2OP002	Central Macedonia - ERDF/ESF	96
		2014GR16M2OP003	Thessaly - ERDF/ESF	50
		2014GR16M2OP004	Epirus - ERDF/ESF	46
		2014GR16M2OP005	Western Greece - ERDF/ESF	49
		2014GR16M2OP006	Western Macedonia - ERDF/ESF	29
		2014GR16M2OP007	Continental Greece - ERDF/ESF	48
		2014GR16M2OP008	Peloponnesus - ERDF/ESF	33

Country	OPs	OP code	OP names	Operations
		2014GR16M2OP009	Ionian Islands - ERDF/ESF	30
		2014GR16M2OP010	North Aegean - ERDF/ESF	25
		2014GR16M2OP011	Crete - ERDF/ESF	73
		2014GR16M2OP012	Attica - ERDF/ESF	178
		2014GR16M2OP013	South Aegean - ERDF/ESF	36
		2014GR16M2OP014	Eastern Macedonia-Thrace ERDF/ESF	-41
HR	1	2014HR05M9OP001	Efficient Human Resources - HR - ESF/YEI	10
HU	3	2014HU05M2OP001	Human Resources Development - HU - ESF/ERDF	2250
		2014HU16M2OP001	Territorial and settlement Development - ERDF/ESF	162
		2014HU16M2OP002	Competitive Central-Hungary - ERDF/ESF	18
IE	1	2014IE05M9OP001	Ireland - ESF/YEI	23
IT	24	2014IT05SFOP001	Social Inclusion - IT - ESF	763
		2014IT05SFOP003	Emilia-Romagna - ESF	383
		2014IT05SFOP004	Friuli-Venezia Giulia - ESF	525
		2014IT05SFOP005	Lazio - ESF	281
		2014IT05SFOP006	Liguria - ESF	637
		2014IT05SFOP007	Lombardia - ESF	1608
		2014IT05SFOP008	Marche - ESF	524
		2014IT05SFOP009	Abruzzo - ESF	18
		2014IT05SFOP010	Umbria - ESF	115
		2014IT05SFOP011	Valle d'Aosta - ESF	8
		2014IT05SFOP012	Veneto - ESF	504
		2014IT05SFOP013	Piemonte - ESF	414
		2014IT05SFOP014	Sicilia - ESF	0
		2014IT05SFOP015	Toscana - ESF	721
		2014IT05SFOP016	Basilicata - ESF	236
		2014IT05SFOP017	Bolzano - ESF	20
		2014IT05SFOP018	Trento - ESF	43
		2014IT05SFOP020	Campania - ESF	43

Country	OPs	OP code	OP names	Operations
		2014IT05SFOP021	Sardegna - ESF	3
		2014IT16M2OP001	Molise - ERDF/ESF	7
		2014IT16M2OP002	Puglia - ERDF/ESF	223
		2014IT16M2OP003	Legality - IT - ERDF/ESF	0
		2014IT16M2OP004	Metropolitan Cities - ERDF/ESF	29
		2014IT16M2OP006	Calabria - ERDF/ESF	0
LT	1	2014LT16MAOP001	EU Structural Funds Investments - LT - ERDF/ESF/CF/YEI	198
LU	1	2014LU05SFOP001	Luxembourg - ESF	12
LV	1	2014LV16MAOP001	Growth and Employment - LV - ERDF/ESF/CF/YEI	118
MT	1	2014MT05SFOP001	Investing in human capital - MT - ESF	13
NL	1	2014NL05SFOP001	Netherlands - ESF	215
PL	17	2014PL05M9OP001	Knowledge Education Growth - PL - ESF/YEI	238
		2014PL16M2OP001	Dolnośląskie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	120
		2014PL16M2OP002	Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	135
		2014PL16M2OP003	Lubelskie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	132
		2014PL16M2OP004	Lubuskie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	
		2014PL16M2OP005	Łódzkie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	55
		2014PL16M2OP006	Małopolskie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	181
		2014PL16M2OP007	Mazowieckie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	232
		2014PL16M2OP008	Opolskie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	278
		2014PL16M2OP009	Podkarpackie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	74
		2014PL16M2OP010	Podlaskie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	146
		2014PL16M2OP011	Pomorskie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	
		2014PL16M2OP012	Śląskie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	66
		2014PL16M2OP013	Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	146

Country	OPs	OP code	OP names	Operations
		2014PL16M2OP014	Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	210
		2014PL16M2OP015	Wielkolskie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	77
		2014PL16M2OP016	Zachodniomorskie Voivodeship - ERDF/ESF	154
				170
				112
PT	8	2014PT05M9OP001	Social Inclusion and Employment - PT - ESF/YEI	801
		2014PT16M2OP001	Norte - ERDF/ESF	20
		2014PT16M2OP002	Centro - ERDF/ESF	1
		2014PT16M2OP003	Alentejo - ERDF/ESF	17
		2014PT16M2OP004	Azores - ERDF/ESF	5
		2014PT16M2OP005	Lisboa - ERDF/ESF	55
		2014PT16M2OP006	Madeira - ERDF/ESF	5
		2014PT16M2OP007	Algarve - ERDF/ESF	13
RO	1	2014RO05M9OP001	Human Capital - RO - ESF/YEI	133
SE	2	2014SE05M9OP001	Investments in growth and employ Investments in growth and employment - SE - ESF/YEIment - ESF/YEI	81
		2014SE16M2OP001	Community-led local Development - SE - ERDF/ESF	108
SI	1	2014SI16MAOP001	EU Cohesion Policy - ERDF/ESF/CF/YEI	163
SK	1	2014SK05M0OP001	Human Resources - SK - ESF/ERDF/YEI	205
UK	5	2014UK05M9OP001	England - ESF/YEI	102
		2014UK05M9OP002	Scotland - ESF/YEI	69
		2014UK05SFOP001	West Wales and the Valleys - ESF	10
		2014UK05SFOP002	East Wales - ESF	7
		2014UK05SFOP004	Northern Ireland - ESF	29
<b>EU-28</b>	<b>145</b>			<b>45,499</b>

Source: AIR Extraction 11 July 2019; variable used: Nbr of operations



## ANNEX 5 – COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

This annex provides information about the cost-benefit analysis that was carried out to support the assessment of Efficiency (see Section 2.2). A preliminary analysis at the EU-level was carried out for the Interim Report.

The EU-level analysis commenced with a descriptive statistical analysis of the SFC2014 database for the purpose of performing a cost-benefit analysis. A cost-effectiveness analysis is carried out for a selection of indicators. Then, the methodology for the cost-benefit analysis is presented. We apply this methodology on both the EU-level cost-benefit analysis and on five case studies.

### Processing of the extraction from SFC2014

The extraction from the SFC2014 was provided in the form of an excel file showing, for each Operational Programme (OP) and Investment Priority (IP) combination, the total eligible cost amount, the total declared amount, Common Output Indicators (COIs) and Common Result Indicators (CRIs), broken down by category of region. The following steps were performed:

- The data was filtered by choosing the priority axes relative to TO9 and summing by OP and IP (343 OP-IPs).
- The data was then split by type of operation included in each OP-IP combination where the information was available (for 10 OP-IPs this information was not available). The same proportion of costs and output/results by OP-IP was allocated to each type of operation. Finally, the proportion related to operations of type 5 and 6 (64 OP-IPs) was taken out, which left 279 OP-IPs. For example, if an OP-IP combination involves operations of type 1 and type 5, only 50% of the costs and output/results would be taken into account.
- Then, data cleaning was performed. First, the data was cleaned by eliminating all OP-IP combinations showing either: a) zero expenditure declared; b) a positive expenditure declared but no results reported. Cost per participation by OP and IP were calculated to identify and eliminate outliers. For IP9i, some small and high numbers were observed. Therefore, the minimum value and the values above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile of the cost per participation were taken out. For IP9ii, IP9iii and IP9vi, the outliers were easy to detect using graphical analysis and they were taken out. No outlier was present in IP9iv. Only two OPs remained for IP9v and four for IP9vi, since all the others referred to types 5-6 operations or were filtered out. The final dataset contains 168 OP-IPs combinations.

### Descriptive statistical analysis

The reason for undertaking a descriptive statistical analysis of the available data is to ascertain whether the data is robust (reliable) enough to use for the CBA, as well as whether it provides suitable information for the CBA.

For the purpose of the analysis in this section, we construct aggregate measures of cost, output and results at country and IP level. It is not possible to distinguish in the data extracted from the SFC whether an operation was fully or partially implemented.

According to guidance from the ESF<sup>555</sup>, Member States may opt to report data on partially or fully implemented operations meaning that the time-lag between participants entering an operation and the reporting of financial or participation and results data can be significant. Moreover, an operation can be fully implemented even if not all related payments have yet been made by beneficiaries or the corresponding public contribution has not yet been paid<sup>556</sup>. Furthermore, participations are recorded in output indicators in the year participants and entities enter operations<sup>557</sup>.

## Costs

The cost of ESF operations is understood to be the funds spent by programme beneficiaries. The possible variables available from the SFC2014 to measure costs are (1) Total eligible costs of operations selected for support until 31/12/2018 (Eligible costs) and (2) Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authorities by 31/12/2018 (Expenditure declared). Cost variable (2) is used in the CBA at EU level (see Table 9).

In addition to the costs agreed (Eligible cost) or spent (Expenditure declared), ESF operations have additional costs, such as administration costs (i.e. technical assistance) which are usually 4 % of the total amount of the Funds allocated to operational programmes in a Member State<sup>558</sup>, and indirect costs such as costs of participation in terms of income forgone or lost production and earnings which are also not available. These costs could therefore not be reflected in the cost-benefit analysis.

For the CBA we are interested in what has *actually* been spent on operations, rather than what *could* be spent (total eligible cost), as we want to be able to calculate the cost of each result (i.e. benefit) achieved by the operation. Total eligible expenditure declared therefore appears to be the most appropriate measure to use, since it should show how much each operation costs to be delivered and thus how much it costs to gain the benefits to society. However, there is a question about whether the expenditure declared data is timely enough, in comparison to the COI and CRI data, to use in the CBA. According to European Commission Guidance document<sup>559</sup>, there might be a time-lag between the start of an operation and the reporting of financial or participation data.

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<sup>555</sup> European Commission. (2018). *Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy - ESF Guidance document*. Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion. Brussels: European Commission.

<sup>556</sup> European Commission. (2018). *Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy - ESF Guidance document*. Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion. Brussels: European Commission.

<sup>557</sup> European Commission. (2018). *Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy - ESF Guidance document*. Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion. Brussels: European Commission.

<sup>558</sup> Article 119 (1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

<sup>559</sup> European Commission. (2018). *Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy - ESF Guidance document*. Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion. Brussels: European Commission.

In order to investigate this, we first take a look at how much of the eligible cost of selected TO9 projects has been declared so far, starting with the dataset before the procedure detailed in Section 0 was applied, to get a broad picture. At EU level, only 39% of the allocated amount to operations was spent (declared) by 31 December 2018. Table 77 shows a significant variation among Member States (MS) in terms of Total eligible costs of operations selected for support and Total eligible expenditure declared. Luxembourg has the highest share of expenditure declared in the eligible costs (70%), while Ireland has the lowest (only 5%). France has both the highest declared amount and the highest number of participations under TO09 operations.

*Table 77. Summary of financial and output data by country for ESF - TO9 purposes, all data*

Country	Total Cost of selected proj. (EUR)	Eligible Total Expenditure Declared (EUR)	Share declared eligible amount (%)	No of participations
AT	185,362,212	69,724,171	38	67,062
BE	600,145,027	202,427,690	34	271,372
BG	289,792,352	173,785,315	60	146,691
CY	61,914,757	23,722,275	38	1,333
CZ	647,778,382	217,319,426	34	41,430
DE	3,401,481,120	1,685,240,379	50	492,739
DK	57,845,841	18,186,045	31	2,753
EE	126,073,052	48,501,461	38	19,900
ES	2,019,517,327	597,537,821	30	831,059
FI	133,968,822	77,945,862	58	31,144
FR	2,642,118,876	1,678,270,916	64	1,656,754
GR	596,162,584	336,024,458	56	169,676
HR	278,240,272	44,553,971	16	19,460
HU	1,246,055,642	203,669,812	16	104,257
IE	297,615,568	14,505,089	5	47,704
IT	1,803,516,285	528,930,055	29	703,623
LT	177,576,156	94,815,062	53	101,491
LU	7,751,600	5,444,134	70	1,405
LV	242,009,158	54,198,447	22	61,296
MT	40,493,708	10,900,822	27	3,138
NL	831,052,396	356,189,636	43	517,297
PL	1,761,962,918	492,650,756	28	323,428

PT	1,064,538,316	470,420,407	44	184,280
RO	1,448,984,042	522,247,301	36	32,441
SE	219,084,395	89,991,683	41	12,010
SI	124,689,067	36,747,194	29	8,082
SK	422,987,719	119,847,393	28	62,734
UK	1,596,416,545	581,675,696	36	235,180
EU-28	22,325,134,140	8,755,473,275	39	6,149,739

Source: Cambridge Econometrics elaboration based on SFC2014, extraction date: 11/12/2019

The last column of Table 77 shows the number of participations in all types of operation<sup>560</sup>.

Ireland has a low declared total expenditure but has a higher number of participations than many other MS with higher declared expenditures. Sweden has declared a similar expenditure amount to Lithuania but has much lower participation figures. The Netherlands has broadly the same participations as Germany but has a declared expenditure which is four times lower than Germany. These differences between MS in terms of expenditure declared and number of participants can indicate different situations. For example, the types of operations chosen by the MS to reach the objectives of the TO9 IPs could have different implementation times. Some operations might be fully implemented within a month (e.g. short-term training for the long-term unemployed) or within several years (e.g. improving access to social services).

As the programme period (2014-20) is not complete, it is therefore difficult to say whether the cost (expenditure declared) per participant figures are an accurate reflection of the actual spending per participant (notwithstanding the issue of additional costs, discussed above). As each year of the programme period passes and more expenditure data is submitted, the problem of whether the expenditure data relates to the output and results indicators should lessen (see Tables 14 and 15 in Annex 4). The 2018 data will be used to assess the performance of the MS, so it is assumed that the MS sent their most up-to-date figures.

Next, we take a brief look at the expenditure data by investment priority, this time after the data cleaning procedure detailed in Section 0 has been undertaken. Compared to Table 77, Table 78 shows that some costs and participations are reduced after data cleaning. Most of the expenditure (both eligible and declared) and number of participations are in IP 9i (i.e. active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability).

<sup>560</sup> Calculated on the basis of the output indicators by labour market status (i.e. sum of unemployed, including long-term unemployed + inactive + employed, including self-employed) (European Commission, 2016).

Table 78. Summary of financial and output data by investment priority (type of operations 1-4 only)

Investment Priority	Total Cost of selected proj. (EUR)	Eligible Total Expenditure Declared (EUR)	Share of declared in eligible amount (%)	No participations of
9i. Active inclusion	11,134,630,661	4,914,247,795	44	3,302,129
9ii. Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma	686,843,338	83,657,307	12	102,579
9iii. Combating all forms of discrimination	121,497,268	49,735,365	41	58,700
9iv. Enhancing access to services	1,394,376,414	456,718,323	33	352,445
9v. Promoting social entrepreneurship	3,292,070	1,786,199	54	586
9vi. Community-led local development strategies	36,428,629	3,974,911	11	6,847
TO9	13,377,068,382	5,510,119,900	41	3,823,286

Source: Cambridge Econometrics elaboration based on SFC2014, extraction date: 11/12/2019

In IP9v most of the operations included in the IP belong either to type 5 or type 6, and therefore are removed from the analysis. IP9ii and IP9vi have a very low share of declared expenditure in eligible amounts. IP9i accounts for 83% of all TO9 eligible costs, 89% of expenditure declared, and 86% of all TO9 participations. We discuss which of the IPs it should be possible to undertake CBA for, but Table 78 suggests that even if we only undertake CBA for IP 9i, we will be covering almost 90% of expenditure. On the other hand, it would not allow us to determine whether the money might have been better spent on the other IPs.

In conclusion, we consider that Total expenditure declared suits better the purpose of measuring the cost side of the CBA, despite the reliability issues described above. We also note that IP 9i accounts for by far the largest share of expenditure and participations under TO9.

### Common outputs

The Common Output Indicators (COIs) record the characteristics of the participants of ESF funded interventions. Table 79 to Table 82 below show the various recorded characteristics of participants in TO9 interventions. It is useful to see the focus of each IP on participants with particular characteristics. Most of the Common Result Indicators (discussed in the next section) do not show the characteristics of the participants, and

so the shares presented here could be used to infer the characteristics of the participants by result, to help make a better valuation of the benefits.

Table 79 shows that in the first investment priority (active inclusion), 61% of the participations are by someone who is unemployed. IPs 9ii (Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma) and 9iv (Enhancing access to services), however, have a much higher proportion (69% and 61% respectively) of participations by those who are inactive. IP 9vi (Community-led local development strategies) has the highest proportion (57%) among the IPs of participations by those who are employed.

*Table 79. Share of participations by characteristics of participants – employment status (type of operations 1-4 only)*

<b>Investment Priority</b>	<b>Share unemployed, including long-term unemployed (%)</b>	<b>Share long-term unemployed (%)</b>	<b>Share inactive (%)</b>	<b>Share inactive, not in education or training (%)</b>	<b>Share employed, including self-employed (%)</b>
9i. Active inclusion	61	31	26	15	13
9ii. Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma	16	10	69	21	14
9iii. Combating all forms of discrimination	45	19	32	13	24
9iv. Enhancing access to services	7	4	61	24	31
9v. Promoting social entrepreneurship	46	18	22	15	32
9vi. Community-led local development strategies	11	6	33	6	57
<b>TO9</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

*Source: Cambridge Econometrics elaboration based on SFC2014, extraction date: 11/12/2019*

Table 80 shows that IP 9ii has a higher proportion (53%) of participations by those under 25 years of age, while IP 9iv and 9vi have a higher proportion (31% and 24% respectively) of participations by those over 54 years of age. Most of the participants (60%-70%) are aged 25 to 54, except in IP9ii and IP9iv.

Table 80. Share of participations by characteristics of participants – age (type of operations 1-4 only)

Investment Priority	Share below 25 years of age (%)	Share 25-54 years of age (%)	Share above 54 years of age (%)	Share above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training (%)
9i. Active inclusion	22	70	8	7
9ii. Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma	53	38	9	6
9iii. Combating all forms of discrimination	12	71	17	8
9iv. Enhancing access to services	32	37	31	20
9v. Promoting social entrepreneurship	30	64	6	5
9vi. Community-led local development strategies	11	65	24	6
EU-28	23	66	11	8

Source: Cambridge Econometrics elaboration based on SFC2014, extraction date: 11/12/2019

Table 81 shows that IPs 9i and 9ii have a relatively high proportion (52% and 66% respectively) of participations with educational level at ISCED 1 or 2. IPs 9v and 9vi, on the other hand, have a much higher proportion of participations by those with education at ISCED 3 or 4 (37% and 46% respectively). IP9vi has the highest share of participations with ISCED 5-8 (29%), while IPs 9ii and 9iii have the highest share of participations without educational attainment (15% and 14% respectively).

Table 81. Share of participations by characteristics of participants – level of education (type of operations 1-4 only)

Investment Priority	Share with primary or lower secondary education (ISCED 1 or 2) (%)	Share with upper secondary or post-secondary education (ISCED 3) (%)	Share with tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8) (%)	Share without educational attainment (%)
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		(ISCED 4)		
		(%)		
9i. Active inclusion	52	27	10	10
9ii. Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma	66	16	3	15
9iii. Combating all forms of discrimination	44	27	15	14
9iv. Enhancing access to services	42	28	18	12
9v. Promoting social entrepreneurship	36	37	21	5
9vi. Community-led local development strategies	20	46	29	5
EU-28	52	27	11	11

Source: Cambridge Econometrics elaboration based on SFC2014, extraction date: 11/12/2019

Table 82 shows that IP 9ii has the highest proportion of participations by those from marginalised communities (59%), as would be expected by the target of the IP. IP 9iii also has a relatively high share of participations by those from marginalised communities (37%), but also has the highest proportion of participations by other disadvantaged participants (61%).

Table 82. Share of participations by characteristics of participants – disadvantaged (type of operations 1-4 only)

Investment Priority	Share migrants, participants with foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma) (%)	Share participants with a disabilities (%)	Share other disadvantaged (%)	Share homeless or affected by housing exclusion (%)
9i. Active inclusion	31	18	37	4
9ii. Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma	59	2	24	5

9iii. Combating all forms of discrimination	37	11	61	2
9iv. Enhancing access to services	7	24	26	1
9v. Promoting social entrepreneurship	30	20	23	6
9vi. Community-led local development strategies	0	14	37	1
EU-28	30	18	36	4

Source: Cambridge Econometrics elaboration based on SFC2014, extraction date: 11/12/2019

In conclusion, we observe a significant variation in the characteristics of the participants to different IPs. It is not easy to create a link between the IPs and the target Common Output (CO) group since there is not one type of CO which is prevalent in one IP.

### Common results

Common Result Indicators (CRIs) record various results of ESF interventions. It is difficult to link expenditure declared to each COI since we are unable to assign each Euro spent to individual participants characterised by the COIs; the situation is even more complicated when one looks at the CRIs. It is not possible to make a direct link between costs and results (which we require for the CBA) because of the diverse nature of priorities across Member States and the aggregated level of data that is stored in the SFC2014. Ideally, we would have detailed information about the characteristics of each participant, how much money was spent on each of them, and what the result of the operation was for them, because the benefits gained (see Table 9) will depend on these characteristics. For example, the value of the benefit gained by a person moving from unemployment to employment will depend on a variety of factors, including their age (a younger person will gain the benefits of being employed over a longer period) and the type of job they obtain (a better-quality, higher paying, job will provide more benefit than a low-quality low-paid job). Moreover, since the CRIs are common across the entire ESF, they do not capture all the benefits of some of the investment priorities, such as 9iv Enhancing access to services, 9v Promoting social entrepreneurship and 9vi Community-led local development strategies. Therefore, for the CBA, we will focus on those IPs whose benefits are best measured by the CRIs.

### Cost per output and result

This section explains how unit cost values by IP and across Member States were constructed. The analysis is a first step towards CBA, in terms of thinking about how costs compare to outputs and outcomes (results), but can also help in understanding the extent to which the underlying expenditure and participation data is recorded in a balanced way (i.e. do the cost data in the SFC2014 extract represent the participations and results data in that same extract?).

The measures calculated are unit costs (costs per participation and cost per result) by IP and by MS. These measures can give some indication of the efficiency of operations under different IPs and in different MS. However, these measures do not take into account the factors that affect how much each participation costs (e.g. the type of operation, or differences in the cost of providing the same type of operation in different

MS) or the range of direct and broader societal benefits of each participation. A simple comparison of cost-effectiveness results across IP or MS assumes that the benefit of each participation is the same, both within and across MS.

We analyse and compare unit costs by referring only to the declared expenditures. However, these unit costs might not represent the full picture, since OPs sometimes record participations after operations are fully implemented and other times when operations are only partly implemented. Both in the case of output and result indicators, we do not calculate the cost per unit for each of the COI and CRI separately since we cannot separate the declared expenditure and link it to exclusive participations or results.

**Error! Reference source not found.** shows some basic unit cost figures (declared expenditure per participation), for each of the investment priorities and for TO9 as a whole. As might be expected, given the range of types of intervention, there is quite a wide variation in cost per participation across the investment priorities. Interventions promoting social entrepreneurship (IP 9v.) have the highest cost per participation, at EUR 3,048. However, this figure refers only to two OPs, since all the other OPs within IP9vi were removed from the analysis because they contained type 5-6 operations. Interventions belonging to IP9vi have the lowest cost per participation at EUR 581, but this figure refers only to four OPs because some were removed during data cleaning. The cost per participation for IP9i, which accounts for the vast majority of costs and participation under TO9, is EUR 1,488. For TO9 as a whole, the average cost per participation is EUR 1,441. This figure is lower than that calculated for social inclusion actions (EUR 1,685 per participation) for ESF period 2007-13<sup>561</sup>, but similar to the one in the Final ESF Synthesis Report of AIR 2018 submitted in 2019<sup>562</sup> (EUR 1,423 per participation).

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<sup>561</sup> See *Study Supporting the update of the data reported in the 2007-2013 ESF ex-post evaluation* (VC/2017/0710), Final Report, March 2018 - p.15.

<sup>562</sup> European Commission (2020) *Final ESF Synthesis Report of AIRs 2018 submitted in 2019*, unpublished.

Table 83. Cost per participation, by investment priority (type of operations 1-4 only)

Investment Priority	No of participations	Total Expenditure Declared (EUR)	Declared expenditure per participation (EUR)
9i. Active inclusion	3,302,129	4,914,247,795	1,488
9ii. Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma	102,579	83,657,307	816
9iii. Combating all forms of discrimination	58,700	49,735,365	847
9iv. Enhancing access to services	352,445	456,718,323	1,296
9v. Promoting social entrepreneurship	586	1,786,199	3,048
9vi. Community-led local development strategies	6,847	3,974,911	581
<b>TO9</b>	<b>3,823,286</b>	<b>5,510,119,900</b>	<b>1,441</b>

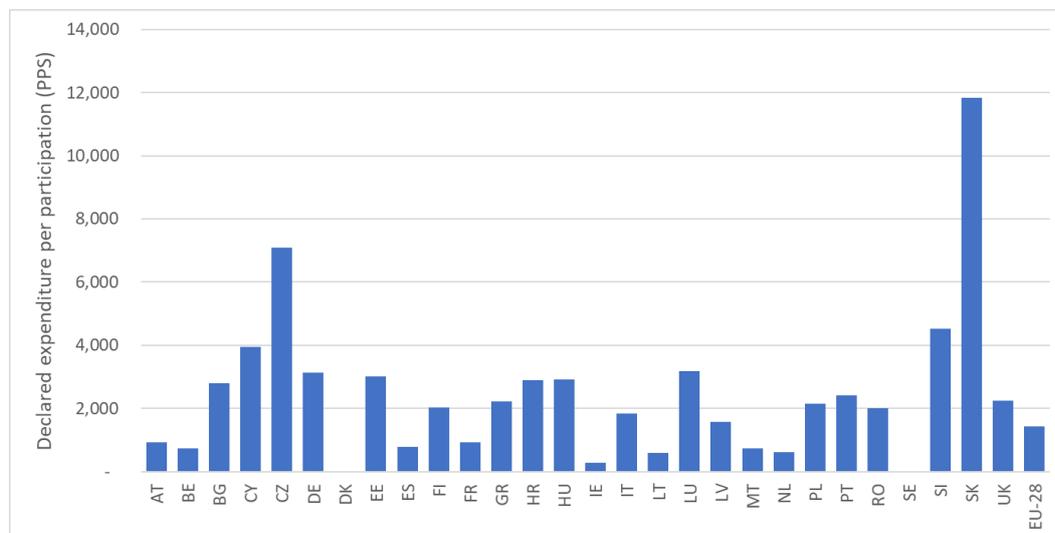
Source: Cambridge Econometrics elaboration based on SFC2014, extraction date 11/12/2019

Figure 55 below shows similar information on cost per participation by Member State converted using purchasing power parity (PPP)<sup>563</sup> to account for price differences among Member States. Denmark and Sweden show no bars because during the data cleaning procedure (see Section 0) the few OPs that were implemented in those countries were eliminated.

Again, the figures vary quite widely, from PPS 287 in Ireland up to PPS 11,338 in Slovakia. Both these extreme values relate to a single OP in the respective MS. Czechia shows the second-highest cost per participation figure at PPS 7,084. All the other MS show cost per participation values of less than PPS 4,500, with most of them showing less than PPS 2,000. Most of these large differences are likely to be the result of the ongoing nature of the update of the monitoring data and it depends on the different numbers of OPs implemented in each country. For countries with multiple OPs, the cost per participation at country level is driven by the differences in cost per participation among the OPs.

<sup>563</sup> Purchasing power parities (PPPs), price level indices and real expenditures for ESA 2010 aggregates. Dataset from Eurostat, Product code: prc\_ppp\_ind, updated on 13-Dec-2019

Figure 55. Declared expenditure (in PPP) per participation and type of operations 1-4



Source: Cambridge Econometrics elaboration based on SFC2014, extraction date 11/12/2019, and Eurostat (prc\_ppp\_ind and ert\_bil\_eur\_a extracted the 10/01/2020)<sup>564</sup>

Next, an analysis similar to the cost per participation is performed to assess the costs of obtaining one of the following short-term results: engaging in job searching (CRI01); entering into education/training (CRI02); gaining a qualification (CRI03); or gaining employment, including self-employment (CRI04)<sup>565</sup>. Table 6 shows the declared expenditure per immediate (short-term) result by IP. As might be expected, given the range of types of intervention, there is quite a wide variation in cost per short-term result across the investment priorities. Interventions for enhancing access to services (IP9iv) show a massive cost per result figure (EUR 52,482), since they are less likely to produce results related to education or employment, and therefore results figure are much lower compared to costs. IP9i, which constitutes the bulk of TO9 operations, has a cost per result of EUR 4,732. For TO9 as a whole, the average cost per short term result is EUR 5,069. This figure is higher than that calculated for social inclusion actions (EUR 4,370 per short term result) for ESF period 2007-13<sup>566</sup>, and smaller than in the

<sup>564</sup> See Eurostat extraction in Data Annex.

<sup>565</sup> We have used only CRI 1-4 following Fondazione G. Brodolini. (2018). *Synthesis Report of ESF 2017 Annual Implementation Reports*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, where it is explained that CRI1-4 “present exclusive types of results in terms of improved labour market position of individual participants that may be reached. CR05 was not included as it is not an exclusive category from common result indicators 1-4; it would introduce double counts and therefore taint the analysis. Nevertheless, the figures presented should be read with some caution, since participants could achieve more result at the same time.”

<sup>566</sup> See *Study Supporting the update of the data reported in the 2007-2013 ESF ex-post evaluation* (VC/2017/0710), Final Report, March 2018 - p.21.

Final ESF Synthesis Report of AIR 2018 submitted in 2019<sup>567</sup> (EUR 5,286 per short term result). The difference with previous reports is illustrative of the relatively fragmented way of reporting individual short-term results in SFC, which should improve in the coming years. Figures in Table 6 should be considered with some caution as some participants can achieve more than one result at the same time.

Table 84. Cost per short-term result achieved, by investment priority, type of operations 1-4

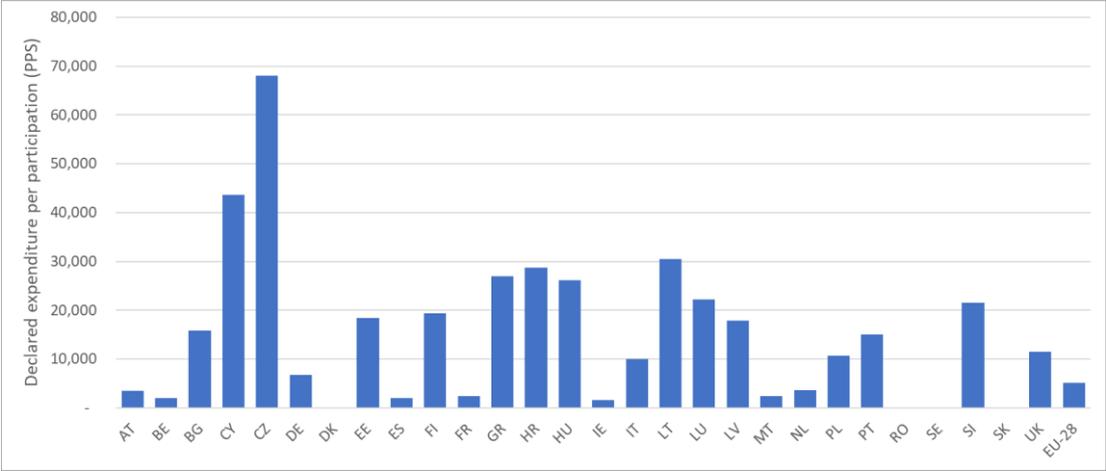
Investment Priority	Total short-term results (CR1-CR4)	Total Expenditure Declared (EUR)	Declared expenditure per short-term result achieved (EUR)
9i. Active inclusion	1,038,502	4,914,247,795	4,732
9ii. Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma	22,365	83,657,307	3,741
9iii. Combating all forms of discrimination	16,555	49,735,365	3,004
9iv. Enhancing access to services	8,702	456,718,323	52,482
9v. Promoting social entrepreneurship	322	1,786,199	5,556
9vi. Community-led local development strategies	521	3,974,911	7,625
TO9	1,086,966	5,510,119,900	5,069

Source: Cambridge Econometrics elaboration based on SFC2014, extraction date: 11/12/2019

Figure 8 shows the same analysis performed at MS level. Figures by Member State have been converted using PPP. As in Figure 55 above, we see large variations among the MS that might be due to the relatively fragmented way of reporting of individual short-term results. Slovakia, and Romania have reported very little results data; therefore, they have been excluded from **Error! Reference source not found.** Czechia and Cyprus also report very high figures of cost per result.

<sup>567</sup> European Commission (2020) *Final ESF Synthesis Report of AIRs 2018 submitted in 2020*, unpublished.

Figure 56. Declared expenditure (PPP) per short-term results, by country over the period 2014-2018, type of operations 1-4



Note: DK, RO, SE and SK figures are not reported as they are outliers.

Source: Cambridge Econometrics elaboration based on SFC2014, extraction date: 15/07/2019, and Eurostat (prc\_ppp\_ind and ert\_bil\_eur\_a extracted the 10/01/2020)

Figure 57 compares, by MS, for all interventions recorded under IP 9i (active inclusion), the cost per inactive or unemployed participation (converted using PPP) against the share of inactive or unemployed participations that have become employed on completion of the intervention.

Figure 57 focuses on inactive or unemployed participants under investment priority 9i as one of the target groups of this IP is 'Unemployed (particularly long-term unemployed and inactive)', and one of the relevant Intermediate Results Indicators is 'Participants in employment/self-employment, upon leaving'.

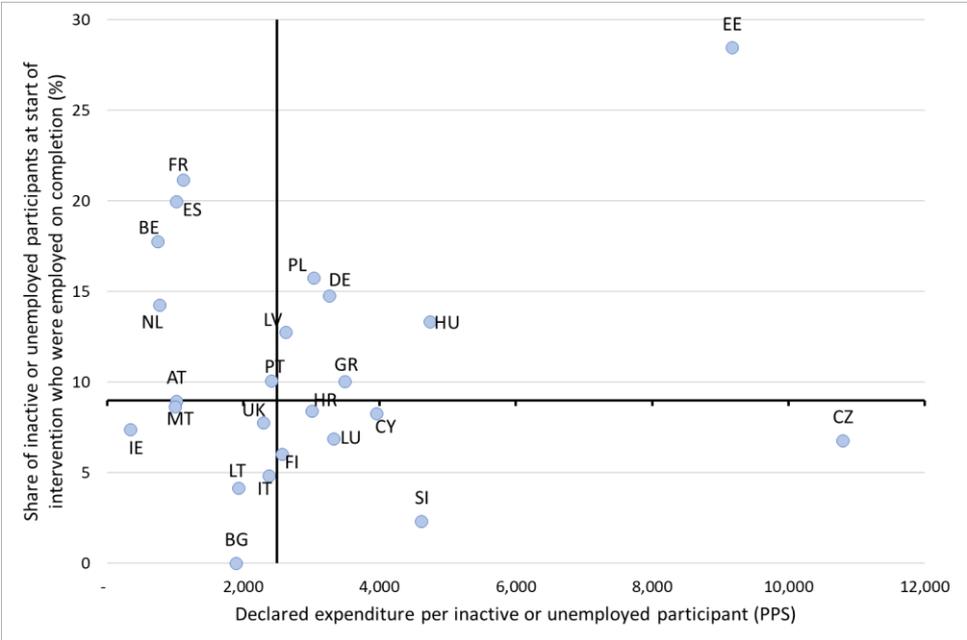
On this basic comparison, which does not take into account the many factors that impact upon how easy it is to get a participant into work (e.g. qualifications held by the participant, the quality of job and wage they actually receive) there would appear to be a wide range in cost effectiveness across MS. Again, the calculations could also be affected by a delay in recording outcomes versus spending (or vice versa). Romania and Slovakia don't have IP9i under OP, therefore are not shown.

Figure 57 shows that, for interventions under the first investment priority, Spain, Belgium and France have spent less than PPS 2,500 per inactive or unemployed participation (at or below the median for the EU-28 as a whole) and also achieved a higher share (than the median) of employed participants upon completion. We calculate here a cost for participation<sup>568</sup> acknowledging that it might be overestimated, but 87% of the participations are by someone who is unemployed or inactive. In the case of other IPs and other types of participant, cost for participation would be hugely overestimated.

<sup>568</sup> The cost of participation was converted using PPP.

However, a number of Member States (e.g. Slovenia, Luxembourg and, most of all, Czechia<sup>569</sup>) have spent considerably more per inactive or unemployed participant to achieve a lower share of employed participants upon completion. Estonia is the second-highest MS in terms of declared expenditure per inactive or unemployed participant (after Czechia), but has the highest share of employed participants upon completion. Other MS such as Lithuania, Ireland and the UK have a lower share of employed participants upon completion than the EU-28 median but have also spent comparatively less. Overall, it is worth noticing how many MS show similar levels of spending per inactive or unemployed participant but widely different outcomes in terms of the share of employed participants upon completion (e.g. Italy, Finland, UK, Portugal and Latvia). The distribution of Member States in Figure 57 might be different in the CBA analysis when extra benefits to society (e.g. reduction in social security payments and increase in tax revenue) are considered and when we use monetised benefits (i.e. the common results indicators) instead of simply quantifying them.

Figure 57. Expenditure (PPP) per inactive or unemployed participant versus share employed on completion - 9i. Active inclusion, over the period, type of operations 1-4



Note: Black lines show the median for EU-28.

Source: Cambridge Econometrics elaboration based on SFC2014, extraction date 15/07/2019, and Eurostat (prc\_ppp\_ind and ert\_bil\_eur\_a extracted the 10/01/2020)

In conclusion, cost per participation and cost per short-term result as a measure of efficiency show a high variation between Member States and IPs. The numbers should

<sup>569</sup> The result for Czechia is has increased after the declared expenditure was converted using PPP. The results shown for Czechia relate to the only IP9i belonging to OP for that country. Further investigation would be needed to understand why costs are so high compared to participation.

be treated with caution as some Member States appear to be behind with their cost declarations while others have on-going operations and thus low result levels recorded.

## Conclusions

The analysis above suggests that although total expenditure declared is the best measure to use from the SFC2014 for the purpose of measuring the cost side of the CBA, there appear to be some issues with the consistency of the time periods for this information and the declared participations in the data extraction – there often appears to be a time lag between the declared expenditure and the quantification of outcomes.

For the COIs, we observe a significant variation in the characteristics of participants across different IPs. The characteristics identified by the COIs are also insufficient to enable us to identify those participants that are the target of some of the IPs.

Similarly, the CRIs provide some information with which to identify the benefits of TO9 operations for some IPs (e.g. participants in employment on leaving, for IP 9i), but it is difficult to link them to other IPs, such as 9iv Enhancing access to services, 9v Promoting social entrepreneurship and 9vi Community-led local development strategies. The data for longer term CRIs, such as participants in employment 6 months after completion, are also less likely to be complete.

The CRIs provide little breakdown of the characteristics of the participants (e.g. age, gender, education level) achieving particular results, or the results themselves (e.g. pay, employment type, type of qualification gained). This will impact on the accuracy of the CBA results. However, it may be possible to proxy some of these things using publicly available data sources and the next section goes on to look at that.

## EU-level cost-benefit analysis

An ex-post CBA is designed to assess the extent to which the policy has delivered against its expected outcomes and overall value for money.

A social CBA requires all impacts (social, economic, environmental, financial, etc.) to be assessed relative to what would have taken place in the absence of the intervention<sup>570</sup>. They include costs and benefits to individuals, businesses, households and the not-for-profit sector; and may not necessarily be limited to the country where the intervention has taken place<sup>571</sup>.

In practice, it is often not possible or practical to monetise the full range of costs and benefits identified<sup>572</sup>. In this case, the CBA calculation is undertaken using those that

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<sup>570</sup> European Commission. (2017). *Better regulation toolbox: Tool #57 Analytical Methods to Compare Options or Assess Performance*. European Commission.

<sup>571</sup> ILO and European Commission. (2017). *Learning exchange programme: Social cost-benefit analysis of the Youth Guarantee*. Turin: Final report. 12-13 July 2017.

<sup>572</sup> European Commission. (2017). *Better regulation toolbox: Tool #57 Analytical Methods to Compare Options or Assess Performance*. European Commission.

can be monetised; with any non-monetary costs and benefits used to provide important context when interpreting the final estimates.

Table 85 provides a conceptual overview of the various factors that should be considered in making an overall assessment of value for money for T09.

*Table 85. Conceptual overview of T09 costs, results and outcomes*

<b>Costs</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Outcomes (benefits to society)</b>
<u>Administrative costs</u>	<u>Impact on labour market status</u>	<u>Improvement in living standards of participants</u>
Costs of delivering schemes in the IPs	Number of participants in employment and long-term employment.	Increase in employment prospects/income.
Total cost		Increased confidence, mental & physical health.
Total cost per IP	Number of previously economically inactive participants now seeking work.	<u>Social benefits</u>
Total cost per Member State		Benefits to society through reduced crime and increase in community cohesion.
<u>Operating costs</u>	<u>Impact on qualification attainment</u>	Other social benefits delivered through social enterprise.
Money used to fund schemes/participations in the IPs.	Number of people gaining a qualification.	<u>Public finance benefits</u>
Total spend	Number of people studying for a qualification as a result of the intervention.	Reduction in social security payments and increase in tax revenue.
Total spend per IP		
Average spend per participation in each IP	<u>Impact on social enterprise</u>	Reduced long-term costs of public service provision as early intervention prevents complex needs in the future.
Total spend in each Member State.	Number of social enterprises formed.	<u>Wider economic impacts:</u>
Spend by entity (social enterprise, SME, education provider, healthcare provider, etc.)	Extent of increased collaboration between social and other enterprises.	Additional income spent creates a multiplier effect in the economy.
Private/public funding split.	Increased skill levels of social entrepreneurs.	Increase in firm productivity, as firms benefit from being able to fill vacancies and a more highly skilled workforce.
<u>Indirect costs (where applicable)</u>	<u>Improved access to services</u>	
Additional costs borne by participants and society.	Number of people accessing services that they were not able to previously	
Costs to individual associated with attending work and/or study.	<u>Reduced discrimination and marginalisation</u>	
Additional costs borne by other service providers in connection with this intervention (e.g. health,	Change in the number of reported incidences of discrimination.	

education and other social service providers).	Number of additional employment/education/access opportunities for target groups.
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Source: Cambridge Econometrics elaboration

Not all the costs, results or outcomes in the table above can be quantified and monetised in practice. An assessment of which IPs are most suitable for a CBA quantitative assessment and which costs and benefits can and cannot be monetised follows, below.

### IPs included in the quantitative CBA

The CRIs are the only current source of information available about the potential benefits that TO9 interventions are delivering. The CRIs are much narrower than the range of outputs shown in Table 9 and are more relevant to some IPs than others, as shown in Table 86, below.

Table 86. Incidences of Common Result Indicators recorded and number of participations, by Investment Priority

Investment Priority	No participations	of Incidences of CRIs 1-4 recorded	% distribution of CRIs	CRIs as a share of participations
9i. Active inclusion	3,302,129	1,038,502	96%	31%
9ii. Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma	102,579	22,365	2%	22%
9iii. Combating all forms of discrimination	58,700	16,555	2%	28%
9iv. Enhancing access to services	352,445	8,702	1%	2%
9v. Promoting social entrepreneurship	586	322	0%	55%
9vi. Community-led local development strategies	6,847	521	0%	8%
TO9	3,823,286	1,086,966		28%

Source: Cambridge Econometrics elaboration based on SFC2014, extraction date 11/12/2019

IP 9i is a clear candidate for inclusion in the CBA. It has by far the most participations and results recorded of any of the IPs under TO9. The final column also suggests that

the CRIs are most relevant for IP 9i<sup>573</sup>. IP 9iii is a much smaller IP, but the table shows that the CR indicators are as relevant for IP 9iii as for IP 9i. However, only 5 Member States have recorded activity under IP 9iii and for this reason, it is not included in the CBA.

IPs 9iv, 9v and 9vi have a very low number of CRIs recorded relative to the number of participations and the distribution of results among these IPs is very low. This may be because these IPs are not very effective, or because the CRIs do not adequately capture the benefits they are delivering. According to Tool 57 of the Better Regulation Toolbox (European Commission, 2017), failure to identify the full range of benefits may skew the final judgment. As the CRIs are the only source of evidence available on the results that these IPs are delivering, undertaking a CBA on these IPs at this stage would not generate sensible or useful results, unless further evidence on their impact were available. This is also true (to a lesser extent) for IP 9ii.

Therefore, we have limited the *quantitative* CBA to IP 9i, where it is likely to yield the most sensible results.

### **The counterfactual**

In a CBA, outcomes would usually be assessed against a control group who had not been involved in any interventions (the counterfactual) but are otherwise similar to the 'treated' group, to assess the extent to which the outcomes delivered are additional to those that would have occurred anyway.

Since information on the outcomes of a counterfactual group are not available for comparison, the analysis assumes that the outcomes delivered by IP 9i are wholly additional – i.e. they would not have happened in the absence of the intervention. This is a strong assumption, as the interventions are likely to have funded at least some people who would have achieved similar outcomes without the funding. However, it is also true that many interventions under TO9 are aimed at participants with complex needs, who are farthest away from the labour market and/or who lack the basic skills required to move into work. Therefore, whilst 100% additionality is unlikely, it is reasonable to expect a high level of additionality in relation to the outcomes experienced by the participants.

### **Monetising costs and benefits**

For IP 9i, several result indicators are monetised. These include CR1 (inactive participants engaged in job searching), CR2 (participants in education and training upon leaving), CR3 (participants gaining a qualification upon leaving), and CR4 (participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving). Whilst the other result indicators are relevant to TO9, they will not be included in the CBA calculation due to the risk of double counting with CR1-CR4.

Even for IP 9i, important details are unavailable. Information required to assess the outcomes the IP has delivered, such as individual characteristics, type of qualification attained and type of employment/pay/hours worked, are missing. Therefore the CRIs

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<sup>573</sup> **Error! Reference source not found.** in Subsection **Error! Reference source not found.** shows that IP 9i accounts for almost 90% of declared expenditure under TO9, which provides another reason for undertaking CBA for this particular IP.

have been monetised by proxy, using information from EU-SILC, the EU Labour Force Survey and OECD publications.

### Benefits

**Job related earnings:** This applies to participants who are in employment upon leaving, those who are unemployed and looking for work and those who are studying for a qualification<sup>574</sup>.

Information on participant earnings is not captured directly, nor is information on hours worked. Therefore, job related earnings have been proxied by using the first quartile income measure from EU-SILC<sup>575</sup>, published by Eurostat ([ilc\_di01], last update: 31/01/2020).

For those participants who are unemployed and looking for work as a result of their intervention, it is assumed that, on average, they will find employment at the employment rate of those with qualifications at ISCED level 0-2 ([lfsq\_ergaed], last update: 13/02/20]).

**Gaining a qualification:** The individual benefit from gaining a qualification is two-fold: the qualification can improve an individual's chances of finding employment and increase their earnings once they are in work, relative to what would have been the case if they had not obtained the qualification.

Information on the type or level of qualification that individuals have obtained or are studying for is not available. Due to the nature of the interventions funded, the potential labour market benefits accrued from a qualification gained through TO9 could be proxied by evidence on the earnings and employment returns to basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Even low levels of basic literacy and numeracy skills can attract a wage premium. In Britain for example, De Coulon et al (2010)<sup>576</sup> have suggested that a one standard deviation improvement in literacy skills can boost earnings by 14% and better numeracy skills by 11%. They also find positive employment effects associated with improvements in basic literacy and numeracy.

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<sup>574</sup> It is also relevant to those who are in employment 6 months after the intervention, but this group is not included in the CBA due to issues with double counting.

<sup>575</sup> The European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) aims at collecting timely and comparable cross-sectional and longitudinal multidimensional microdata on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions. More information on EU-SILC based data can be found here: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-statistics-on-income-and-living-conditions>

<sup>576</sup> Vignoles, A., A. De Coulon, and O. Marcenaro-Gutierrez. "The value of basic skills in the British labour market." *Oxford Economic Papers* 63:1 (2010): 27–48.

Using OECD data, Hanushek et al (2015)<sup>577</sup> find that on average across OECD countries, a one standard deviation increase in numeracy scores is associated with an 18% increase in earnings. However, this return can vary significantly between countries.

The results from De Coulon et al (2010) have been used to proxy the labour market benefits of TO9 interventions in this CBA, as many interventions are focussed on providing participants with the basic skills required for them to participate in the labour market. Their results have been averaged across basic literacy and numeracy to give an earnings return of 12.5% and an average increase in the probability of employment of 2.75 percentage points.

Given that many TO9 interventions are designed to improve access to the labour market, it is assumed that the interventions will equip people to access employment opportunities at the same rate as those with ISCED level 0-2 qualifications and earn an income equivalent to the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of the income distribution in each country. Therefore, the counterfactual assumes that participants would have an employment rate of 2.75 percentage points less than the ISCED level 0-2 rate and earn 89% of the 25<sup>th</sup> income percentile.<sup>578</sup>

**Individuals undertaking a qualification:** the percentage of individuals who complete the qualification they are undertaking as a result of engagement in a TO9 scheme is not known. Therefore, completion rates have been proxied with ISCED 3-4 graduation rates, taken from the OECD's Education at a Glance publication. The average graduation rate across EU countries covered by the OECD is used to proxy the graduation rate of EU Member States who are not also OECD members.

**Public finance benefits:** Increasing the number of people in employment is likely to lead to lower benefit spending and increased tax revenues in each country.

The reduction in benefit spending is estimated by calculating the average benefit spend per unemployed person from a combination of Eurostat data on total unemployment spend ([spr\_exp\_sum]) and the unemployment level ([une\_rt\_a]) in each country and year of interest; and applying this figure to the number of people who have found employment as a result of this scheme.

It is assumed for simplicity that all participants would have claimed unemployment support had they not found work as a result of taking part in the TO9 scheme.

Increased tax revenues are calculated by applying estimates of income tax plus employee contributions (as a percentage of earnings) from the OECD's Taxing Wages 2019<sup>579</sup>, to the earnings benefits calculated as outlined above.

#### Unemployment benefit spending as a transfer payment

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<sup>577</sup> Hanushek, E. A., G. Schwerdt, S. Wiederhold, and L. Woessmann. "Returns to skills around the world: Evidence from PIAAC." *European Economic Review* 73 (2015): 103–130.

<sup>578</sup> 89% is the point at which a 12.5% uplift will mean that individuals will be receiving an income equivalent to the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, as given by the formula  $1/(1+0.125)=0.89$ .

<sup>579</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/tax/taxing-wages-20725124.htm>

Unemployment benefit is a transfer payment: a transfer of money from the Government to an individual, with no goods or services received in return. When an individual who is claiming unemployment support enters employment, they forfeit their unemployment benefit – this is a cost to the individual associated with moving into employment. At the same time, the Government benefits by an equal amount – it no longer pays unemployment support.

In a social cost-benefit analysis, these equal and opposing costs and benefits cancel out. The net social impact is zero, since unemployment benefits are simply a payment from one member of society to another. It is for this reason that savings in unemployment benefits are not usually presented in a social cost-benefit analysis. However, any savings can clearly benefit Governments financially and could be put to good use elsewhere.

### Costs

Information on the operating costs of the operations is available through SFC2014 and is captured in the analysis. Operating costs by MS are shown in Table 18. An uplift of 4% is applied to capture additional Technical Assistance funding to support project administration. This (operating cost plus Technical Assistance) is used to represent the total cost of funding IP 9i interventions in the CBA.

### Non-monetary benefits

There are many wider benefits to employment and education that cannot be easily valued but should nonetheless be recognised.

**Reduced crime:** Getting a job or a qualification is associated with a reduction in crime: for example, Machin et al (2011) find a causal crime reducing effect of education for the UK<sup>580</sup>.

**Health and community cohesion:** Better access to healthcare and other social services is likely to improve the mental and physical health of participants. UK evidence suggests that gaining a qualification is linked to improved mental and physical health; higher levels of social and interpersonal trust and community cohesion<sup>581</sup>.

**Reduced reliance on social services later in life:** Early intervention, say for those young people who are NEET, or for preventative health treatments, may reduce the need for more complex and costly interventions in the future.

**Reduced discrimination and marginalisation:** Improved integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma, improved equality of opportunity and awareness of equality issues as a result of the interventions.

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<sup>580</sup> Stephen Machin, Olivier Marie, Sunčica Vujić, The Crime Reducing Effect of Education, *The Economic Journal*, Volume 121, Issue 552, May 2011, Pages 463–484, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0297.2011.02430.x>

<sup>581</sup> What are the wider benefits of learning across the life course? Future of Skills and Lifelong Learning, Foresight, Government Office for Science: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/635837/Skills\\_and\\_lifelong\\_learning\\_-\\_the\\_benefits\\_of\\_adult\\_learning\\_-\\_schuller\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/635837/Skills_and_lifelong_learning_-_the_benefits_of_adult_learning_-_schuller_-_final.pdf)

**Wider economic impact:** Those who gain employment as a result of their participation in ESF schemes are likely to spend most of the additional income they receive, which could create a multiplier effect.

**Improvements in firm productivity:** Employers benefit from being able to fill vacancies and access to a more highly skilled workforce.

Other costs

There may be other costs that are difficult to monetise, such as travel costs and lost earnings if those studying for a qualification are unable to take up work as a result. However, if they exist, they are expected to be small. Participants of TO9 are likely to take part in interventions locally, minimising travel costs. It is also unlikely that people undertaking a qualification through TO9 schemes will have taken up employment during the period of study, as the training is likely to be aimed at those who are furthest from the labour market.

It is important to try and assign a monetary value to as many relevant costs and benefits as possible, as this will mean that the final calculations will better represent the overall value of the intervention to society.

However, it is rarely possible to quantify every cost and benefit associated with an intervention. Some costs and benefits will be larger and more central to the intervention than others and being unable to account for everything does not necessarily detract from the usefulness of a CBA. It is important that the CBA results are considered in the context of this wider evidence. For example, if the results were to show that the interventions result in an overall cost to society, it will become more important to consider whether this result would be different if it were possible to monetise and include any missing elements.

Calculation of net present value and benefit cost ratios

Once the costs and benefits have been estimated, they will be used to calculate the net cost or net benefit and benefit-cost ratio (BCR) of the schemes for IP 9i, by MS and the EU as a whole, to provide an assessment of TO9 value for money.

Due to the lack of information available on individuals’ employment type or qualifications obtained, it is difficult to say with certainty how long a sensible timeline for estimating the benefits of the interventions might be. Therefore, benefits, net benefits and cost-benefit ratios will be calculated at 1 and 2 years after the intervention.

**Results of CBA at EU-level**

**Error! Reference source not found.** shows the results of the cost-benefit analysis by IP.

*Table 87. Results of the cost-benefit analysis by IP, EU level*

	Total eligible costs plus technical assistance funding (at 4% Euro)	Total benefits after 1 year (million Euro)	Total benefits after 2 years (million Euro)	NPV benefits last 1 year (million Euro)	NPV benefits last 2 years (million Euro)	BCR if benefits last 1 year	BCR if benefits last 2 years
<b>IP9i</b>	5,111	9,692	19,385	4,582	14,274	1.9	3.8

Across the Member States, IP 9i generates a benefit-ratio of 1.9, meaning that for every EUR 1 spent, EUR 1.90 is generated in benefits. However, the benefit-cost ratio can vary significantly across countries. Denmark, Sweden and Slovakia are not included, having been removed as part of the data cleaning process. Romania does not have any recorded activity under IP 9i. The Czech Republic and Croatia have also been excluded, as they have a very low number of results recorded across CRIs 1-4.

France and Ireland have unusually high benefit-cost ratios. In the case of France, the result appears to be driven by one IP (2014FR05SFOP001) with a very high number of recorded results across CRIs 1-4. This could reflect the fact that some participants are recorded as experiencing more than one result. France also has a relatively high 25<sup>th</sup> percentile income level at EUR 16,581, compared to the EU28 average figure of EUR 12,231. In the case of Ireland, the result is driven by its relatively high income at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, compared to other EU 28 countries. In 2018, the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile income in Ireland was EUR 17,650. This generates a relatively high benefit per result value of EUR 21,421 over two years.

Slovenia has a very low benefit-cost ratio. This is because it has a relatively low number of results recorded under CRIs 1-4 compared to other Member States and because the income level at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile in Slovenia is low compared to other countries at EUR 9,991.

Most Member States have benefit-cost ratios under 1, meaning that the costs outweigh the benefits at Member State level for these interventions. However, these results must be considered in context.

Income levels can vary significantly across countries and the assumption that participants earn an income at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile may not be appropriate for all.

Benefits may also take more than the two-years considered here to be fully realised. It is reasonable to suggest that once individuals find employment as a result of the intervention, they could remain in employment for many years and the positive impact of any intervention could persist into the future. The final column in Table 2 shows the number of years that the benefits are required to persist for, before they equal the costs. Most countries reach this so called 'break-even point' within 5 years, except for Latvia and Slovenia, who reach this at around year 6 and 8, respectively.

The interventions may also generate important, non-monetary benefits that are (by definition) difficult to capture as part of a cost-benefit analysis. Some of these are highlighted in the detailed case studies and include improved confidence, ability to access wider services, improved social and cultural integration of participants and in some cases, valuable experience gained by practitioners involved in running the projects.

Table 88. Costs, benefits, net present value and benefit cost ratio estimates by Member State for IP 9i

<b>MS</b>	<b>Cost plus uplift for technical assistance funding (at 4%) (Euro)</b>	<b>Total benefits after 1 year (Euro)</b>	<b>Total benefits after 2 years (Euro)</b>	<b>NPV if benefits last 1 year (Euro)</b>	<b>NPV if benefits last 2 years (Euro)</b>	<b>BCR if benefits last 1 year</b>	<b>BCR if benefits last 2 years</b>	<b>Years required for benefits to equal the costs</b>
<b>AT</b>	72,513,138	164,304,754	328,609,507	91,791,615	256,096,369	2.3	4.5	0.4
<b>BE</b>	200,267,743	457,314,745	914,629,490	257,047,002	714,361,747	2.3	4.6	0.4
<b>BG</b>	5,565,895	2,064,387	4,128,773	-3,501,509	-1,437,122	0.4	0.7	2.7
<b>CY</b>	2,410,096	788,045	1,576,090	-1,622,051	-834,006	0.3	0.7	3.1
<b>DE</b>	1,431,654,912	1,600,913,79	3,201,827,580	169,258,878	1,770,172,668	1.1	2.2	0.9
<b>EE</b>	16,171,174	4,843,193	9,686,386	-11,327,981	-6,484,787	0.3	0.6	3.3
<b>ES</b>	304,950,366	945,522,620	1,891,045,240	640,572,254	1,586,094,874	3.1	6.2	0.3
<b>FI</b>	81,063,696	38,292,248	76,584,497	-42,771,448	-4,479,199	0.5	0.9	2.1
<b>FR</b>	878,428,818	4,127,179,676	8,254,359,352	3,248,750,858	7,375,930,534	4.7	9.4	0.2
<b>GR</b>	228,981,122	55,033,941	110,067,883	-173,947,181	-118,913,240	0.2	0.5	4.2
<b>HU</b>	48,097,119 €	12,388,204	24,776,409	-35,708,914	-23,320,710	0.3	0.5	3.9
<b>IE</b>	15,085,293 €	84,505,577	169,011,155	69,420,285	153,925,862	5.6	11.2	0.2
<b>IT</b>	172,776,622 €	81,030,766	162,061,533	-91,745,856	-10,715,089	0.5	0.9	2.1
<b>LT</b>	6,567,327 €	1,156,872	2,313,745	-5,410,455	-4,253,583	0.2	0.4	5.7
<b>LU</b>	2,830,950 €	2,352,741	4,705,482	-478,209	1,874,532	0.8	1.7	1.2
<b>LV</b>	38,912,909 €	15,457,396	30,914,792	-23,455,514	-7,998,118	0.4	0.8	2.5
<b>MT</b>	656,794 €	1,366,417	2,732,834	709,623	2,076,040	2.1	4.2	0.5
<b>NL</b>	370,437,221 €	1,393,194,023	2,786,388,046	1,022,756,802	2,415,950,825	3.8	7.5	0.3
<b>PL</b>	188,845,966 €	114,039,675	228,079,350	-74,806,291	39,233,384	0.6	1.2	1.7
<b>PT</b>	323,608,459 €	121,815,701	243,631,401	-201,792,758	-79,977,058	0.4	0.8	2.7
<b>SI</b>	15,276,048 €	1,970,861	3,941,723	-13,305,186	-11,334,325	0.1	0.3	7.8
<b>UK</b>	601,502,943 €	466,474,011	932,948,021	-135,028,933	331,445,078	0.8	1.6	1.3

## **Conclusion on CBA at EU-level**

A partial cost-benefit analysis has been attempted, using several data sources and a number of underlying assumptions to proxy the labour market outcomes of individuals taking part in TO9 operations. This approach was necessary as information on several elements that are ideally required to undertake a robust CBA for the TO9 operations at EU level is unavailable. These include detailed participant level information on outputs and outcomes<sup>582</sup>, such as qualifications obtained by participants, employment details, social security benefits received, type of services accessed, other information on individual characteristics, outputs of social enterprises, etc. Furthermore, no information is available that assesses the extent to which any outcomes are additional, i.e. would not have occurred in the absence of the intervention.

This high-level analysis indicates that for many Member States, the costs of TO9 interventions outweigh the benefits within the two-year time horizon considered here. However, the results also indicated that value for money could be achieved within a sensible timeframe – within 5 years for most Member States.

The results should be interpreted with caution, as there are several limitations to this particular cost-benefit analysis approach: partly due to the need to make some strong assumptions owing to lack of evidence to inform them; and partly due to the fact that TO9 interventions are always expected to benefit participants in many ways which are difficult to monetise and therefore difficult to include in a cost-benefit analysis framework. These results must be viewed in that context and as part of an assessment that includes a range of evidence on the outcomes they generate, before final conclusions on their effectiveness and value to society are drawn.

## **Detailed CBA for 5 case studies**

The final stage was to undertake a detailed CBA for 5 projects within 5 OPs. It was originally suggested that priority would be given to OPs for which ex-ante CBA had been undertaken; so that actual costs and benefits could be compared to those anticipated prior to any intervention. As no ex-ante CBAs were identified, we proceeded to choose 5 projects among the 50 identified by country experts. The projects chosen are in the Netherlands, Austria, Italy, Spain and Latvia.

This project-level CBA follows the methodology set out above for EU level analysis but also includes any information provided by Managing Authorities to enhance the robustness or relevance where possible. A description of the project CBA approach follows for each country.

### **Netherlands: Youth unemployment free zone Midden Brabant outreach**

#### Project outline

The Youth unemployment-free zone in Midden Brabant was introduced in 2014 by Tilburg local authority to deal with the high levels of youth inactivity in the region. In 2017, outreach programmes were developed, with the help of TO9 funding, in order to more effectively reach inactive young people who public authorities were not aware of

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<sup>582</sup> Some of this information would be available for the detailed CBA for the 5 OPs.

and were at risk of exclusion. These were developed by Midden Brabant's Youth Point and involved setting up a PR agency and increasing the use of existing social media channels. In total, EUR 486,887 was allocated to the project, of which EUR 190,000 (38%) came through ESF funding, while the rest of the funding came from Tilburg local authority.

According to an interim evaluation by Panteia (2019), 1,241 young people had contacted the programme after 2015. This included 337 and 714 young people making contact after the introduction of the outreach programmes in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Out of these 1,051 individuals it is understood 33% contacted the programme through their own initiative, possibly after engagement with the PR and social media campaigns. Figures from Youth Point show that of all those who completed their support track, 46% moved into employment, 10% moved into further education, 12% moved onto social assistance benefits and 2% received mental health support.

#### Cost benefit analysis

Since 33% joined the programme at their own initiative, it can be assumed that at a maximum, out of the 1,051 participants who joined after the outreach programme was implemented, 347 joined the programme through engagement with it. The true figure cannot be recovered because the extent to which individuals had joined through engagement with the PR and social media campaigns or completely of their own accord is not known.

*Table 89. Benefit cost ratios and net benefits under different counterfactual scenarios*

<b>Counterfactual assumption</b>	<b>Benefit ratio</b>	<b>cost</b>	<b>Net benefits</b>
<b>None are in employment</b>	14.0		EUR 6.3m
<b>50% are in employment</b>	7.0		EUR 2.9m
<b>70% are in employment (average for 20-24 year olds)</b>	4.2		EUR 1.5m
<b>93% are in employment</b>	1.0		EUR 0.0m

The benefit cost ratios and net benefits under different counterfactual scenarios and using a two-year time horizon are shown in Table 13. The method to calculate these benefits is driven by two main assumptions. Firstly, of the 347 participants in scope, 46% are known to have moved into employment. To estimate their associated benefits, it is assumed they earn the minimum wage salary at age 21 in the Netherlands of EUR 19,483<sup>583</sup>. While many participants would be earning more than the minimum wage, some would also be working less than full-time, therefore it may provide a good reflection of the average annual earnings of the participants. Secondly, for the 10% of participants who moved into further education, it is assumed they accrue benefits only in year 2 and earn the minimum wage salary, subject to the employment rate for 20 to 24-year olds of 70%. Under these main assumptions and assuming that in the counterfactual scenario none of the participants would have found employment, the

<sup>583</sup> Government of the Netherlands.

benefit cost ratio is 14, while the net benefits are EUR 6.625m from an initial cost of EUR 486,887.

However, some of the participants would have ended up in employment or education even had they not taken part in the programme. It is difficult to say exactly how many of the participants would have remained inactive, but if half of the participants would have become employed or moved into education had they not taken part in the programme, the benefit cost ratio falls to 7. If it is assumed that the participants would have been employed at the average employment rate for their age group of 70% the benefit cost ratio falls further to 4.2. For there to be a benefit cost ratio of 1 93% of individuals would need to have been active had they not taken part in the programme, which is unlikely considering the nature of the target group.

The estimated benefit cost ratios are quite high, suggesting the project generates a healthy return. However, it should be noted that the estimation likely represents a maximum, since it has been assumed that all of the 33% of participants who join on their own accord do so because of interaction with the PR or social media campaign, which may not be accurate.

Apart from the measurable outcomes from employment and education, the outreach programme also produced softer outcomes, which should also be considered. Firstly, the project developed links between young people and public services such as healthcare or social assistance benefits, which may support a young person's transition into the labour market in the future. Secondly, the authorities learned about why young people disconnect with the system in the first place, which could aid the development of future projects aimed at the target group. It is understood that the project would have been funded by the Tilburg local authority in the absence of the TO9 funding. Therefore, it could be argued that the project generates no *additional* benefits compared to what have happened anyway. However, it is likely that the TO9 funding did enhance the quality of the offer compared to what the local authority would have been able to provide without the additional funding.

## **Italy: Peer support techniques in social inclusion and employment**

### Project outline

The project had multiple aims, to: i) support people who have experienced or are experiencing mental distress through peer support techniques and, ii) train participants in peer support techniques, iii) promote a cultural shift in the approaches to treat mental illnesses and the relationship between patients and mental services.

The total funds for the project were EUR 38,835, with half of the funding from TO9.

14 participants took part in the programme. In the 2015 pilot project, all participants completed the programme, with 7 working as a peer supporter in a social cooperative, once they finished the programme. It is assumed that the current programme will enjoy a similar success rate to the pilot.

### Cost benefit analysis

The following elements are key to establishing the value for money of this intervention:

**Outcomes:** how many individuals are likely to access employment opportunities as a result of taking part in the intervention.

**Counterfactual:** How many of the individuals would have gained employment anyway, if they had not taken part in the intervention.

Although the focus is on participants gaining employment in peer support roles, they could also find employment in the wider labour market, which is the overarching aim of the programme.

If 7 people go on to undertake employment as a peer support worker at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile level of income in Italy (EUR 11,121 annually in 2018<sup>584</sup>) and remain in employment, the total benefits would be EUR 77,847 in the first year. This translates into a benefit cost ratio of 2 after one year and 4 after two years. This assumes that the individuals would not have found employment in the absence of the intervention.

To achieve a benefit-cost ratio of 1, this would require 4 people to find sustained employment for at least one year and be paid at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of the income distribution in Italy.

Of course, this assessment only takes into account the earnings benefits and the intervention is likely to deliver a range of other, more qualitative benefits, such as: improved confidence, improved ability to manage emotions and stress levels and a greater level of social interaction social networking amongst participants. Furthermore, this analysis does not consider the impact that the peer support workers have on others recovering from mental health issues. In that sense, it is likely that there may be second and third round impacts that are unable to be included here.

How many individuals would have gained employment anyway, if they had not taken part in the intervention? The peer support role is not formally recognised in Italy and this is the only training of its kind available. Therefore, it is very unlikely that the individuals would have become peer support workers in the absence of the intervention. Whilst some individuals may have found support from elsewhere and participated in the wider labour market in the absence of this intervention, this too is thought to be unlikely, given the nature of the mental illnesses suffered by the participants.

## **Austria: StartVienna – The Youth College (SartWien -Das Jugendcollege)**

### Project outline

The goal of this project was to provide young people (aged 16-21) from a refugee background and not subject to compulsory education, support and training to re-enter education or the labour market. The project also provided German lessons to the participants. In total, EUR 17.3m was allocated for the project, with half from TO9 funding.

### Project outcomes

A total of 2,407 people took part in the programme, with 719 dropping out before completion. The vast majority of participants achieved the following outcomes:

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<sup>584</sup> EU-SILC: Distribution of income by quantiles - EU-SILC and ECHP surveys (ilc\_di01).

undertake further training, move into employment, move into secondary education, start an apprenticeship or begin tertiary education. The improvement in the participant's German was also an important outcome of the project, which would allow them to integrate more easily with Austrian society and improve access to public services.

Table 14 shows the number and types of outcomes that the 1,688 young people who had completed the programme experienced.

*Table 90. Participant outcomes*

<b>Participant outcomes as listed in case study</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
<b>Continue education/training</b>	690
<b>Receive degree from the Youth College</b>	628
<b>Move into employment</b>	153
<b>Move into secondary education</b>	122
<b>Start apprenticeships</b>	61
<b>Enter tertiary education</b>	32
<b>Enter alternative to employment</b>	2
<b>Total</b>	1688

Two individuals are categorised in Table 14 as having entered an alternative to employment as a result of the programme. Since no further information is available on what this particular outcome entails, they have been excluded from the cost-benefit analysis that follows.

#### Cost-benefit analysis

The benefits have been appraised over a two-year time period. The benefits, net benefits and benefit-cost ratios are shown in Table 15.

*Table 91. Benefits, net benefits and benefit cost ratio*

	<b>Year 1 benefits</b>	<b>Year 2 benefits</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>People who continue education</b>	EUR 0	EUR 8.4m	EUR 8.4m
<b>Receive degree from the Youth College</b>	EUR 1.9m	EUR 5.3m	EUR 7.1m
<b>People in employment</b>	EUR 3.0m	EUR 3.0m	EUR 6.0m

<b>Move into secondary education</b>	EUR 0	EUR 1.5m	EUR 1.5m
<b>Start apprenticeships</b>	EUR 0.6m	EUR 0.6m	EUR 1.2m
<b>Enter tertiary education</b>	EUR 0	EUR 0.4m	EUR 0.4m
<b>Total</b>			EUR 24.7m
<b>Net benefit</b>	EUR 7.5m		
<b>Benefit cost ratio over 2 years</b>	1.4		

The outcomes for those who receive a degree from the Youth College are dependent on their asylum status. According to the evaluation conducted by L&R Sozialforschung (from May 2019)<sup>585</sup>; two-thirds of the interviewed young people had a positive asylum status. Of those, 23% went into employment and 41% entered further education or training. Of those not granted asylum, 51% went into further training.

In this analysis, it is assumed that two-thirds of those receiving a degree from the Youth College have a positive asylum status and experienced the same outcomes as those interviewed in the evaluation. Also, the results assume that those in further training find employment at the same rate as those aged 15-24 with secondary education; and earn the median salary for a non-EU worker in Austria. The analysis also assumes that those in further training without a positive asylum status gain this and join the labour market at the end of their period in training.

These results are driven by several other assumptions, including:

- Participants would not have found employment in the absence of the programme.
- When participants move into employment, they earn the median salary for a non-EU worker in Austria<sup>586</sup>.
- Those who continue their education join the labour market in year 2, after 1 year of study and find employment at the same rate as those aged 15-24 with secondary or tertiary education, depending on the level studied<sup>587</sup>.
- Those who undertake an apprenticeship are assumed to earn a wage of EUR 10,000 per year whilst training over the two years in scope for this analysis.

#### Interpretation of results

<sup>585</sup> Zusammenfassung: Evaluierung „Start Wien – das Jugendcollege“ Nadja Bergmann, Lisa Danzer, Ferdinand Lechner & Omar Yagoub,

<sup>586</sup> EU-SILC: Mean and median income by broad group of citizenship (population aged 18 and over) (ilc\_di15)

<sup>587</sup> EU-LFS: Employment rates by sex, age and educational attainment level (%) (lfsq\_ergaed)

The benefit-cost ratio is 1.4, meaning that EUR 1 spent generates EUR 1.4 of benefits. One key assumption is that individuals would not have found employment in the absence of the intervention. In Austria, the employment rate for non-EU citizens aged 15-24 is 40%. If participants would have found employment at this rate in the absence of the intervention (in other words, that 40% would have been employed anyway), this reduces the benefit-cost ratio to 0.9. However, it is also likely that the intervention will help participants sustain employment at a higher rate over many years, rather than the 2 years illustrated here. Indeed, extending this to 3 years yields a benefit-cost ratio of 2. Therefore, it is likely that the intervention will offer good value for money.

In addition, there may be other, non-monetary benefits that are important to consider. For example, although it is difficult to measure, the external evaluation also found that participants had made important progress in their social and cultural integration, as a result of taking part in the programme<sup>588</sup>.

### **Spain: Gypsy Secretariat Foundation (Fundación Secretariado Gitano)**

#### Project outline

The Acceder project aims to provide employment pathways and encouragement for the Roma community to integrate more into the labour market and society, by providing tailored employment and job training services. The Roma population already have relatively high activity rates compared with the Spanish average but are at higher risk of poverty, often due to being in unstable and low paid employment. The project had a particular focus on Roma women, who have lower activity rates than Roma men and often face pressures from within the Roma community to remain economically inactive.

The project originally started in Madrid and was scaled up to a national level through ESF funding in 2000. In the most recent ESF programming period, the project was funded by two OPs: POISES OP and Youth Employment. This case study only concerns the outcomes from funding through the POISES OP. In total, for the programmes associated with the POISES OP, there was funding of EUR 24.4m, of which EUR 18m (75%) came through T09.

#### Project outcomes

The number of participants and the number who gain a qualification are shown in Table 16, along with the numbers that can be apportioned to the EU based on the share of T09 funding. These outcomes are not mutually exclusive, meaning an individual who gains a qualification and moves into employment may be counted twice.

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<sup>588</sup> L&R (2019). Zusammenfassung: Evaluierung „Start Wien – das Jugendcollege“

Table 92. Participant outcomes

Participant outcomes	Female	Male	Total
<b>All Participants</b>			
Total	11,808	8,435	20,243
Gain qualification	2,859	2,213	5,072
Move into employment	2,340	1,948	4,288

#### Cost benefit analysis

The activity rate among Roma men is generally high, so it is not necessarily the case that the Acceder project would have had a significant impact on encouraging entry into the labour market, but rather allow the participants to increase their skills and possibly enter more stable employment. For Roma women the activity and employment rates are known to be lower, so the project may have had some effect on labour market engagement. However, there is little evidence on the actual employment rate for Roma females so for this analysis it is assumed, as with Roma men, the project provides them with more stable employment and improved skills. If participants gain a qualification, but are not in employment, it is assumed, like those who move into employment, they will move into more highly skilled and stable work than they would have done had they not taken part in the programme.

For both men and women, it is assumed that in the counterfactual scenario, participants who ended up in employment would have earned the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile annual salary<sup>589</sup>, while after the project they move into employment earning the median salary, reflecting the fact they are more likely to be working in more stable and more highly skilled employment.

As it is not possible to identify exactly how many individuals experience more than one outcome, two possible scenarios are considered to provide a range within which the true estimate may lie. The first assumes that the two groups are mutually exclusive, or in other words, that participants can only experience one outcome: that no individuals who move into employment also gained a qualification and vice-versa. The second assumes that all those who move into employment also gain a qualification, resulting in a much smaller number of people having only gained a qualification.

For the outcomes presented in Table 16, the benefit cost ratios under the two scenarios are 2.5 in the mutually exclusive scenario and 2.0 in the scenario that assumes maximum overlap across the two outcomes. Thus, indicating that the project could offer at least EUR 2 in benefits for every EUR 1 spent, under the assumptions considered here.

Furthermore, significant non-monetary outcomes have been highlighted as important for participants. Firstly, participants have improved their autonomy and are more willing to look for more permanent employment. Secondly, there has been an improvement in their self-esteem, soft skills for job interviews and proactivity. Finally, the project had an impact on gender roles, as more Roma women have entered the labour market.

<sup>589</sup> EU-SILC: Distribution of income by quantiles - EU-SILC and ECHP surveys

Unfortunately, these important softer outcomes cannot be feasibly measured, but should be considered when assessing the effectiveness of the project.

## **Latvia: Integration of persons with disabilities or mental disabilities in labour market and society**

### Project outline

The aim of this project was to provide tailored and comprehensive support for the integration of people with severe mental and physical disabilities into employment and society. In Latvia, these groups face a higher risk of unemployment, social exclusion and risk of poverty mainly due to poor educational attainment and an unfriendly labour market.

This project initially involved identifying the specific needs and potential labour market opportunities for the target group, which supported the development of 5 tailored continuing education exercises and 35 skills training exercises. Upon entering the programme, participants undergo an individual assessment lasting up to 10 days, where a team of professionals decide the most effective and appropriate training exercises. While taking part in the programme participants are provided accommodation and catering, along with other personal support services. The project has been running since July 2015 and will continue to mid-2020 with additional financing. Up to December 2019 EUR 1.25m had been allocated, 85% of which came from ESF TO9 funding.

### Project outcomes

Up to December 2019, 100 people had successfully completed the programme, of whom 57 were either in employment or seeking employment after 6 months. Meanwhile, there were also many less quantifiable outcomes reported by those who took part and helped to run the programme. Many participants felt more confident and more motivated to work. While the staff reported that they learned a lot about the peculiarities of working with the types of individuals in the target group and were able to build networks with employers, which can be used to help integrate more people from the target group into the labour force in the future.

### Cost benefit analysis

Using the average annual Latvian unemployment rate for 2018 of 6.4%<sup>590</sup>, it is assumed that of the 57 participants in scope, 53 are in paid employment, while the remainder are unemployed.

Over a two-year time horizon and assuming that those who are employed earn at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile<sup>591</sup>, it is estimated that the project has a benefit-cost-ratio of 0.4, while the net cost of the project is EUR 762,000. In fact, even if all 100 of the participants went into paid employment at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile salary, the benefit cost ratio would rise to only 0.7. Here the counterfactual assumes none of the participants would have ended up in employment had they not taken part in the programme. This is not unlikely, given the challenging disabilities of those in the target group. However, if it is instead

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<sup>590</sup> EU-LFS: Unemployment by sex and age - annual average (une\_rt\_a)

<sup>591</sup> Taken from EU-SILC and chosen to reflect the reduced labour market experience and lower education levels of the participants.

assumed that 50% of the participants would have ended up in employment in the absence of the intervention, the benefit cost ratio would halve from 0.4 to 0.2.

In order to achieve a benefit cost ratio of 1, participants (earning the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile salary) would have to be in employment for five years as a result of participating in the intervention. This is perhaps not unreasonable, considering how unlikely these individuals were to enter the labour market prior to the programme, although it may also be the case that some eventually drop out of the labour market due to their disability.

The low benefit cost ratio and estimated losses are perhaps unsurprising, given the scale of the inputs and number of participants involved. Although, it is important to highlight the non-monetary benefits, such as the improvement in the professional team's capability in dealing with and understanding the target group's needs. This may provide longer term benefits to the project that are not reflected in the estimated benefits and benefit cost ratio.

## Data Annex

Table 93. Eurostat data (prc\_ppp\_ind and ert\_bil\_eur\_a extracted the 10/01/2020)

Member State	PPP (prc_ppp_ind)	Exchange rate (ert_bil_eur_a)
<b>AT</b>	1.11	1
<b>BE</b>	1.11	1
<b>BG</b>	0.99	2
<b>CY</b>	0.88	1
<b>CZ</b>	17.88	26
<b>DE</b>	1.07	1
<b>DK</b>	9.77	7
<b>EE</b>	0.78	1
<b>ES</b>	0.92	1
<b>FI</b>	1.24	1
<b>FR</b>	1.09	1
<b>GR</b>	0.82	1
<b>HR</b>	4.80	7
<b>HU</b>	199.30	321
<b>IE</b>	1.14	1
<b>IT</b>	0.98	1
<b>LT</b>	0.65	1
<b>LU</b>	1.22	1

<b>Member State</b>	<b>PPP (prc_ppp_ind)</b>	<b>Exchange (ert_bil_eur_a)</b>	<b>rate</b>
<b>LV</b>	0.71	1	
<b>MT</b>	0.84	1	
<b>NL</b>	1.13	1	
<b>PL</b>	2.53	4	
<b>PT</b>	0.83	1	
<b>RO</b>	2.41	5	
<b>SE</b>	12.73	10	
<b>SI</b>	0.82	1	
<b>SK</b>	0.73	1	
<b>UK</b>	0.99	1	
<b>EU-28</b>	1.00	1	

Table 94. Costs per Member State for IP 9i (EUR)

<b>MS</b>	<b>Total eligible costs</b>	<b>Eligible costs plus technical assistance (at 4%)</b>
<b>AT</b>	69,724,171	72,513,138
<b>BE</b>	192,565,138	200,267,743
<b>BG</b>	5,351,823	5,565,895
<b>CY</b>	2,317,400	2,410,096
<b>DE</b>	1,376,591,261	1,431,654,912
<b>EE</b>	15,549,206	16,171,174
<b>ES</b>	293,221,505	304,950,366
<b>FI</b>	77,945,862	81,063,696
<b>FR</b>	844,643,094	878,428,818
<b>GR</b>	220,174,156	228,981,122
<b>HU</b>	46,247,229	48,097,119
<b>IE</b>	14,505,089	15,085,293
<b>IT</b>	166,131,367	172,776,622
<b>LT</b>	6,314,738	6,567,327
<b>LU</b>	2,722,067	2,830,950
<b>LV</b>	37,416,259	38,912,909
<b>MT</b>	631,533	656,794
<b>NL</b>	356,189,636	370,437,221
<b>PL</b>	181,582,660	188,845,966
<b>PT</b>	311,161,980	323,608,459
<b>SI</b>	14,688,507	15,276,048
<b>UK</b>	578,368,215	601,502,943

Note: DK, SE and SK are excluded owing to data reliability issues. CZ and HR are excluded due to the very small number of results recorded under CRIs 1-4.

## ANNEX 6 - FIELDWORK

### Overview

This annex presents an overview of the fieldwork carried out in the Member States in support of the evaluation. Section 2 presents an overview of the interviews carried out or scheduled by 28 February 2020 in the Member States. Section 3 presents the methodology taken to identify projects for the in-depth analysis in the case studies. A detailed cost-benefit analysis has been carried out in a selection of five of these projects.<sup>592</sup> Section 4 provides an overview of the focus groups carried out while Section 5 presents the EU-level Delphi survey. The background document from the Delphi survey can be found in Annex 6.1.

### Interviews in Member States

The table below presents information about interviews carried out by the country experts. In total 141 interviews have been carried out.

Table 95. Interviews carried out or scheduled by 28 February 2020

	Organisation	Place	Date
AT	ESF Managing Authority Austria	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection (BMASGK)	27.08.2019
AT	VHS Wien StartWien - Das Jugendcollege	Das VHS Wien	29.10.2019
AT	Former participant of the StartWien - Das Jugendcollege	Telephone interview	08.11.2019
BE	Managing authority ESF Flanders	Brussels	10.09.2019
BE	Cabinet Mniister-President vervoort and cabinet Minister of Employment Clerfayt, Capital Region	Brussels	07.09.2019
BE	Managing Authority ESF	Brussels	10.09.2019
BG	Operational Programme Science and Education for Economic Growth	Sofia	05.11.2019 06.11.2019 08.11.2019
BG	Operational Programme Science and Education for Economic Growth, Burgas Municipality, Pre-school Zvezditsa-Zornitsa, Pre-	Burgas	08.11.2019

<sup>592</sup> As noted in Annex 4 the selection of projects for the in-depth cost-benefit analysis includes the following:

	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
	school Detelina, Temenuga	Pre-school	
BG	Operational Programme Human Resources Development	Sofia	02.12.2019
BG	Agency for Social Assistance	Sofia	03.02.2020
CY	Planning Officer for European Programmes, Coordination and Development	Email, Telephone	15.09.2019 (phone) 25.09.2019 (email)
CY	Ministry of Employment Welfare and Social Insurance, Employment Department	Social Email	13.09.2019
CY	Ministry of Employment welfare and Social Insurance, ESF Unit	Social Email	08.10.2019
CZ	Ministry of Labour Affairs, MA of OP Employment	Social Prague	09.09.2019
CZ	Ministry of Labour Affairs, MA of OP Employment	Social Prague	Several meetings: 09.10.2019 14.10.2019 21.10.2019 24.10.2019
CZ	Municipality of Prague, MA of OP Prague Growth Pole	Prague	17.10.2019
CZ	MA - OP Prague Pole of Growth	Prague	28.11.2019
CZ	Responsible for PA 3 Innovation - OP Prague Pole of Growth	Social Prague	28.11.2019
CZ	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MA – OP RDE)	Prague	04.02.2020
CZ	MA - OP RDE	Prague	04.02.2020
DE	Ministerium für Arbeit, Gesundheit und Soziales des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (Ministry for Labour, health and Social Affairs) ESF-Verwaltungsbehörde Referat II 1, ESF-Programmsteuerung,	für Telephone	14.10.2019

	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
	Controlling, Berichtswesen, IT Managing Authority		
DE	Ministerium für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, Familie, Frauen und Senioren Baden- Württemberg (Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Family, Women and older people of Baden-Württemberg), Referat 63 (Europa, Europäischer Sozialfonds), Managing Authority	Telephone	14.10.2019
DE	Referentin Verwaltungsbehörde für die ESI- Fonds – EU-VB EFRE/ESF; Ministerium der Finanzen Sachsen-Anhalt (Ministry of Finance)	EU- Telephone	10.10.2019
DK	Ministry, Danish Authority	Business Telephone	26.08.2019
EE	Ministry of Finance	Tallinn	21.01.2020 29.01.2020 14.02.2020
EL	Head of the Special Service for Coordination and Monitoring of ESF Actions, General Secretariat of National Strategic Reference Framework (ΕΣΠΑ), Ministry of Economy and Development	Email, Telephone	15.10.2019
EL	Head of Managing Authority, Region of Central Macedonia	Email, Telephone interview	24.10.2019
EL	Head of Managing Authority, Attica Region	Email, Telephone interview	01.12.2019
ES	State ESF MA (UAFSE)	Madrid	07.10.2019
ES	Catalonia IB (regional ESF MA)	Telephone	20.11.2019
ES	Madrid IB (regional ESF MA)	Telephone	12.09.2019
ES	Andalusia IB (regional ESF MA)	Telephone	02.10.2019
ES	Managing Authority, Ministry of Employment, Migrants and Social Security	Telephone	09.01.2020

	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
ES	General Subdirector of Telephone Programmes of FSG		09.01.2020
ES	Department of Equality, Social Policies and Work-life balance of the Regional Government of Andalusia	Telephone	15.01.2020
ES	City Council of Seville	Telephone	16.01.2020
ES	Province Government of Jaen	Telephone	17.01.2020
ES	Manresa Foundation	Telephone	23.01.2020
ES	Programs of Labour Insertion of Foundation San Martin de Porres	Telephone	23.01.2020
ES	General Directorate of the PES, Department of Economy, Employment and Treasury, Madrid Regional Government	Telephone	27.01.2020
FI	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	Telephone	19.09.2019
FI	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland (MEE) Regions and Growth Services Department	Telephone	18.12.2019
FR	Ministry of employment – DGEFP Responsible for evaluating and monitoring the performance of the ESF	Paris	10.09.2019
FR	Responsible of ESF Service – Guyana	Telephone	27.09.2019
FR	Responsible of ESF Service – Picardy	Telephone	12.11.2019
FR	Responsible of Enterprises, Employment and Economy Unit at the Direccte Hauts-de-France (Ministry of employment) Project manager ESF at the Direccte Hauts-de-France (Ministry of employment)	Lille	03.10.2019
FR	Evaluator of ESF TO9 in the National OP– Amnyos	Paris	8.11.2019

	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
HR	Ministry of Labour and Pension System Department for administering of operative programmes of EU - The sector for programming and monitoring operative programmes	Zagreb	07.10.2019
HR	Ministry of Labour and Pension System Department for administering of operative programmes of EU The head of the department for implementation of the projects in social inclusion	Zagreb	30.09.2019
HR	The Ministry for demography, family, youth and social welfare, Department for coordination international and EU affairs	Zagreb	09.10.2019
HR	The department for coordination international and EU affairs (2) The department for preparation and realisation EU Funds' programmes	Zagreb	09.10.2019
HR	<i>Interviewee(s) declined to share this information out of privacy concerns</i>	Telephone	10.10.2019
HR	Open University Zagreb	Zagreb	09.10.2019
HR	Matica umirovljenika Hrvatske (Association of Croatian Pensioners) <a href="http://www.muh.hr/kontakt">http://www.muh.hr/kontakt</a>	Zagreb	09.10.2019
HU	Ministry of Human Capacities	Budapest	04.09.2019
			04.09.2019
HU	Ministry of Finance	Budapest	04.02.2020
HU	Ministry of Interior	Budapest	05.11.2019
HU	KOPINT-TARKI Economic Research Institute Ltd	Budapest	08.11.2019
HU	Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta	Telephone	18.02.2020
HU	Directorate-General for Social Opportunities (TEF)	Telephone	18.02.2020

	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
HU	Participant - Local co-ordinator (NGO)	Telephone	20.02.2020
HU	Independent expert	Telephone	09.01.2020
IE	ESF Policy and Operations Unit, Department of Education and Skills	Dublin	11.10.2019
IT	Ministry of Labour and social inclusion	Telephone	09.09.2019
IT	Servizi di Contrasto alla Emarginazione Adulta, Bologna	Grave ASP	07.01.2020
IT	Servizi socio-educativi, Cooperativa Sociale Grande	Telephone Piazza	04.02.2020
IT	Project participants	Written responses	07.02.2020
IT	Friuli Venezia Giulia (Autonomous) Region	Telephone	17.09.2019
IT	ENAIIP Friuli Venezia Giulia	Telephone	13.01.2020
IT	Dipartimento di Salute Mentale, Azienda Sanitaria Universitaria Integrata di Trieste (ASUITs)	Telephone	21.01.2020
IT	Project participants	Telephone	31.01.2020
IT	European Commission	Brussels	20.09.2019
LT	Ministry of Finance	e-mail	30.10.2019
LT	Ministry of Social Security and Labour	e-mail, Telephone	18.10.2019 21.10.2019 30.10.2019 14.11.2019
LU	Secrétariat FSE	Luxemburg	27.08.2019
LV	The Ministry of Finance, the EU Funds Strategic Department	Telephone / Riga	02.09.2019 04.09.2019 16.09.2019
LV	State Social Integration Agency	Riga	23.12.2019 27.12.2019
MT	The Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division, Ministry for	Telephone	06.12.19

	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
	European Affairs and Equality (Managing Authority)		
MT	Richmond Foundation (Mental Health First Aid for Youth project)	Telephone	06.12.19
NL	Uitvoering van Beleid (Managing Authority)	Skype	18.09.2019
NL	Tilburg local authority (coordinating authority)	Skype	21.11.2019
NL	Coordinator of the Youth point (implementing organisation)	Skype	24.01.2020
PL	Head of Regional Center of Social Policy in Olsztyn/ Authorities of Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship	Telephone Managing Authorities	04.09.2019
PL	Head of Unit Department of the European Social Fund Ministry for Economic Development/ Authorities in charge of ESF and Managing Authorities Knowledge Education Growth (PO WER)	Warsaw	10.09.2019
PL	Head of Analysis Division, the Office of Wielkopolskie Voivodeship/ Managing Authorities Wielkopolskie Voivodeship	The department of ESF Implementation, the Marshal's Office of Wielkopolskie Voivodeship/ Managing Authorities Wielkopolskie Voivodeship	12.09.2019
PL	Head of Analysis Division, Department of the European Social Fund, the Marshal's Office of Śląskie Voivodeship/ Managing Authorities Śląskie Voivodeship	Telephone	24.09.2019
PL	CourtWatch Foundation	Telephone	20.01.2020
PL	Managing Authority PO WER	Telephone	02.02.2020
PL	Stabilo Foundation	Telephone	30.01.2020
PL	Starostwo Powiatowe Wąbrzeźnie	w Telephone	04.02.2020
PL	Voivodeship Commercial Inspection Bydgoszcz	Inspectorate of Inspection in Telephone	04.02.2020

	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
PL	Managing Authority – Silesia Voivodeship	Telephone	15.01.2020
PL	The Social Economy Support Centre Central-Western Subregion	Telephone	15.01.2020
PL	Social Cooperative of Honolulu	Telephone	04.02.2020
PL	Fundacja Leżę i Pracuję	Telephone	03.02.2020
PL	Representative of beneficiary / the Municipal Social Welfare Centre	Telephone	23.01.2020
PL	Managing Authority - Warmińsko-mazurskie Voivodeship	Telephone	15.01.2020
PL	Competence Centre Councelling and Training Group A. Gawrońska Sp. j. -Ryszard Gawroński	Telephone	16.01.2020
PL	Managing Authority – Wielkopolskie	Telephone	23.01.2020
PL	Healthcare and social services provided for the local community of 7 municipalities in wągrowiecki district, for dependant elderly persons	Telephone	02.02.2020
PL	Healthcare and social services provided for the local community of 7 municipalities in wągrowiecki district, for dependant elderly persons	Telephone	30.01.2020
PT	Member of the Executive Board of the MA for the National Operational Programme Social Inclusion and Employment 2014-2020 (POISE)	Lisbon	16.09.2019
PT	Executive Board of the MA for the Regional Operational Programme Central Region 2014-2020	Telephone	03.09.2019
PT	Director of the Program Support Unit - Institute of Social Security	Lisbon	04.02.2020
PT	Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security	Email	10.02.2020

	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>
PT	Cooperative António Sérgio for the Social Economy	Email	13.02.2020
RO	Ministry of European Funds	Bucharest	30.08.2019 23.09.2019
SE	Analyst, Swedish ESF-council	Gävle	05.09.2019
SE	Coordinator at Development & Control unit, Swedish board of Agriculture	Jönköping	25.10.2019
SE	Analysts, Swedish board of Agriculture	Jönköping	28.10.2019
SE	Partner organisation – Department for Public Procurement at a municipality	Telephone	15.01.2020
SE	State authority under the Ministry of Finance	Telephone	16.01.2020
SE	Managing Authority – regional coordinator	Telephone	20.01.2020
SE	Swedish Transport Administration	Telephone	22.01.2020
SI	Government Office for Development and Cohesion Policy	Ljubljana	25.10.2019 15.11.2019
SK	Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities	Bratislava	24.09.2019
SK	Implementation Agency of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic	Bratislava	26.09.2019
SK	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic	Bratislava	30.09.2019 09.10.2019
UK	Department for Work and Pensions	Video call	05.09.2019
UK	Scottish Government	Video call	24.09.2019

### **Selection of projects to be reflected in the OP-level case studies**

Table 96 presents an overview of the 20 selected OPs for the case studies. Across these 20 OPs, country experts identified a total of 62 projects in consultation with the Managing Authorities that could be considered for an in-depth analysis in the case

studies (Task 4). Table 97 presents the number of projects identified from the OPs. A case study was not prepared for one of the OPs where an interview could not be organised with the Managing Authority.<sup>593</sup>

The selection of OPs for the case studies and the projects was done on the basis of selection criteria agreed with the Commission at inception phase and followed by a process of consultations with the Commission, the Managing Authorities and the desk officers.

The first criteria for the selection of the OPs related to:

- **Mix of different socio-economic and policy context** – The selection of Member States has taken into account a reflection on the socio-economic context in relation to the challenges faced by the Member States and the policy context to ensure a wide range of contexts relevant for TO9.
- **Geographical spread of Member States** – The selection intended to provide a good geographical spread including Western and Eastern European countries, north European and Mediterranean countries.
- **Spread of regions representing different levels of development** – Beyond ensuring a balanced geographical spread, it was important that the selection of OPs included countries with a differing share of more developed and less developed regions, and regions in transition.
- **Mix of Member States with different level of funds allocated, implementation of ESF resources versus planned** – The decisions made in relation to the allocation of funds to TO9 and to specific OPs reflect, to some extent the commitment to fight social inclusion and the challenges faced by policy makers in the territory. The level of allocated funds was taken into account to ensure a that most relevant OPs in this respect were included.
- **Volume of participants vis-à-vis IPs** – In some Member States some IPs have been implemented at a higher rate than others, while across OPs the relevance of different IPs varied i.e. some IPs were considered as marginal with a limited number of projects and beneficiaries supported. Therefore, the selection of OPs was done in a proportional manner and took into account the level of operations supported under IPs with large allocation of funds and numbers of participations.

Following this first grid of assessment, the study team discussed with the Commission potential Member States and OPs, this selection was shared with the desk officers. Internal discussion within the Commission took place to ensure a good balance and avoid overlaps with the other two parallel evaluations (TO8 and TO10). For example, is an OP case study had been selected for another evaluation, this was then replaced with another OP.

The selection of projects took a similar approach. A set of initial criteria were identified with the Commission, these were: the funds allocated to each IPs under OPs, to ensure a good coverage all IPs across OPs and Member States; the type of operations to ensure full coverage (e.g. employment oriented, access to essential services); the target groups

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<sup>593</sup> This is the OP Sicily in Italy - 2014IT05SFOP014.

reached to ensure full coverage of the typology (see Annex 2 for more information on the typology of operations and target groups).

The identification of the projects with the Managing Authorities was guided by the following additional criteria (i.e. the projects presented by the Managing Authority had to include some of the following criteria, not necessarily simultaneously):

- **Rationale** – The rationale for funding the project in relation to the national/regional socio-economic context and needs identified in the mapping of the OPs and through the interviews with the Managing Authorities.
- **Nature, scale, aims and objectives** – The aims and objectives of projects had to be interlinked and aligned with the rationale for funding OPs and specific IPs.
- **Effective targeting and outreach strategies** – Projects had to showcase interventions that undertook specific measures to improve the way target groups were identified, selected and reached to ensure that those most in need and difficult to engage were effectively targeted and reached.
- **Delivery methods and partnerships** – Projects had to provide an overview of various interesting forms of delivery methods and innovative approaches to implement the projects.
- **Effectiveness** – The projects had to provide a mix of examples of particularly effective provision of measures.
- **Sustainability and transferability** – Projects funded under ESF should ultimately lead to a situation where effective measures are mainstreamed by national and/or local authorities through national funds and/or other funding methods. Therefore, this was a criterion the team looked at.
- **Monitoring, evaluation, data availability** – Projects selected had to include (as far as possible) measures that were monitored, assessed/evaluated with different methods.

The criteria above were presented to Managing Authorities who then selected and submitted a range of projects. The projects were sent to the desk officers who ultimately selected the most relevant projects.

Of the 62 projects, the Commission approved four projects for case studies (two for Bulgaria, one for Austria and one for the Netherlands). The research team then reviewed the remaining 58 projects in order to select projects to review in the case studies. During the selection process, the team tried to reflect a coverage of all IPs, types of operations and target groups for the available list of projects and the selected OPs, in order to ensure some level of representativeness of the diversity of TO9 operations. Not all target groups are covered by the 62 projects (e.g. none of these had 'single parents' as a target group). Based on the available information, there seems to be a concentration of projects for a particular type of operation (access to essential services). This is due to, for example, around one third (21) of the 62 projects having operations with a focus on access to essential services.

Table 98 presents the list of projects covered in the case studies. The subsequent tables provide an overview of the coverage of the selected projects to analyse as part of the case studies, across IPs, types of operations and target groups.

Table 96. Overview of 20 selected OPs

MS	CCI	Operational Programme	9.i	9.ii	9.iii	9.iv	9.v	9.vi
AT	2014AT05SFOP001	Employment	x					
BG	2014BG05M2OP001	Science and education for smart growth	x	x				
BG	2014BG05M9OP001	Human resources development				x	x	
CY	2014CY05M9OP001	Employment, human capital and social cohesion			x			
ES	2014ES05SFOP012	Social inclusion and social economy	x	x	x		x	
ES	2014ES05SFOP021	Madrid	x		x		x	
ES	2014ES05SFOP022	Andalucía	x					
HU	2014HU05M2OP001	Human resources development	x	x		x		
IT	2014IT05SFOP001	National OP Social Inclusion	x	x				
IT	2014IT05SFOP004	Friuli-Venezia Giulia	x					
IT	2014IT05SFOP014*	Sicily	x			x		
LV	2014LV16MAOP001	Growth and employment	x			x		
NL	2014NL05SFOP001	ESF	x					
PL	2014PL05M9OP001	Knowledge Education and Development	x				x	
PL	2014PL16M2OP012	Śląskie Voivodeship	x			x	x	
PL	2014PL16M2OP014	Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship	x			x		
PL	2014PL16M2OP015	Wielkolskie Voivodeship				x		
PT	2014PT05M9OP001	Social inclusion and employment	x			x		
PT	2014PT16M2OP002	Centro	x					x
SE	2014SE05M9OP001	Investments in growth and employment	x					

\*No case study was prepared for this OP as an interview could not be organised with the Managing Authority.

Table 97. Number of projects identified by country experts for the 19 OPs

MS	CCI	Operational Programme	9.i	9.ii	9.iii	9.iv	9.v	9.vi
AT	2014AT05SFOP001	Employment	2					
BG	2014BG05M2OP001	Science and education for smart growth	1	3				
BG	2014BG05M9OP001	Human resources development				2	1	
CY	2014CY05M9OP001	Employment, human capital and social cohesion			2			
ES	2014ES05SFOP012	Social inclusion and social economy	3	1	1		1	
ES	2014ES05SFOP021	Madrid	1		1		3	
ES	2014ES05SFOP022	Andalucía	3					
HU	2014HU05M2OP001	Human resources development	1	3		1		
IT	2014IT05SFOP001	National OP Social Inclusion	1	1				
IT	2014IT05SFOP004	Friuli-Venezia Giulia	3					
LV	2014LV16MAOP001	Growth and employment	1			1		
NL	2014NL05SFOP001	ESF	4					
PL	2014PL05M9OP001	Knowledge Education and Grow	1				2	
PL	2014PL16M2OP012	Śląskie Voivodeship	2			2	1	
PL	2014PL16M2OP014	Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship	2			2		
PL	2014PL16M2OP015	Wielkolskie Voivodeship				2		
PT	2014PT05M9OP001	Social inclusion and employment	1			1		
PT	2014PT16M2OP002	Centro	1					1

<b>MS</b>	<b>CCI</b>	<b>Operational Programme</b>	<b>9.i</b>	<b>9.ii</b>	<b>9.iii</b>	<b>9.iv</b>	<b>9.v</b>	<b>9.vi</b>
SE	2014SE05M9OP001	Investments in growth and employment	3					
<b>Total</b>			<b>30</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>

Table 98. Selection of 19 projects for the case studies

MS	CCI	Operational Programme	Project title
AT	2014AT05SFOP001	Employment	StartWien – The Youth College
BG	2014BG05M2OP001	Science and education for smart growth	Full support for pre-school education and training for disadvantaged children from Burgas Municipality
BG	2014BG05M9OP001	Human resources development	Foster me 2015
CY	2014CY05M9OP001	Employment, human capital and social cohesion	Actions for School and Social Inclusion
ES	2014ES05SFOP012	Social inclusion and social economy	Acceder
ES	2014ES05SFOP021	Madrid	AZSOLAR
ES	2014ES05SFOP022	Andalucía	Andalusian Regional Strategy for Cohesion and Social Inclusion Intervention in disadvantaged areas
HU	2014HU05M2OP001	Human resources development	EFOP-1.6.1-VEKOP/16 - Supporting social inclusion cooperation
IT	2014IT05SFOP001	National OP Social Inclusion	Call 4/2016 - AV4-2016-BO
IT	2014IT05SFOP004	Friuli-Venezia Giulia	Peer support techniques in social inclusion and employment
LV	2014LV16MAOP001	Growth and employment	Integration of persons with disabilities or mental disabilities in labour market and society
NL	2014NL05SFOP001	ESF	SITS Tilburg - Youth unemployment-free zone Midden-Brabant

<b>MS</b>	<b>CCI</b>	<b>Operational Programme</b>	<b>Project title</b>
PL	2014PL05M9OP001	Knowledge Development	Education The UN Convention on legal rights of disabled persons in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship
PL	2014PL16M2OP012	Śląskie Voivodeship	Social Economy Support Centre – central-western subregion
PL	2014PL16M2OP014	Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship	Consultation Point for Violence in Wydminy
PL	2014PL16M2OP015	Wielkolskie Voivodeship	Healthcare and social services provided for the local community of 7 municipalities in Wągrowiecki district, for dependant elderly persons
PT	2014PT05M9OP001	Social inclusion and employment	MAVI – Support Models for an Independent Life
PT	2014PT16M2OP002	Centro	SI2E - Incentive Scheme for Entrepreneurship and Employment
SE	2014SE05M9OP001	Investments in growth and employment	Employment through Procurement

*Selection of 19 projects for case studies - Overview of the IPs covered*

MS	CCI	Operational Programme	Project title	9.i	9.ii	9.iii	9.iv	9.v	9.vi
AT	2014AT05SFOP001	Employment	StartWien – The Youth College	x					
BG	2014BG05M2OP001	Science and education for smart growth	Full support for pre-school education and training for disadvantaged children from Burgas Municipality		x				
BG	2014BG05M9OP001	Human resources development	Foster me 2015					x	
CY	2014CY05M9OP001	Employment, human capital and social cohesion	Actions for School and Social Inclusion			x			
ES	2014ES05SFOP012	Social inclusion and social economy	Acceder		x				
ES	2014ES05SFOP021	Madrid	AZSOLAR					x	
ES	2014ES05SFOP022	Andalucía	Andalusian Regional Strategy for Cohesion and Social Inclusion Intervention in disadvantaged areas				x		
HU	2014HU05M2OP001	Human resources development	EFOP-1.6.1-VEKOP/16 - Supporting social inclusion cooperation		x				
IT	2014IT05SFOP001	National OP Social Inclusion	Call 4/2016 - AV4-2016-BO		x				
IT	2014IT05SFOP004	Friuli-Venezia Giulia	Peer support techniques in social inclusion and employment			x			
LV	2014LV16MAOP001	Growth and employment	Integration of persons with disabilities or mental disabilities in labour market and society					x	

MS	CCI	Operational Programme	Project title	9.i	9.ii	9.iii	9.iv	9.v	9.vi
NL	2014NL05SFOP001	ESF	SITS Tilburg - Youth unemployment-free zone Midden-Brabant	x					
PL	2014PL05M9OP001	Knowledge Education and Development	The UN Convention on legal rights of disabled persons in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship	x					
PL	2014PL16M2OP012	Śląskie Voivodeship	Social Economy Support Centre – central-western subregion					x	
PL	2014PL16M2OP014	Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship	Consultation Point for Violence in Wydminy					x	
PL	2014PL16M2OP015	Wielkolskie Voivodeship	Healthcare and social services provided for the local community of 7 municipalities in Wągrowiecki district, for dependant elderly persons						x
PT	2014PT05M9OP001	Social inclusion and employment	MAVI – Support Models for an Independent Life					x	
PT	2014PT16M2OP002	Centro	SI2E - Incentive Scheme for Entrepreneurship and Employment						x
SE	2014SE05M9OP001	Investments in growth and employment	Employment through Procurement	x					

*Table 99. Selection of 19 projects for case studies - Overview of the types of operations covered*

<b>• Type of operation</b>	<b>9.i</b>	<b>9.ii</b>	<b>9.iii</b>	<b>9.iv</b>	<b>9.v</b>	<b>9.vi</b>
Type 1: Actions with an employment objective	1	1				1
Type 2: Enhancing basic skills	2					
Type 3: Basic school education		1	1			
Type 4: Access to essential services	2	1		4		
Type 5: Social entrepreneurship					2	
Type 6: Measures influencing attitudes and systems	2	1				

*Table 100. Selection of 19 projects for case studies - Overview of the target groups covered*

<b>Target group</b>	<b>Number of projects</b>
Unemployed for 12 months or more	2
SMEs, micro companies (e.g. private and third sector organisations, NGOs, social enterprises)	1
Roma or other minorities	3
Recipients of minimum income schemes	3
Public administrations/public services (at national/regional/local) including workers in public services	2
People with a migrant or foreign background	2
People with a disability	4
People requiring long-term care	1
Other groups (e.g. ex-offenders, suffering from housing exclusion, substance abusers)	1

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**Focus groups**

A total of 10 focus groups were conducted to support the evaluation. An overview of these focus groups is presented in Table 101. Each focus group was facilitated by a national expert of the evaluation team. Participants to the study group included representatives from the Managing Authority and beneficiaries. An attempt was made to organise a focus group in Italy, but it could not be organised within the timeframe of the evaluation. An EU-level Delphi survey (see Section 5) was carried out instead.

*Table 101. National-level focus groups – locations and dates held*

MS	Location	Date
AT	Vienna	3 December 2019
BG	Sofia	30 January 2020 and 3 February 2020
CY	Nicosia	11 February 2020
S	Madrid	12 December 2019
HU	Budapest	25 February 2020
LV	Riga	26 February 2020
NL	The Hague	18 February 2020
PL	Warsaw	31 January 2020
PT	Lisbon	11 February 2020
SE	Stockholm	27 January 2020

The focus groups served to (1) validate the key findings of the evaluation in the country in relation to TO9 operations, what worked and what did not work, and (if necessary) to provide further evidence; (2) Investigate "what works" and "what does not work" (which relates to "Effectiveness") and (3) Identify good practices.

Each focus group lasted approximately two hours.

The findings of the evaluation pertaining to the specific countries were for the large part validated, although some new information and insights were gathered. This new information and insights are highlighted in three evaluation criteria (Effectiveness, Coherence and Relevance) in the sub-sections below. Section 0 also covers the second objective. Section 0 highlights the good practices identified.

**Effectiveness**

Several examples of "success factors" identified in the focus groups are highlighted below.

- High level of cooperation between national bodies (Latvia) – The set budget for each of the 35 labour market regions, dedicated account managers for these regions and intensive support provided by the Managing Authority was very successful. This, together with simplified cost options ensured that the ESF budget was used and helped create more enthusiasm at the regional level for ESF. It also helped create ESF expertise at the regional level, which in turn promoted the effective spending of ESF funding. Finally, cooperation between the Managing Authority and the regional labour market local authorities improved generally, which is considered an important gain from this programme period.

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- Holistic approach (Bulgaria) - The participants in the focus group agree that systematic operations are more effective in delivering results.
- Involvement of target group (Bulgaria) – The involvement of parents and teachers in operations promoted the effectiveness of school-based operations.
- High political support (Cyprus) - The project progressed well in large part due to the vertical coordination among the key players. The availability of funding and the high political support to support educational interventions for the target group also promoted the success of the intervention.
- Strong coordination (Sweden) – Success factors included building on existing networks (of already engaged officials) and the available national experience as well as learning from international expertise. Dividing the project delivery method of signed work packages and responsibilities divided by the partner organizations also found success.

The focus groups also identified examples of what did not work, which hindered the effectiveness of ESF support to social inclusion. Several examples are highlighted below.

- Identifying and engaging the target group - Challenges in identifying and engaging the target group was noted in several Member States. In one case, organisations were reluctant to provide information about the target group. The target group faced challenges to participate in the trainings due to different reasons.
- Lack of tools and financing for promotional activities – In Poland, the limited availability of funds and tools for promotional activities limited the dissemination of project results on the wider scale, and can limit the upscaling or mainstreaming of good practices.
- Stereotypes – Stereotypes toward the target group were noted in several Member States. In Bulgaria, it is common for teachers to hold prejudice towards the target group and lack skills in working with them. There are currently teacher trainings available for working in multicultural environment under ESF, but this is not yet enough. In Latvia, prejudice towards the target group prevents their labour market integration subsequent to the training intervention.
- Lack of development of NGO sector (Bulgaria) - The participation of NGOs in the delivery of ESF measures is crucial for their success. They are very pro-active in reaching the vulnerable groups that are difficult to identify by institutions. In the current programming period, there was no measure aimed at development of the capacity of the non-governmental sector. Except NGOs delivering some consultancy services, the organisations working on the field have not managed to build capacity.
- Excessive administrative burden (Spain) - Audit procedures have been 'excessive', according to a generalised perception of the ESF MA and other IBs and BOs. Audit criteria were not transparent from the beginning and its final application has been characterised by erratic, changing across different audit processes. The authority for audit (IGAE) was not involved enough to assist entities for the use of simplified cost options although there was a request for help on these procedures. Moreover, there were problems to upload the required documents to the IT tool for audit procedures. These factors have created uncertainty and confusion for the MA, IBs and beneficiaries, hindering the actual implementation of actions.
- Regional distribution of funds (Spain) - The distribution of financing by region category based on GDP per capita raises further challenges to organisations. In less developed regions, there is a high amount of ESF funds while there are fewer NGOs and, more in general, fewer implementation capacity to absorb these funds. Furthermore, the target groups in less developed regions are limited, since they migrate to more developed areas with more job opportunities. Low number of available jobs makes job integration of the target group difficult. On the contrary,

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the most disadvantaged groups are concentrated in more developed regions due to the inflow of domestic and international migration, as mentioned previously, and relatively higher living costs, leading to poverty and inequalities. Thus, the design of ESF programming should be adapted to regional imbalances in Spain, considering not only the types of regions but also the situation in very sparsely populated rural areas. Strengthening absorption capacity of less developed regions, reinforcing it with other EU funds, such as ERDF, seems crucial to avoid insufficient intervention.

- Financial barriers to participation (Spain) - It is also important to note that some entities could not participate in ESF support to social inclusion as beneficiaries due to the financial barriers. Many of them had to cover the costs of the actions in advance and reimbursement of the costs by the ESF funds took time. Therefore, participation was limited to those entities with sufficient available funds in advance.

## Coherence

In several focus groups, participants discussed the potential overlaps of TO9 with other thematic objectives. In Poland, participants considered that the activities under TO9 did not coincide with those undertaken under TO8, as they have completely different objectives. In Bulgaria, participants noted that there is some overlap with TO10, which is why the Managing Authority is very careful in the demarcation. For example, in the trainings under TO10 there should not be trainings for working in multicultural environment, which is funded under TO9.

Participants in several focus groups highlighted the administrative complexity in combining ERDF and ESF funds. For example in Spain, the combined usage implied a heavier workload for the Managing Authority, implementing bodies or beneficiaries. As such, it is seen extremely difficult and even unrealistic to adequately and effectively jointly manage actions funded by ESF-ERDF unless there are some changes that reduce the complexity of the procedures (focus group). The coordination of ESF and ERDF actions would make full sense to overcome structural imbalances detected in less developed regions, where a lack of business fabric and NGO presence has been identified (see above). In addition to obstacles created by complex procedures, the lack of political will has been also argued as a factor that also hinders the use of complementary funding instruments. More specifically, high-level political actors place more emphasis on ERDF and infrastructure while relatively neglecting the ESF. In Hungary, the lack of synchronisation between ERDF and ESF funds led to challenges as the Managing Authority did not have the capacity/competency to provide assistance straight away, it takes a lot of time, there is definitely need for simplifying the administrative processes related to this (as well as in the case of project applications, although there is certain basic support/training provided in this field by the Programme Office). Focus group participants in Hungary also noted that the complex settlement programmes should be coordinated together with the economic development programmes where the focus is on employment and also with the inclusive education programmes (and also with other sectors, e.g. healthcare).

## Relevance

Participants in several focus groups highlighted challenges and gaps in relation to the targeting of ESF support to social inclusion. Examples are presented below.

- Portugal - In relation to the list of target groups it was said that the proposed stratification does not reflect the complexity of social problems, and that most vulnerable individuals do belong to several of the categories (like victims of domestic violence or disabled persons from excluded families). In this perspective, one participant stated that the response to these complex social problems must be

holistic (possibly in a territorial approach) and should allow time extensions for interventions beyond the limit of three or four years.

- Bulgaria - There is no mapping of the specific needs of adults and children from vulnerable groups and how the groups in a vulnerable position differ from one another. For example, there are significant regional difference across Roma communities. In some places, the Roma children graduate secondary education, but have limited opportunities enrolling in higher education. In other places the main problem is the high rate of primary school drop-out of children from Roma minorities.
  - Latvia - For several reasons, ESF was not used for those aged 55 or more years. Most importantly, this group has often been unemployed for a long time and is deemed to benefit more from social activation measures (i.e. outside the direct scope of ESF TO9) rather than reintegration measures (ESF). Also, this group is supported by dedicated case managers which are often left out of scope for TO9, when LAs are able to spend their ESF funding on case managers supporting the group who are more likely to benefit from reintegration.
- Sweden - The key lesson learned from the focus group is that the *duality of layers of target groups* introduced in some ESF interventions (Type 6)– specifically where the primary target group is mediating actors within a culture or system and the secondary target group is vulnerable individuals standing far from the labour market – introduces complexity to this type of intervention. Firstly, the dual layers of target groups makes it more critical to perform a refined stakeholder analysis already in the design phase of the project, to ensure that project activities are designed to make the impact become of long-lasting effect. Secondly, the dual layers of target groups makes project operations complex in terms of maintaining a shared view of effects of measures (since it requires clear knowledge about the actual inner workings of the system or culture), but also of such matters as how to assess project efficiency (i.e. assess fulfilment of project objectives or try to capture real movements of the secondary target group).
- Poland - Participants also noted the challenges related to the definition of target groups made during the programming period as compared to changes in current situation. One of the issues noted was the disproportionality of unemployed groups and former beneficiaries. As stated by participants, there are no available unemployed lists that the involved institutions could use to target unemployed people in need. On the other hand, a lot of former beneficiaries are available, but the two groups are very different. It should be more flexibility in the programmes to focus on those who have other and complex problems that make them inactive.

## Good practices

- Hungary - Training should be differentiated for social workers in urban and rural area, a general training part and maybe also a tailored part (in the future) as they use a different set of tools in urban and rural areas
- Netherlands - Overall, it is important to match the skills taught in a support trajectory with work i.e. link theory with practice. Support works when it is not only designed with local actors who know the local demand but is also implemented with these actors. Flexibility around the target group keeps administrative burden to a reasonable level and therefore ensures ESF reaches those who need it.
- Bulgaria - The use of mediators between the minority groups and the school institution has proved a good practice in the activities related to prevention of drop out. School directors play a crucial role in the successful application for ESF support and the delivery of ESF social inclusion operations.
- Spain - The ESF has helped organisations to work better in networks. These networks or collaborative arrangements have brought together different organisations with different perspectives on similar issues such as the Social Inclusion Network (RIS). Also, the transnational projects funded by the ESF have enabled entities to learn from other MS and to use these insights to improve the practices in their respective contexts. ESF also has increased awareness on sensitive social inclusion topics which it has then fed into the design of interventions, thereby improving the support provided to disadvantaged groups. ESF has also contributed to increased transparency within entities.
- Cyprus – Several of operations and procedures were identified as good practices for example, evening courses for both students and their parents, especially those who as immigrants or refugees should learn the Greek language and achieve inclusion. Furthermore, the actions of psychological support to students during their transition to different school environments (e.g. from primary school to high school) has been considered as an added value action to vulnerable students, especially those having different socioeconomic and religious background and specifically the immigrants and refugees.

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## **Delphi survey**

An EU-level Delphi survey was carried out between 9 April 2020 and 13 May 2020. The survey aimed to gather a range of perspectives from representative stakeholders of organisations concerned and involved at European level in policy debate on social inclusion, poverty and discrimination as well as managing authorities not consulted in the previous stages, one auditor and social partners.

Invitations were sent to representatives from 15 organisations. A total of 10 representatives participated in at least one round of the survey. The organisations represented in the Delphi survey were as follows:

- Solidar
- BE Managing Authority
- National Audit Union of Social Cooperatives – PL
- European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network
- Inclusion Europe
- European Disability Forum (EDF)
- EuroHealthNet
- ENISE
- ESN
- European Network on Independent Living

The survey was administered in two rounds. In Round 1, the survey solicited on general findings from the evaluation as well as findings from two focus areas, which were summarised in a background document. The focus areas were:

- Access of small and grassroots organisations to ESF TO9
- Measurement of soft outcomes

The background document was refined based on the inputs provided. An additional set of questions to validate the inputs provided and probe further were presented in Round 2. The final background document can be found in Annex 6.1.

## ANNEX 6.1 – DELPHI SURVEY FINDINGS

### Overview

An online EU-level Delphi survey was carried out to support a European Commission evaluation of ESF Thematic Objective 9. The survey was administered in two rounds between 9 April 2020 and 13 May 2020. A total of 10 representatives from a range of organisations involved in policy debates at the European level on social inclusion, poverty and discrimination as well as a Managing Authority not consulted in other stages of the study and an auditor participated in the Delphi survey.<sup>594</sup>

In Round 1 of the survey, respondents reviewed a background document that presented the overall evaluation findings and more specific findings in relation to two focus areas. Respondents were then asked to provide their reflections and additional inputs. The background document was revised based on the inputs received. In Round 2, the respondents reviewed the revised background document and provided further clarification and validation.

Section 2 provides an overview of Round 1 survey results while Section 3 presents the Round 2 survey results.

Sections 4 and 5 represent the substance of the background document that was refined based on the inputs gathered through the Delphi survey.

### Summary of Round 1 survey results

This section summarizes the results and contributions from the open-ended questions from Round 1 of the Delphi Panel. Round 1 was completed by a total of 9 participants. The below section reflects on the inputs they provided on the different evaluation criteria.

#### Effectiveness

6 out of 9 participants agreed with the findings in relation to effectiveness, notably regarding the identified key challenges such as low administrative capacity coupled with perceived complex administrative requirements for receiving ESF funds.

Respondents highlighted several success factors for the effectiveness of ESF support for TO9:

- Coordinated and coherent approach to investment
- Alignment of priorities with broader EU and national policy goals
- Linkages between policy goals and local/regional needs to help build political support for reforms

On the other hand, respondents confirmed a number of challenges that were also identified in the evaluation:

- Requirements for receiving ESF funds as well as requirements for project implementation are complex and challenging for potential beneficiaries e.g. eligibility rules, payment applications etc.
- Low administrative capacity of potential beneficiaries to comply with project planning, management and reporting requirements

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<sup>594</sup> 10 representatives participated in Round 1. Of these 10, 4 participated in Round 2.

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Stakeholders noted that in order to fully measure the effectiveness of ESF support for TO9 in the areas of employment, participation in education and training, etc. there must be linkages to policies promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and combating discrimination.

## **Efficiency**

The majority of participants agreed with the key findings of the evaluation in relation to efficiency. The participation of local communities was identified a key success factor of many ESF-funded projects. However, more could be done to facilitate a systematic and transparent system for generating the involvement of local stakeholders. Collaboration through cross-sectoral networks were found to be useful to capitalise on ESF funding and develop integrated solutions to promote ESF objectives.

The implementation of Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) was often perceived to be difficult and time consuming for both Managing Authorities and beneficiaries. Training/workshops/guidelines etc. for beneficiaries and also for the Managing Authority could decrease this burden for stakeholders.

The development of innovative approaches was considered to have a negative impact on efficiency. These approaches are overall less-cost effective as their design, set-up and implementation requires additional efforts. However, in the long run testing these innovative approaches can lead to new ways of working and simplified procedures. The development of these approaches is considered crucial to increase efficiency in long-term especially for small- and medium-sized beneficiaries.

It was also suggested that efficiency considerations should not be limited to costs, but should reflect processes e.g. time-length of action from inception to result.

## **Relevance**

The majority of participants agreed with the key findings of the evaluation in relation to relevance. According to respondents, the relevance of ESF projects is better ensured when they:

- Target social problems with the right solutions. Respondents emphasized that relevance can be ensured when the objective of the interventions are clearly linked to strategic policy documents (e.g. health strategy). In this case they are more likely to deliver the right outcomes. Evidence-, needs-, socio-economic context- and community-based consultation are recommended.
- Involve a wide spectrum of stakeholders in the design and/or implementation of a project is important to build buy-in for the project and its results and to ensure that the objectives and activities are realistic. It was emphasized that identification of target groups of beneficiaries in early stages of the ESF-funded projects is essential to increase the relevance of the projects

A successful project example from the health sector showed that it is beneficial for successful ESF-funded health projects to directly engage with a wide range of health and other important stakeholders such as patients, trade unions and professional associations, hospitals and public health institutions, as well as targeted users of the outputs. Stakeholder feedback can identify not only existing needs, but also the most suitable solutions and approaches to addressing these gaps. Ensuring that ESF-funded projects support workable solutions that have the acceptance of the various stakeholders involved can facilitate the subsequent roll-out and replication of successful practices.

One of the key issues that emerged from the responses for further improvement is the relevance of TO9 operations in regions (or rather areas/local communities) with a poorer socio-economic situation. Some areas in need of ESF support for TO9 do not have an NGO

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sector and the local authorities are not active in applying for financial support from ESF (because of many different reasons e.g. will, capacity, ESF rules etc.).

A key challenge identified by the respondents is to make sure that the support reaches those most in need as they are often outside the scope of social services, employment services, health care and education.

### **Coherence**

The majority of participants (8 out of 9) agreed that ESF support for TO9 was aligned with the European policy framework on social inclusion. Respondents emphasized the importance of the bigger picture and to track social inclusion links to innovation, environment and digital policies, among others, in order to ensure that social inclusion solutions are available, accessible, effective and coherent with other EU level policies. It is essential for the investments to be guided by social principles (such as the European Pillar of Social Rights)

In relation to the health sector it was noted that there is a critical interdependence between health and socio-economic policies which needs to be ensured to maximise coherence and reduce health inequalities.

Similarly to feedback received under relevance respondents highlighted that in order to ensure coherence of ESF operations a broad range of stakeholders need to be consulted to in order not to overlook the specific context required to reach end-users, particularly vulnerable and 'hard to reach' groups.

### **EU added value**

The majority of participants (8 out of 9) agree with the key findings of the evaluation in relation to EU added value. Yet, there was general agreement that the added value of ESF support for TO9 could have been greater in terms of catalysing national reforms. ESF-funded operations could contribute to creating enabling environment in which critical reforms could take place beyond only reinforcing existing (sub-) national frameworks or actions. This enhanced impact could also be cross-border and transnational in nature.

### **Access of small, local organisation to ESF TO9**

The majority of respondents agreed that small, local organisations often face difficulties to access ESF support for TO9. The difficulties were identified by the respondents in the following areas:

- **Capacity:** The administrative requirements are too complicated for small, local organisations. The requirements are perceived as being vast and incomprehensible. The application forms and criteria are the same for all beneficiaries regardless of their size. Small local organisations often do not have the administrative capacity and know-how for project planning and management.
- **Funding:** The financial requirement of minimal turnover (a higher level is related to higher project value) is a barrier for small, local organisations because they often lack the minimum level of turnover as indicated by the national body. Small local organisations are afraid of making mistakes and risk ineligibility of expenditures. Their financial position does not allow them to cover unexpected expenditures. Some small organisations chose not to apply for ESF funding because of co-financing requirements and because of delays in payments, which can lead to severe cash-flow issues and risk of bankruptcy.
- **Delivery:** Often small, local organisations are not able to achieve "hard" results that are required in OPs (for example, an increase of employment or qualification). They are able to support local communities and realise impacts on them through

strengthening the individuals, families and whole communities. These actions often lead to the social change, but this change is often a soft outcome. The anxiety about not reaching the targets for hard result indicators discourages small local organisation from applying for ESF. Small local organisations have to compete with larger and more experienced organisations. Being "local" is not a crucial factor that is systematically taking into consideration in access to the ESF and it is not necessarily promoted. Managing Authorities are more concerned with being able to deliver on program targets.

A number of support factors also emerged from the responses which highlight actions that could help to facilitate small, local organisation's access to ESF TO9:

- **Partnerships:** Forming partnerships between (local) authorities and local grassroots organisations and targeted communication were perceived to help in reaching out to small organisations. For example, in Belgium (Flanders), the Managing Authority's communication is often focused on small organisations. The Managing Authority urged local authorities to get in contact with these small organisations and once they became partners in the projects the Managing Authority included them as members in their database for easier, direct communication. This allowed the Managing Authority to communicate new possibilities to them directly as well as offer coaching on project development and implementation.
- **Processes:** It was highlighted that the language used for official communication has become very administrative and this is more comprehensible for larger organisations. It was suggested that guidelines for small local organisation could improve access to ESF. These guidelines should be clear, unequivocal, simple, and practical. It was suggested to employ more flexible means of communications, regulation etc, for example by employing ICT tools (chat bots, collaborative tools etc), which would make the rules/procedures easier to process and de-centralise the engagement (no need to travel to meetings, know the right person) while keeping the information in one place. While tailored communication is perceived as highly important it was noted that it is not enough in itself as it does not address capacity issues.
- Respondents had divided opinions on the role of Simplified Cost Options in reducing administrative burden. On one hand it was argued that a well-developed and simple framework for Simplified Cost Options allows even smaller organisations to utilise them without additional administrative burden. On the other hand, some respondents noted that Simplified Cost Options are definitely challenging for small, local organisations. Potential non-compliance could have serious financial consequences which is a risk small organisation cannot take.
- **Capacity:** Small, local organisations access to ESF TO9 could be increased according to respondents by providing additional training and coaching for them during the application and project development phase as well as during implementation. It was suggested that funding from Technical Assistance could potentially be used for these training and capacity building activities.

The following actions were identified as potential support for small, local organisations in the future:

- Separate, dedicated measures within TO9 priority axes for small (for example up to 10-15,000 euro) local initiatives in diverse thematic areas connected somehow in local development and social inclusion, inclusive education, arts and culture, cultural heritage, social services etc. implemented by small local organisations (but also local institution or socio-public partnerships). The requirements for this small projects and small organisation should be simplified at application stage. It is necessary to have a

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fund that provides small organisations with interest-free loans or establishing favourable conditions for an advance payment.

- There is a need for predefined operations to support associations of small organizations, because an association can concentrate administrative capacity and human resources.
- Support to capacity building for small, local organisation through coaching in project development and one to one contact at all stage of the project preparation and management.
- Facilitate the creation of a network of experts (scientific evidence and political background) and cross-sector stakeholders 'ready' to form a project consortium with small, local organisations.

### **Measurement of soft outcomes**

A majority of respondents agreed that it is critical to incorporate the measurement of soft outcomes into the ESF monitoring system. However, not all relevant soft outcomes can be measured with data. It would be good to have qualitative as well as quantitative analysis, discussing with some beneficiaries how the experienced has helped them on a personal level. One of the main problem highlighted among the respondents is that the projects which do not guarantee achievements of the "hard" indicators aren't selected (or have much less chance to be selected) even if they are really needed for the community. Furthermore, one respondent argued that the terminology 'soft' should not be used to measure these outcomes as they are crucial to report on 'actual results' of the interventions.

Participants highlighted that ESF funds could lead the way in prioritising investment in such 'soft' investments and solutions. These projects clearly demonstrate linkages with specific objectives in relevant strategic policy documents, and they would help to convince national central agencies (i.e. Finance Ministries) of their merits. It was noted that the introduction of soft outcomes needs to consider project-providers and beneficiaries' perspective and consider how this solution influence their reporting requirements.

Respondents confirmed the main challenges in relation to the incorporation of soft indicators into the ESF monitoring framework, namely:

- The data is not readily available and would impose additional burden;
- Defining the indicator and its measurement may be subjective; and
- The objectives of ESF operations vary widely and thus several soft indicators would need to be defined.

Stakeholders involved in the ESI Funds for health project stressed the need for other indicators to demonstrate the full range of impacts of projects improving health and wellbeing at population level. There is a need to develop a more comprehensive system of appropriate indicators that capture impacts on the population. The use of various types of indicators to track these impacts was especially complex for projects supporting access to healthcare and in general, for all projects that aim at reducing health inequalities. However, these difficulties do not mean that they should not be measured.

These issues can be overcome by developing a programme with a clear objective defined by indicators, integrating the evaluation phase since the very beginning and with a clear purpose as to what the programme intends to achieve, for whom and in what circumstances; how the outcomes can then be recorded and promoted to sustain it in time.

Respondent identified a number of areas where soft indicators could be introduced:

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- use of soft indicators not only for individuals but also for families and local communities to show the social change in these families and communities;
- soft outcomes for inclusion could be around social roles, social valorisation;
- digital literacy; and
- improved behavioural changes.

In relation to measuring soft outcomes in the next programming period it was suggested to have face-to-face interviews with beneficiaries, that allow them to talk about what they feel has been the personal value for them. It will show value of the projects not just in terms of numbers, but from a more human angle.

### **Summary of Round 2 survey results**

This section summarizes the results and contributions from the open-ended questions from Round 2 of the Delphi Panel. Round 2 was completed by a total of four participants. The below section reflects on the inputs they provided on the different survey questions.

### **Access of small local organisations to ESF T09**

A majority of respondents agreed with the identified barriers that small, local organisations have to overcome to access ESF support for T09. Nevertheless, respondents provided further suggestions and clarifications as well:

- Delays in project selection and approval of reimbursements on the side of the Managing Authority often due to lack of capacity on the part of the Managing Authority. For example, the project selection process can often take 6 months which results in a lot of uncertainty for small, local organisations resulting in risks that they are often not willing to take. This unpredictability in return can cause the inability to absorb funds in some Member States.
- Limited capacity to access credit was rejected by respondents. It was argued that it is not the capacity that is missing from small, local organisations to access credit. The problem is the lack of access e.g. limited access to micro-grants.

One respondent did not agree with the identified barriers except for complex application requirements and small organisations' lack of capacity to comply with these requirements.

In order to support capacity building and networking for small, local organisations respondents suggested the following ideas:

- First of all, the value of involving small, local organisations needs to be clear for Member States. Making targeted changes to one area will not result in significant change unless the system is favourable for their involvement;
- Require local authorities that applied for ESF funds to have a local partnership with - amongst others - grassroot level organisations in their community, that have links with the target group and experience in working with them; and
- A specialised platform for small, local organisations was also recommended to exchange experience, provide training and facilitate liaison with other stakeholders involved in the design and delivery of programmes.

The majority of respondents agreed (one strongly disagreed) with the idea of introducing a dedicated separate measure within T09 priority axes for small, local initiatives in diverse thematic areas connected to local development and social inclusion, implemented by small local organisations with simplified requirements on application and implementation stage. This would increase small, local organisations' possibilities to access funding. However, it was emphasized that this would not fully solve the issues that small organisations face. A broader strategic approach is needed to address all the barriers. As mentioned above some

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of the problems are present on the side of the Managing Authorities e.g. delays in project selection. It was suggested that small, local organisations could be involved in the working groups during the planning of Operational Programmes.

### **Measurement of soft outcomes**

All respondents agreed with the identified action points with regards to measurement of soft outcomes. It was noted that first there is a need to provide clear definitions on measurable indicators. Preferably participants need to be involved in the process of designing the indicators for soft outcomes. It is important to approach the process using the principles of co-production.

One respondent highlighted that it is important to assess how measuring soft outcomes would influence beneficiaries and participants. Some of the data that needs to be collected is often very sensitive which might discourage participation.

The majority of respondents agreed that it would be beneficial to measure soft outcomes at the family and community level. One example provided was that ESF funds for personal assistance for people with disabilities helps to 1) provide employment for someone 2) allow informal carers e.g. family members to return to the labour market which also has a positive effect on their mental health. Thus, the intervention has a much wider impact than the individual and this could be captured by indicators in family level. It was noted that that indicators on family and community level are only reasonable when the Operational Programmes offer support to families and communities.

The following solutions were suggested to measure soft outcomes at the family and community level:

- Personal changes (in attitude, feelings, behaviour etc.) in relation with other persons or institution belonging to the same community e.g. personal identification with local community and neighbourhood or personal sense of influence on decision made at local level, etc;
- Involve local organisations: 1) external entities strongly involved in development of specific local community access social change that has occurred 2) organisations representing the various target groups would be able to help in setting indicators, and again, local NGOs could be used to organise for example, interviews, focus groups in the community etc. It was emphasized that this information should be collected at the local level by grassroots organisations, as it requires a certain level of trust and openness;
- Checklist of changes in local communities consisting of many different indicators. This checklist could work as a simple and clear self-evaluation provided by beneficiaries; and
- The level of community participation in policy/budget developments.

One respondent disagreed with introducing indicators on family and community level arguing that this would bring additional administrative burden and data collection would be expensive.

The following solutions were suggested to measure soft outcomes on capacity:

- Experience gained in project design and delivery e.g. administrative, organisational, co-operational
- Increase in networks and relationships

It was also noted that instead of introducing a number of indicators there should be more emphasis on following up with individuals to understand the long-term benefits and impact of interventions.

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Respondents did not share a unanimous view on whether measuring soft outcomes could potentially increase administrative burden and hence limit small, local organisations access to ESF TO9. It was argued that the introduction of soft outcomes needs to be done in a way that it does not provide additional burden and clearly show their added value.

### **Current challenges**

Participants were asked to reflect on the current challenges faced by the European Union with the Covid-19 pandemic. Participants all highlighted that the pandemic reinforces the importance of ESF support to vulnerable people. It is even more important now that the economic recession should not divert funds away from Thematic Objective 9 as more people will be marginalised and in a vulnerable position as a result of the crisis. It is important that that ESF addresses the post-Covid societal problems. One participant argued that reaching out to the target group will be even harder.

Participants suggested the following actions points:

- ESF, especially shared management programmes should be flexible to quickly react to the pandemic;
- Locality is becoming increasingly important and therefore local communities should be supported even stronger especially local organization which deliver social, health, educational services, local suppliers and customers. It means that also social economy and social entrepreneurships should be supported more intensively to be better prepared to responding social needs also during crisis time;
- Actions supported transition from institutional care to family- and community-based services should be support more intensively; and
- Continue and potentially strengthen support for mental health, social protection, resilience against increasing poverty, inequalities and lack of opportunities for social mobility.

### **Key findings of the evaluation refined with inputs from Round 1 survey results**

The emerging findings from the evaluation with respect to the five evaluation criteria are presented below refined with inputs received from Round 1 survey results.

#### **Effectiveness**

TO9 operations generated positive, immediate and longer-term results that supported the objectives of TO9, which were to promote social inclusion and combat poverty and any form of discrimination. The generation of these results, however, was limited by the low level of financial implementation of TO9 operations.

A coordinated and coherent approach linking strategic policy goals on EU and national level to local needs was found essential to ensure that TO9 operations are effective and structural reforms are successful.

The analysis found higher success rates for TO9 operations that focused on employment. The success rate also varied in relation to the socioeconomic context. Most notably, the success rate of labour market-oriented operations was greater in economically more favourable regions. A high level of cooperation between local authorities and proper targeting facilitated the effectiveness of TO9 operations, while low administrative capacity coupled with perceived complex administrative requirements for receiving ESF funds as well as requirements for project implementation (e.g. eligibility rules, settlement rules, drawing up and submitting payments application) were identified as key challenges. While

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data is lacking, there is strong qualitative evidence suggesting that ESF support for TO9 promoted 'soft' outcomes including self-confidence and skills improvement.

The absorption rate of funds for TO9 operations was rather low considering the advanced stage of the programming period - at the EU level, more than 70% of planned funds for TO9 operations were allocated, while about 28% of allocated funds were declared as spent by the beneficiaries to the Managing Authorities.

The contribution of TO9 operations to the promotion of the social inclusion target of Europe 2020 is overall positive. In total, more than 5 million results were recorded in terms of engagement in job search, participation in education and training as well as accessing employment including self-employment.

TO9 operations generated 2.8 million immediate-term results and 1.3 million longer-term results by the end of December 2018. These results were related to job searching, engagement in education or training, gaining a qualification and gaining employment (including self-employment).

### **Efficiency**

The cost per participation and cost per immediate result to date as a measure of efficiency varies substantially across Member States and IP.

The numbers should be treated with caution as Member States mostly report on partially completed operations. As a consequence of the time lag between their realisation, outputs, results and costs cannot be directly compared.

The development of innovative approaches was identified as negatively impacting efficiency. These approaches are overall less-cost effective as their design, set-up and implementation requires additional efforts. However, in the long run testing these innovative approaches can result in new ways of working, simplified procedures and capacity building. The development of these approaches is crucial to increase efficiency in long-term.

The use of Simplified Cost Options appears to promote the efficiency of ESF operations. Respondents however highlighted that the implementation of Simplified Cost Options can be difficult (especially calculation of amounts used in Simplified Cost Options) and time-consuming (e.g. preparation of the calculation's methods, longer selection of projects) for both Managing Authorities as well as beneficiaries.

### **Relevance**

Most TO9 operations identified specific target groups (133 out of the 145 OPs) and most set objectives that were fully relevant to the needs identified (105 OPs out of 145 OPs). Target groups identified at the planning stage were often broad enough to allow for flexibility in implementation. Target groups were typically identified through consultative processes that also drew on recent studies and evaluations. Such flexibility was noted in 10 Member States with respect to shifting types of operation and 13 Member States with respect to target groups. Respondents emphasized that relevance can be ensured when the objective of the interventions are clearly linked to strategic policy documents and local needs. This would also help to ensure that ESF TO9 is relevant in the context of regions and local communities with poorer socio-economic status. Some deprived areas are often not reached by the NGO sector and their local authorities are not active in applying for ESF TO9. It is important to ensure that these regions also benefit from ESF support.

The partnership principle has furthered the overall relevance of TO9 operations in terms of targeting the most relevant groups and understanding the socio-economic context.

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Managing Authorities considered that the ESF allowed for sufficient flexibility to adapt the programming of operations to shifts in the context that occurred over the period. In fact, many of them introduced changes in order to respond to socio-economic and/or political developments by putting more emphasis on existing operations or by introducing new target groups or re-allocating funding and/or reprogramming the OP. In addition, overall funding to TO9 increased in nearly half of the Member States.

## **Coherence**

TO9 operations in practice are overall coherent with EU policies in the area of social inclusion. In all Member States, ESF support for TO9 was coherent with the European policy framework on social inclusion at the design and planning stage. Planning documents cite key EU policy documents on social inclusion while gaps were also identified.

Stakeholders highlighted that it is also important to look at the coherence from a bigger picture and to track social inclusion links to innovation, environment and digital policies, among others, in order to ensure that social inclusion solutions are available, accessible, effective and coherent with other EU level policies. It is essential for the investments to be guided by social principles (such as the European Pillar of Social Rights)

However, some Operational Programmes do not refer to the key EU policy documents for TO9, such as the EU 2020 Strategy. While 25 countries implemented TO9 operations targeting persons with disabilities, only in two Member States (LT, DE) do the Operational Programme make reference to the EU policy for this target group. Similarly, 22 countries implemented operations targeting the Roma and other ethnic minorities, while only three countries referred to their National Strategy for Integration of Roma 2012-2020 (BG, DE, RO).

Six different types<sup>595</sup> of TO9 operations were identified. Only Type 4 operations (Access to Services) are unique to TO9. Strong similarities were found with operations under TO8 and TO10. Nevertheless, TO9 operations differed from other TOs in relation to the target groups and the implementation methods and adopted a holistic approach to social inclusion.

With respect to the coherence of ESF support to TO9 with other EU funds, it was stronger with the ERDF closely followed by FEAD.

## **EU added value**

The overall objective of TO9 – the promotion of social inclusion - is a competence of Member States. Therefore, EU funds delivered through the ESF may only complement or add value to the actions taken by the Member States. The evaluation identified EU-added value of ESF support to TO9 in terms of the four dimensions highlighted below:

- Volume effect: ESF support to TO9 operations played a primary role in funding social inclusion policies and reinforcing existing national actions, thus further promoting social inclusion (24 Member States);

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<sup>595</sup> Type 1 Employment-focused actions

Type 2 Enhance basic skills

Type 3 Basic school education

Type 4 Access to services

Type 5 Social entrepreneurship

Type 6 Actions influencing attitudes and systems

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- Scope effect: ESF support to TO9 funded pilot projects was instrumental to fight poverty and discrimination, and also allowed for covering target groups that would not have been covered with other funds (17 Member States);
- Role effect: ESF support to TO9 enhanced existing national frameworks, tested new collaborations and partnerships and piloted innovative actions (23 Member States); and
- Process effect: ESF support to TO9 improved the administrative capacity and knowledge in the design and delivery of services promoting social inclusion (18 Member States).

The added value of ESF TO9 operations could have been greater in terms of promoting more national reforms. ESF-funded operations could not contribute to creating enabling environment in which critical reforms could take place, beyond only reinforcing existing (sub-) national frameworks or actions

## **Focus area findings refined with inputs from Round 1 survey results**

### **Access of small, local organisations to ESF T09**

#### **Importance of access by small organisation to ESF funding**

The public consultation identified the cooperation between civil society organisations and Managing Authorities as a success factor. Small organisations have the advantage of knowing the local context and needs and have the trust of the communities, which gives them easier access to work with marginalized and socially excluded groups. Yet small, local organisations including NGOs and local government administrations often find it difficult to access ESF funds. The challenges are mainly related to the limited availability of information on funding opportunities and guidelines, as well as the perceived rigid eligibility and reporting requirements. Moreover, Managing Authorities and intermediate bodies might not be keen to engage with many small-scale projects. These are considered costly in terms of resources while providing only little absorption of the funds.

#### **Barriers to access ESF support for T09**

Findings of the research shows that small, local organisations face more barriers to access ESF support for T09. This barrier is the result of a number of factors:

- application requirements are too complicated for small, local organisation,
- lack of administrative capacity for project planning and management,
- financial requirement e.g. minimum turnover, share of co-financing,
- unequal competition with larger organisation,
- limited access to or network with experts,
- lack of access credit e.g. microgrants
- delays in project selection and approval of reimbursements on the side of the Managing Authority

Overall, limited communication from responsible national bodies regarding funding opportunities and guidelines on reporting requirements contributed to lower access to ESF support for T09 for small organisations.<sup>596</sup> Better guidelines for small, local organisations would improve their access to ESF. Stakeholders agree that these guidelines should be clear, unequivocal and simple in order to provide practical guidance for project design and delivery. It was also noted that small, local organisation sometimes choose not to apply for EU funding as potential delay in receiving the payments can lead to severe cash-flow issues which these organisations cannot absorb.

Delays in the publication of calls from responsible national bodies, which was identified in several country-based analyses may have adversely impacted the take-up rate among small organisations, who have limited administrative capacity to respond at shorter notice.

In addition, the project selection process can often take 6 months, often due to lack of capacity on the side of the Managing Authorities, which results in a lot of uncertainty for small, local organisations resulting in risks that they are often not willing to take.

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<sup>596</sup> Ibid.

This unpredictability in return can cause the inability to absorb funds in some Member States.

### **Enablers to improve small, local organisation's access to ESF T09**

A number of areas were identified where barriers to small, local organisations' access to ESF support for T09 can be overcome.

#### **Partnerships**

First of all, the value of involving small, local organisations needs to be clear for Member States. Making targeted changes to one area will not result in significant change unless the system is favourable for their involvement.

The promotion of obligatory partnership agreements was considered as a potential way to allow for a responsible delegation of implementation. It is suggested that emphasis should be placed on the use of simplified cost reporting methods to reduce the administrative burden. There may also be scope in exchanging good practices between Member States in terms of outreach methods and capacity building tools and approaches.

Another potential solution suggested by stakeholders is to support ESF projects for organisations to develop a collaboration network for, small local organisations to facilitate networking. A membership organisation or association would take advantage of small, local organisation's knowledge of the local context and needs and have the trust of the communities, which gives them easier access to work with marginalized and socially excluded groups. An association would provide the necessary administrative and expert capacity needed for project planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

#### **Processes**

The streamlining of ESF procedures such as the Standard Cost Options was generally found to reduce administrative burden and risk of error when submitting project expenses over time. However, the implementation of Standard Cost Options can be challenging for small, local organisations. Potential non-compliance could have serious financial consequences which is a risk small organisations are less able to absorb. Hence streamlining ESF procedures should be accompanied by tailored support for small, local organisations to ensure the smooth transition to and uptake of these procedures. Reporting requirements should be further simplified, and new methods should be used to ensure a responsible use of funding without imposing excessive audit requirements.

Introducing a dedicated separate measure within T09 priority axes for small, local initiatives in diverse thematic areas connected to local development and social inclusion, implemented by small local organisations with simplified requirements on application and implementation stage. This would increase small, local organisations' possibilities to access funding. However, it is important to note that this would not fully solve the issues that small organisations face. A broader strategic approach is needed to address all the barriers.

#### **Capacity and outreach**

The evaluation identified good practices of ad-hoc support to promote information-sharing and capacity building of potential beneficiaries including training sessions, task forces and helpdesks. A good example was identified in the Netherlands where the Managing Authority created a database of small, local organisations to facilitate

communications with potential beneficiaries about new opportunities and provided coaching for them on project development.

The Commission should further incentivise and encourage Managing Authorities to strengthen tailored communication to small organisations of different types. Language used for official communication has become very administrative and this is more comprehensible for the bigger organisation. Guidelines for small local organisation could improve access to ESF. These guidelines must be clear, unequivocal, simple, not very general but adequate to practical problems that project providers and beneficiaries meet). The use of more flexible means of communications, regulation etc, for example by employing ICT tools (chat bots, collaborative tools etc) is also encouraged. This would make the rules/procedures easier to process and de-centralise the engagement (no need to travel to meetings, know the right person) while keeping the information in one place.

## **Measurement of soft outcomes**

### **Importance of soft outcomes**

The importance of measuring "soft outcomes" for ESF operations has often been highlighted. In 2000, a report called the '*Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: A Review of Current Practice*' noted that the measurement of 'hard' outcomes, which was the traditional focus for ESF-funded employment programmes was not sufficient to gain a complete picture of participants' increased employability. The study recommended '*ESF-funded projects to set up systems to monitor soft outcomes, particularly those projects delivering support under Policy Field 2 (Equal opportunities for all and promoting social inclusion)*.'<sup>597</sup> As part of this study a good practice guide was developed to help projects in measuring soft outcomes.<sup>598</sup>

Despite this recommendation and the good practice guide, a 2019 study commissioned by the European Commission<sup>599</sup> found that '*there is a limited evidence base on the effectiveness of distance travelled measures in terms of programme impact.*' It noted

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<sup>597</sup> Dewson, S., Eccles, J., Tackey, N. D. and Jackson, A. (2000). Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: A Review of Current Practice. DfEE Research Brief No. 219. 7 August 2000. London: DFEE.  
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130402140928/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RB219.pdf>

<sup>598</sup> Dewson, S., Eccles, J., Tackey, N. D. and Jackson, A. (2000b). *Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled*. Brighton: Institute for Employment Studies.  
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130703170038/http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/distance.pdf>

<sup>599</sup> European Commission (2019) The feasibility of developing a methodology for measuring the distance travelled and soft outcomes for long-term unemployed people participating in Active Labour Market Programmes.  
<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3315180b-9ecf-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

that soft skills were rarely monitored in a structured and systematic fashion.<sup>600</sup> The ESF Thematic Network on Inclusion stressed the importance of incorporating 'soft indicators' into the monitoring of ESF operations to holistically assess their impacts.<sup>601</sup>

A study on the Monitoring and Evaluation systems of the ESF<sup>602</sup> underscored the need to monitor soft outcomes to assess the achievements of ESF such as confidence, personal skills, social cohesion, feelings (e.g. motivation) which can be important factors in social inclusion particularly for TO9 operations. At the same time, the evaluation found that the main challenges in relation to the incorporation of soft indicators into the ESF monitoring framework, namely:

- The data is not readily available and would impose additional burden
- Defining the indicator and its measurement may be subjective
- The objectives of ESF operations vary widely and thus several soft indicators would need to be defined.

The evaluation found that some Managing Authorities monitor soft outcomes generated by TO9 operations through-programme-specific indicators. The outcome that emerged most frequently related to improvement of soft skills, including increased self-esteem and improvement of labour market prospects of ESF participants (e.g. BG, ES, FI, FR, IT, SK, UK). The replies to the public consultation highlighted soft outcomes related to the ESF TO9.<sup>603</sup> Beneficiaries who received ESF funding noted improved soft skills such as stronger interpersonal relations at work (57%) or increased self-confidence (57%).

Practices concerning the measurement of soft outcomes in Member States are uneven. For the next programming period stakeholders emphasized it would be beneficial to have the following:

- At first not obligatory, but optional use of soft indicators in Member States.
- Introduce pilot projects for soft indicators in a couple of Member States before wide-scale implementation in the EU
- More awareness raising on EU as well as Managing Authority level on the importance of soft outcomes
- Exchange of experience among stakeholders on measuring soft outcomes
- Build networks including Managing Authorities and 'end users', beneficiaries

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of qualitative analysis, discussing the experience of beneficiaries how participating in the project has helped them on a

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<sup>600</sup> European Commission (2019). The Feasibility of Developing a Methodology for Measuring the Distance Travelled and Soft Outcomes for Long-Term Unemployed People Participating in Active Labour Market Programmes, p. 8.

<sup>601</sup> European Commission (2018). Study on integrated delivery of social services aiming at the activation of minimum income recipients in the labour market - success factors and reform pathways, p. 2. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/filedepot\\_download/2594/2044](https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/filedepot_download/2594/2044)

<sup>602</sup> European Commission (2018): Study on the Monitoring and Evaluation Systems of the ESF

<sup>603</sup> Public consultation question III-5.

personal level. Such personal stories could also be of used to communicate the human value of ESF investments, and to justify continues investment from the Member States.

The evaluation has found that stakeholders strongly support measuring soft outcomes. It was noted the added value of measuring them is clear and is closely linked to the project objectives especially in case of small, local organisations. More clarity is needed with regards to the required capacity to what monitor soft outcomes on beneficiary level and the benefits otherwise organisations might perceive it as additional administrative burden.

### **Typology of soft outcomes**

The study on the Monitoring and Evaluation systems of the ESF identified a typology of outcomes that ESF seeks to achieve. Each area is listed below along with examples of "soft" indicators:

- **vulnerabilities and social conditions:** overcoming vulnerability/difficulty/disadvantage; improved health, improved wellbeing (e.g. healthier habits, reduced use of drugs);
- **capacity:** improvements competences and skills i.e. digital skills; improved attitude and behavioural changes, experience gained in project design and delivery e.g. administrative, organisational, co-operational, increase in networks and relationships
- **school/education:** increased engagement in learning; improved attitude and behavioural changes
- **employment/labour market:** Increased potential for labour market engagement; Higher motivation to engage with the labour market; Improved time management; Improved job search abilities; Improved career management skills
- **use of services:** Increased awareness of service availability and potential benefits; satisfaction of services received
- **social change in families and local communities**

The following potential indicators were identified to measure soft outcomes at the family and community level:

- personal changes (in attitude, feelings, behaviour etc.) in relation with other persons or institution belonging to the same community e.g. personal identification with local community and neighbourhood or personal sense of influence on decision made at local level etc;
- involve local organisations: 1) external entities strongly involved in development of specific local community access social change that has occurred 2) organisations representing the various target groups would be able to help in setting indicators, and again, local NGOs could be used to organise for example, interviews, focus groups in the community etc. It was emphasized that this information should collected at the local level by grassroots organisations, as it requires a certain level of trust and openness
- checklist of changes in local community consisting of many different indicators. This checklist could work as a simple and clear self-evaluation provided by beneficiaries
- level of community participation in policy/budget developments

### **Lessons learnt**

The evaluation identified several lessons learned with respect to "soft" outcomes. These lessons learned include:

- Monitoring soft outcomes is critical to reflect the results generated by ESF TO9. "Soft" outcomes should be monitored in all areas where results are expected (e.g. capacity, access to services).
- The evaluation found that "soft" outcomes have been measured in the context of TO9 operations in several Member States. Identifying the practicalities and challenges with measuring "soft" outcomes in these instances and sharing them with ESF practitioners more widely could promote the monitoring of "soft" indicators.
- An EU level approach is needed, facilitated by the European Commission. A pilot phase in a smaller number of Member States was found to be a potential solution. In case the pilot is successful this could be scaled up to other Member States
- Projects which do not guarantee achievements of the "hard" indicators are less likely to be selected even if they are really needed for the community.

## ANNEX 7 – PUBLIC CONSULTATION

### Executive Summary

This report presents the results of the public consultation on how the European Social Fund (ESF) promotes social inclusion and combats poverty and discrimination (Thematic Objective 9 (TO9)). The public consultation ran from 26 September to 19 December 2019 and received a total of 574 replies.

The results of the public consultation are presented taking into account different types of respondents: organisations not aware of ESF; organisations aware of ESF but not playing a direct role in the delivery; organisations directly involved in the delivery of ESF; persons having received ESF support; persons aware of the ESF but not having received support; and persons not aware of the ESF.

This analysis focuses on the five criteria defined for the evaluation of ESF TO9 interventions: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, and EU added value. The key findings related to these evaluation criteria are presented below.

### Key findings - Relevance

The majority of respondents agree that **the European Union should be involved in the promotion of social inclusion, in combating poverty and any discrimination.**

ESF actions aiming at getting people into employment were most frequently deemed relevant among all the respondents, regardless of their extent of their knowledge of or experience with ESF.

Two-thirds of the respondents who indicated having received ESF support mentioned having participated in ESF actions focused on training and education or on information and guidance in job searching.

Most of the respondents who answered on behalf of organisations directly involved in ESF delivery indicated that the support actions they provide are directed at people unemployed for 12 months or more. A significant share of respondents within this type indicated that the support actions they provide are also directed at people with a disability.

The review of position papers suggests that ESF Thematic Objective 9 is overall deemed to have an appropriate remit, supporting actions addressing social inclusion and anti-discrimination issues which are as relevant today as they were in 2014.

### Key findings - Effectiveness

Overall, the large majority of respondents believe that **all ESF actions are either very useful or mostly useful.**

Most respondents indicated that these actions brought about changes related to jobs for participants, improved soft skills, increased self-confidence of participants, as well as greater awareness of social inclusion poverty and discrimination issues.

Partnerships between Managing Authorities and NGOs and targeted or individualised support actions are some of the main factors identified as contributors to the success of ESF actions.

Nearly all the respondents who indicated having received ESF support mentioned that their expectations from participating in ESF activities had either been partially or fully

met. Expectations most frequently related to obtaining better job conditions, finding a job or being actively included in society.

### **Key findings - Efficiency**

On average, most respondents believe that the different **activities implemented with the European Social Fund are cost-effective** (the resources invested were proportionate to the results achieved), in particular activities related to: basic skills training; training and education, information, guidance, tutoring in the search for a job; and internships, traineeships to learn a trade.

Most organisations with a role in the delivery of ESF indicate direct, practical and individualised support followed by flexible and multidimensional support, as well as support for integration to employment as the most cost-effective.

Several factors have also been identified as contributing to inefficiency, in particular the so-called 'creaming' effects (projects focusing on achieving set targets rather than real social change), as well as the standardisation and rigidity of ESF delivery structures and timeframes.

### **Key findings - Coherence**

Overall, the **ESF actions promoting social inclusion combating poverty or combating discrimination programme are seen as coherent with other schemes**, in particular with national, regional or local programmes.

Regarding EU schemes, Erasmus+ was most frequently identified as complementing and reinforcing ESF actions promoting social inclusion or combating poverty and discrimination.

A trend noticeable in the review of position papers is that there will be scope under ESF+ to further strengthen coherence with the European Pillar of Social Rights (on access to education and sustainable employment) and with Interreg (on social innovation).

### **Key findings - EU added value**

An overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that **one of the advantages of having European Union interventions promoting social inclusion combating poverty or combating discrimination that more could be done than with national or local resources only**.

More than half also thought that ESF interventions allow for the coverage of new social issues or the testing of new social services. Very few respondents thought that ESF or even EU-supported interventions do not make a difference in terms of promoting social inclusion or combating poverty and discrimination.

### **Overall conclusion**

The replies to the public consultation suggest that ESF support for TO9 has positive value for a wide range of stakeholders including persons and organisations not aware of the ESF to persons and organisations aware of the ESF and involved in its delivery. ESF actions are generally considered to be effective and offer value for money that could not be generated by national or local resources. At the same time, the replies to the public consultation highlight areas of concern and where potential improvements could

be made to the ESF, for example, 'creaming' effects that hinder the efficiency of actions and the scope for greater coherence with the European Pillar of Social Rights.

## **Introduction**

The European Social Fund (ESF) is the European Union's main instrument available in EU countries for promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination, also referred as thematic Objective nine (TO9).

As part of the study supporting the evaluation of ESF TO9, a public consultation was carried out to obtain meaningful information and feedback from all stakeholders of the ESF in the EU countries, as well as from the wider public, on the effects and impacts of the instrument in terms of promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination.

The public consultation aims to feed into the evaluation study in the sense that its results contribute to informing the European Commission on the performance of ESF operations for the period 2014-2018 – supporting the information collected from secondary sources – while providing insights on whether and how ESF support can be improved to address social inclusion, the fight against poverty and anti-discrimination issues even more effectively. As such, the public consultation addresses the five evaluation criteria as those defined for the main evaluation study. More specifically, respondents to the public consultation were asked to express their views on:

- **Relevance:** the extent to which the issues ESF TO9 seeks to address around social inclusion, poverty and discrimination still deserve attention today.
- **Effectiveness:** the extent to which ESF TO9 has achieved its objectives of promoting social inclusion, and of combating poverty and discrimination.
- **Efficiency:** the extent to which the resources used by ESF TO9 are commensurate with the objectives achieved
- **Coherence:** the extent to which the actions supported under ESF TO9 complement and strengthen those of other programmes (EU or national) in the field of social inclusion, anti-poverty and anti-discrimination
- **EU added value:** the extent to which the contribution of ESF TO9 adds to actions taken by EU Member States in terms of promoting social inclusion, and of combating poverty and discrimination.

To that effect, respondents to the public consultation were asked both closed (single or multiple-choice) questions and open (or free text) questions.

The public consultation questionnaire was designed to account for the knowledge and experiences of different organisation types and individuals involved in ESF TO9 at all levels: from the management of Operational Programmes (i.e. Managing Authorities) to participation in ESF-funded project activities (i.e. individual beneficiaries of ESF support). In line with the Better Regulation Guidelines, this public consultation also sought the views of other interested parties not having been involved in ESF TO9, i.e. organisations of all types and the general public.

This public consultation was carried out online via the main Consultations website<sup>604</sup> of the European Commission. The public consultation questionnaire was made available in all EU official languages, except Irish. The dissemination of the public consultation was made via direct invitations to key stakeholders<sup>605</sup> involved in ESF TO9 and through an active social media presence.

The analysis investigated views from a wide range of stakeholders concerning how the European Social Fund (ESF) promotes social inclusion and combats poverty and discrimination. The main groups of stakeholders included<sup>606</sup>:

- organisations involved in the delivery of ESF TO9: e.g. Managing Authorities, Intermediate Bodies, beneficiary organisations or project promoters;
- organisations with knowledge of ESF TO9 but not involved in its delivery: e.g. NGOs, think-tanks;
- individuals who have received ESF TO9 support;
- individuals who have not received ESF TO9 support but who have knowledge of it: e.g. academic experts;
- organisations with no knowledge of or involvement in ESF TO9;
- individuals with no knowledge of or involvement in ESF TO9.

A mixed methods approach was applied in the analysis to ensure a clear and balanced assessment of the consultation responses. This entailed:

- A descriptive analysis of the profile of respondents involved across Member States and stakeholder groups in order to ascertain the diversity and representative nature of the sample, which may influence the interpretation of findings.
- An interpretative analysis of the key findings to identify response patterns both common and specific to different respondent profiles or groups of respondents.

The interpretative analysis can be broken down into:

- A quantitative analysis of the answers generated from the closed-ended questions: univariate analyses (proportions, averages) and bivariate analyses, including cross-tabulations to investigate relationships between respondent variables and response patterns.
- A qualitative analysis of the answers generated from open-ended questions, using a coding system summarising textual responses into short statements or keywords which are as many quantifiable units of analysis from which response patterns are identified according to their frequency of occurrence.

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<sup>604</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2018-6547571\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2018-6547571_en)

<sup>605</sup> Public and private organisations involved in the delivery, monitoring or implementation of ESF actions, as well as organisations and individuals benefiting or having benefited from ESF support

<sup>606</sup> The public consultation questionnaire had six sets of questions (or strand) tailored to each of the six stakeholder groups listed below.

Since the results of this public consultation were obtained from a non-representative sample<sup>607</sup>, the results had to be interpreted with care. The analysis was carried out by strand to identify differences in views by stakeholder group. Views from open response questions and position papers were reported if they were shared by more than one organisation or person. A key limitation of replies to the public consultation is the concentration of replies from a minority of countries (e.g. more than half of replies were from three Member States – Bulgaria, Hungary and Croatia). The findings presented in this report cannot be considered representative of any group (e.g. Member State, type of organisation). Small sample sizes for some groups may also limit the generalisability of their views. As a rule of thumb, a sample size of less than 50 replies was considered small and at a higher risk of bias.<sup>608</sup> Such occurrences are accompanied by a note of caution in the analysis.

This report presents the analysis of the responses from the public consultation which ran from 26 September to 19 December 2019. This report is to feed into the Commission's Staff Working Document of the evaluation of ESF support to promote social inclusion, combat poverty and any discrimination.

## **Overall response**

A total of 574 replies to the web-based PC<sup>609</sup>, implemented between 26 September and 19 December 2019, were received. The final analysis of these is included in current report.

## **Responses by country**

Respondents from Bulgaria were most numerous with 123 responses (21.4%), followed by 82 responses (14.3%) from Hungary, and 79 responses (13.8%) from Croatia. Importantly, responses were received from all 28 EU Member States. Five respondents out of the 574 came from outside the EU<sup>610</sup>.

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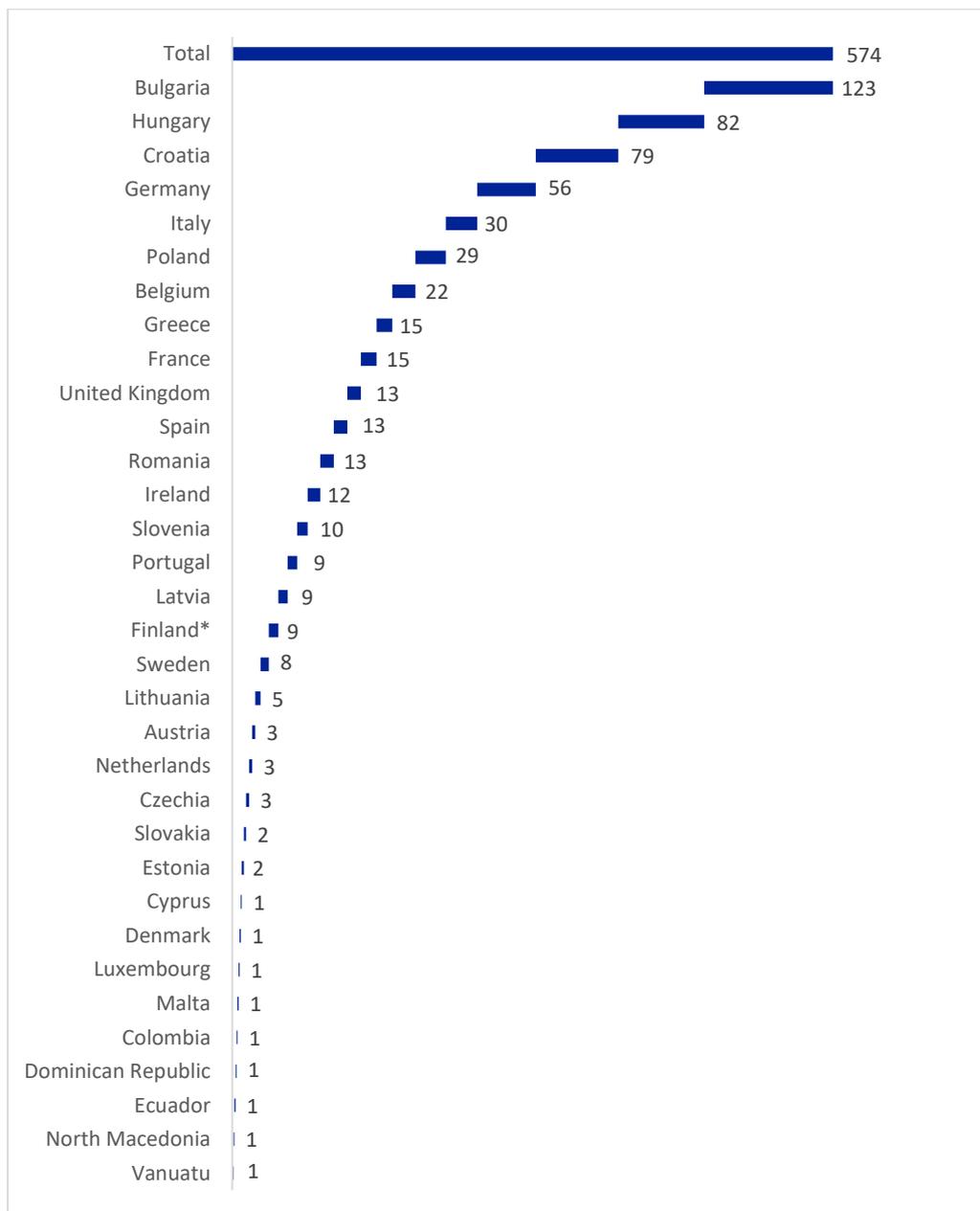
<sup>607</sup> Respondents were not selected in a way as to constitute a representative sample of the wider EU population; the public consultation was open to all and therefore anyone with an interest in responding to it did so.

<sup>608</sup> In theory, a representative sample of 50 replies may be sufficient and without bias.

<sup>609</sup> One public consultation response was not submitted through the EU Survey online platform; it was however added to the other 573 responses received.

<sup>610</sup> Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, North Macedonia and Vanuatu.

Figure 1. Overview of responses by country



N=574, Source: PC results

\*Finland includes (2) responses from the Åland Islands. See Supplementary Table for further breakdown by strand.

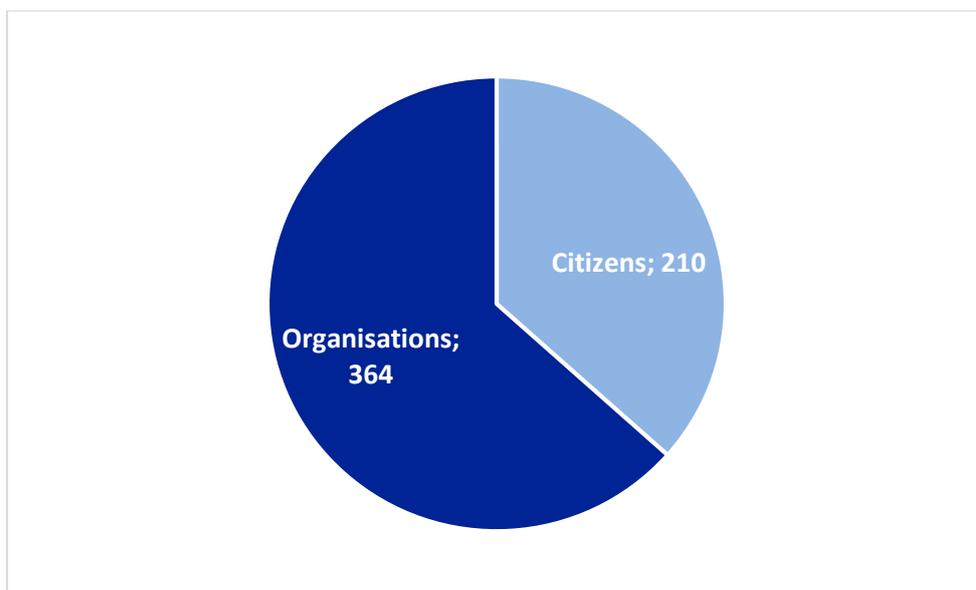
The number of responses per country are not commensurate with Member States' financial allocations under ESF TO9 (see Annex 4 for further information). For instance, there were more than twice as many responses from Bulgaria as there were from Germany while Germany's ESF TO9 financial allocation is ten times higher than Bulgaria's. Elsewhere, Hungary and Croatia totalled more responses than Member States with the highest allocated amounts such as France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Finally, the public consultation gathered more responses from the EU13 Member States (359) than from the EU15 Member States (210).

### Responses by type of participant

In terms of participant type, the 574 responses were split unevenly between organisations (364 responses or 63%) and citizens (210 responses or 37%).

Figure 2. Overview by participant type



N=574, Source: PC results

When analysing the type of organisations in the sample, public authorities are most prevalent (168 responses), followed by NGOs (70 responses). Regarding individual participants, nearly all identified as EU citizens except two.

Table 1. Participant types among individual respondents and responding organisations

Participant type		No. responses	of %
Citizens	EU	208	36.2%
	Non-EU	2	0.3%
Organisations	Public authorities	168	29.3%
	Non-governmental organisations	70	12.2%
	Other	57	9.9%
	Company/business organisation	36	6.3%
	Business association	13	2.3%
	Trade union	11	1.9%
	Academic/research institution	8	1.4%
	Consumer organisation	1	0.2%

Participant type	No. responses	of %
<b>Total</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>100%</b>

*N=574, Source: PC results*

The age and gender characteristics of all respondents in the sample – both those responding on behalf of an organisation and those responding as individuals – are described in the table below. More than 60% of the respondents identified as female while more than 80% of the respondents were aged 25 to 54 years old.

*Table 2. Gender and age of respondents in the sample*

Gender and age of respondents		No. responses	of %
Gender	Female	354	61.7%
	Male	191	33.3%
	I do not wish to answer	27	4.7%
	Other	2	0.3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>364</b>	<b>100%</b>
Age	25 to 54 years old	464	80.8%
	55 to 64 years old	76	13.2%
	65 years old or more	12	2.1%
	24 years old or less	10	1.7%
	No answer	12	2.1%
<b>Total</b>		<b>574</b>	<b>100%</b>

*N=574, Source: PC results*

Respondents on behalf organisations predominantly specialise in the fields of labour market and social inclusion with just over 40% among them involved in the management of EU funds, as shown in the table below.

*Table 3. Responding organisations' field of work or expertise*

Organisation's field of work or expertise	No. responses	of %
Management of EU funds	153	42.1%
Labour market inclusion	116	32.0%
Social inclusion	113	31.1%
Training or education	91	25.1%
Community strengthening projects	59	16.3%
Information and awareness raising campaigns	46	12.7%
Advocacy groups	39	10.7%
Social enterprises	37	10.2%

Organisation's field of work or expertise	No. responses	of %
Healthcare	22	6.1%
Other*	68	18.7%

*N=364, Source: PC results; multiple answers possible*

*\*The responding organisations' other fields of work or expertise include predominantly local and regional development, mental health, youth, social dialogue, and anti-discrimination.*

More than a third of respondents on behalf of organisations indicated working in a large organisation (with 250 employees or more). In terms of scope, more than a half of the respondents on behalf of organisations provided no information on the scope of their respective organisation while more than a quarter of the respondents indicated working for national-level organisations.

*Table 4. Responding organisations' size and scope*

Size and scope of organisations		No. responses	of %
Size	Large (250 employees or more)	136	37.4%
	Medium (50 to 249 employees)	100	27.5%
	Micro (1 to 9 employees)	65	17.9%
	Small (10 to 49 employees)	63	17.3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>364</b>	<b>100%</b>
Scope	No answer	196	53.8%
	National	99	27.2%
	Regional	37	10.2%
	Local	30	8.2%
	International	2	0.6%
<b>Total</b>		<b>364</b>	<b>100%</b>

*N=364, Source: PC results*

Looking at responding organisations' involvement in ESF delivery, 41.9% among them identified as beneficiaries, having received ESF funding for projects. A total of 110 responses (30.3%) were submitted on behalf of Managing Authorities or Intermediate Bodies. Only 30 (8.3%) out of the 364 respondents on behalf of organisations indicated playing no role in ESF delivery.

*Table 5. Extent of responding organisations' involvement in ESF delivery*

Role of organisation in ESF delivery	No. responses	of %
Beneficiary - organisation or entity receiving ESF funding for the implementation of a project	152	41.9%

Role of organisation in ESF delivery	No. responses	of %
Managing Authority or Intermediate Body <sup>611</sup>	110	30.3%
No role	30	8.3%
Civil society organisation or advocacy group	28	7.7%
Member of an ESF Monitoring Committee	18	5.0%
EU Funds Coordinating body	12	3.3%
Non-beneficiary entity receiving support from ESF actions	10	2.8%
Certifying or Audit Authority	4	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>100%</b>

*N=364, Source: PC results*

Turning to individual respondents' experience of or involvement with ESF, nearly three quarters of them indicated never having received ESF support; i.e. having never taken part in an ESF intervention. A total of 33 out of the 210 individual respondents indicated having recently received ESF support while only 5 indicated currently receiving ESF support.

*Table 6. Individual respondents' experience of ESF*

Individual respondent	No. responses	of %
Never received ESF support	157	74.8%
Yes, I have received support in the past years	33	15.7%
I do not know / I do not wish to answer	15	7.1%
Yes, I am currently receiving support	5	2.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>

*N=210, Source: PC results*

The above results appear to coincide with the answers given by individual respondents regarding their socio-economic situation with nearly three-quarters of them (155 out of 210; 73.8%) indicating being employed full-time; ESF social inclusion interventions indeed tend to target individuals who are unemployed or irregularly in employment<sup>612</sup>.

<sup>611</sup> The following countries did not have any respondents who selected "Managing Authority or Intermediate Body" to the question "What is your role in the delivery of the European Social Fund?": AT, CY, EL, LU, MT, NL, SK

<sup>612</sup> See section 2.6 in this report for a comparison of the employment status of the sample of respondents indicating having received ESF support with the employment status of ESF TO9 participants overall.

*Table 7. Individual respondents' social and economic status*

<b>Individual respondent</b>	<b>No. responses</b>	<b>of %</b>
Full-time employed	155	73.8%
Part-time employed	18	8.6%
Self-employed	16	7.6%
Unemployed for 12 months or more	12	5.7%
Unemployed for less than 12 months	12	5.7%
Having a chronic health problem	8	3.8%
Single parent	8	3.8%
Migrant or foreign background	6	2.9%
Having a disability	5	2.4%
I did not complete secondary education	3	1.4%
Recipient of minimum income schemes	3	1.4%
Other (e.g. ex-offender, suffering from housing exclusion, substance abuser)	3	1.4%
Unemployed and not looking for a job	1	0.5%
Roma or other minorities	1	0.5%
Person requiring long-term care	1	0.5%

*N=210, Source: PC results; multiple answers possible*

Both individual respondents and respondents on behalf of organisations were directed to specific sets or strands of questions corresponding to their level of knowledge of or involvement with ESF.

Among respondents on behalf of organisations, a distinction was made between those not aware of ESF (Strand I), those aware of ESF but not involved in its delivery (Strand II) and those directly involved in its delivery (Strand III). Out of the 574 respondents to this public consultation, more than half (295, 51.4%) responded on behalf of organisations being directly involved in ESF.

Among individual respondents, a distinction was made between persons having received or currently receiving ESF support (Strand IV), persons aware of ESF but not having received support (Strand V), and persons not aware of ESF and not having received ESF support (Strand VI). The most prominent group of individual respondents were those aware of ESF but not having received ESF support (132, 23%).

*Table 8. Strands of questions according to respondents' relationship to ESF*

<b>Strand</b>	<b>No. responses</b>	<b>of %</b>
Strand I: Organisations not aware of ESF	10	1.7%
Strand II: Organisations aware of ESF but not playing a direct role in the delivery	59	10.3%

Strand	No. responses	of %
Strand III: Organisations directly involved in the delivery of ESF	295	51.4%
Strand IV: Persons having received ESF support	38	6.6%
Strand V: Persons aware of the ESF but not having received support	132	23.0%
Strand VI: Persons not aware of the ESF and not having received support	40	7.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>100%</b>

*N=574, Source: PC results*

### Analysis of the responses to the evaluation questions

This analysis focuses on the five criteria defined for the evaluation of ESF TO9 interventions: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, and EU added value. Each of the six strands contained questions relating to some or all these evaluation criteria.

The results to the public consultation questions are provided by strand, starting with those questions common to two or more strands. Results by strands are aggregated for those questions common to two or more strands.

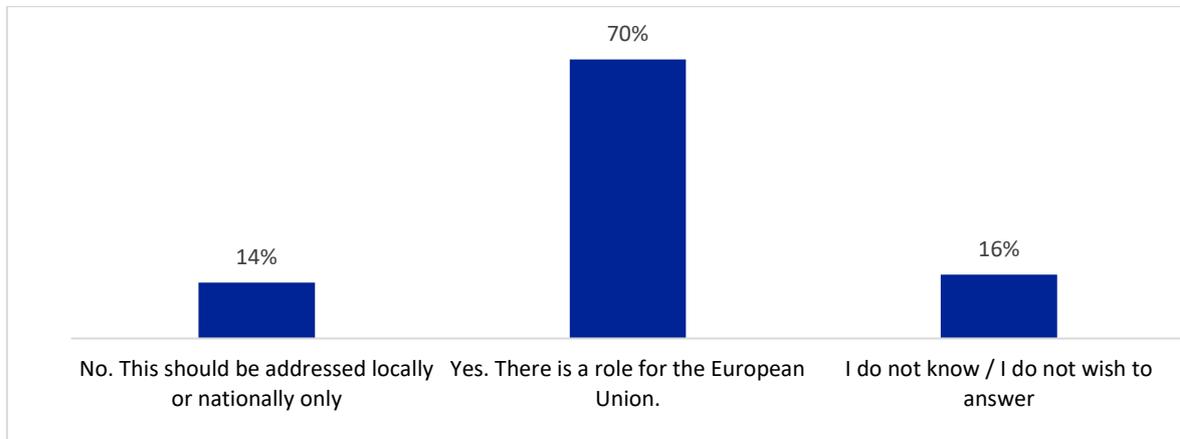
- The results from Strands I and VI are treated separately from the remaining strands as they relate to respondents having no knowledge or experience of ESF.
- The results from Strand III have been broken down by organisations' role in ESF delivery where appropriate or relevant.
- The results from Strand II have been broken down by organisation type where appropriate or relevant.
- Results have been broken down by country (or country groups) across various strands where appropriate or relevant.
- Results from Strand IV are treated separately as they relate to the experiences of individuals having received ESF support.

### Relevance

Organisations and individuals not aware of the ESF (Strands I and VI respectively) were firstly asked to indicate **if the European Union should be involved in the promotion of social inclusion, in combating poverty and any discrimination** (see Figure 3).

Most respondents across both strands (35; 70%) answered positively, that there is a role for the European Union in relation to these matters. Seven respondents said that these should be addressed locally or nationally only and further eight mentioned that they did not know or did not wish to answer. This finding is at a high risk of bias due to the small sample size (N=50).

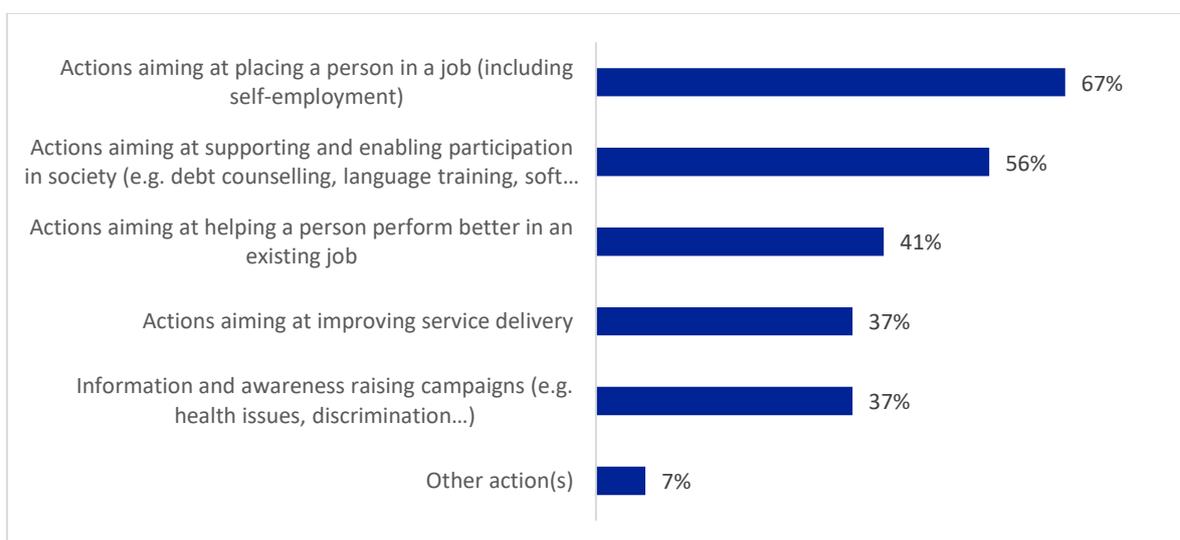
Figure 3. In your view, should the European Union be involved in the promotion of social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination? (Q I-1 and Q VI-1)



N=50, Source: PC results

All respondents not involved in ESF delivery – individuals and organisations alike – who agreed that the EU should play a role in the promotion of social inclusion were asked to indicate **what kind of actions should be provided with ESF support to promote social inclusion, combat poverty and any discrimination** (see ). Over two thirds (161; 67%) of respondents who answered this question (across Strands I, II for organisations; V and VI for individuals) suggested *actions aiming at placing a person in a job (including self-employment)* and over half of them (134; 56%) also suggested *actions aiming at supporting and enabling participation in society (e.g. debt counselling, language training, soft skills)*. A further 41% (98) indicated *actions aiming at helping a person perform better in an existing job* and another 37% (88) mentioned *actions aiming at improving service delivery, and information and awareness raising campaigns (e.g. health issues, discrimination)*.

Figure 4. What kind of actions should be provided with ESF support to promote social inclusion, combat poverty and any discrimination? (Q I-2, Q II-2, Q V-2 and Q VI-2)



N=241, Source: PC results; multiple answers possible

As shown in the table above, 7% suggested the ESF could support other actions, these include respondents aware of the ESF but not playing a role in its delivery (Strand II) and individuals aware of the ESF but having never received ESF support (Strand V):

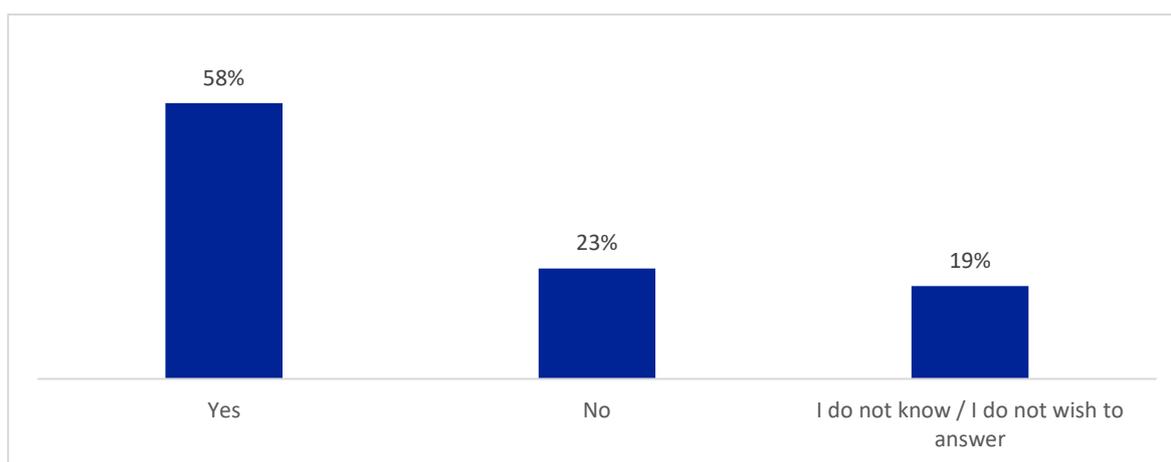
- Nine of the 59 responding organisations in Strand II believed ESF should also cover (or strengthen) other support actions such as education for all, affordable housing, and developing the social economy – in line with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights.
- Six of the 132 individual respondents in Strand V indicated that ESF should promote other actions such as work-life balance, better health structures, more support for affordable housing.

Among representatives of organisations aware of ESF but not playing role in its delivery (Strand II), most of them (41; 70%) indicated that *actions aiming at supporting and enabling participation in society (e.g. debt counselling, language training, soft skills, ...)* should be provided by the EU. A similar share of respondents (38; 64%) also believe that *actions aiming at placing a person in a job (including self-employment)* should be provided by the EU. Nearly half of them said the same about *actions aiming at helping a person perform better in an existing job; actions aiming at improving service delivery (29; 49%); and Information and awareness raising campaigns (e.g. health issues, discrimination...)* (28; 48%).

Respondents on behalf of organisations aware of ESF but not involved in its delivery (Strand II) and individual respondents aware of ESF but not having received its support (Strand V) were asked to state **whether they thought that the all the actions mentioned above were indeed being provided under ESF** (see Figure 5).

The majority (110; 58%) responded positively, while almost one quarter (44; 23%) suggested that the actions were not being provided.

Figure 5. Do you think these actions are indeed being provided? (II-3, V-3)



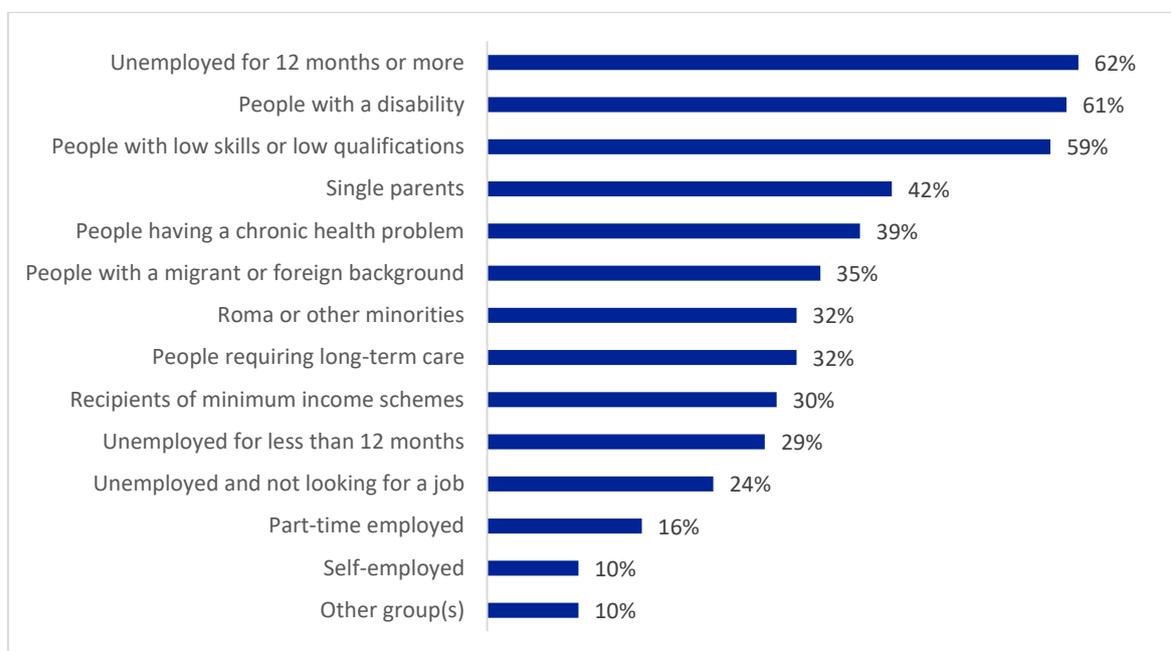
N=191. Source: PC results

Respondents from strands I, II, V and VI were asked to state **which target groups should be prioritised under ESF** (see Figure 6).

According to respondents across all four strands, it is thought that people *unemployed for 12 months or more* (149; 62%), *people with a disability* (146; 61%) and *people with low skills or low qualifications* (142; 59%) should be prioritised the most. The groups

that should be prioritised the least by ESF, according to respondents' opinions, are the *self-employed* (23; 10%) and the *part-time employed* (39; 16%).

Figure 6. Which target groups should be prioritised? (Q I-3, Q II-4, Q V-4, Q VI-3)



N=241. Source: PC results; multiple answers possible

Opinions among the different types of respondents are overall consistent in relation to the target groups that should be prioritised under ESF. However, some differences can be observed regarding the priority given people *unemployed for 12 months or more*: the share of respondents in Strand V (persons aware of the ESF but not having received support) who selected this target group (69%) is higher compared to the three other strands (50% to 56% selected this target group across Strands I, II and VI).

Some differences can also be noticed in relation to *people with low skills or low qualifications*. The share of respondents from Strand II (organisations aware of ESF but not playing a direct role in the delivery) who selected this target group (75%), is higher than the share of respondents from the other strands who selected the same. The findings for Strand I and Strand VI are at a high risk of bias due to the small sample size (N<50).

Table 9 provides a detailed overview of the responses received to this question according to each strand.

Table 9. Which target groups should be prioritised? (Strands I, II, V and VI)

	Strand I: Orgs not aware of ESF N=10	Strand II: Orgs aware of ESF but not playing a role in delivery N=59	Strand V: Persons aware of the ESF but not having received support N=132	Strand VI: Persons not aware of the ESF not having received support N=40
Unemployed for 12 months or more	50%	56%	69%	50%
People with low skills or low qualifications	40%	75%	58%	43%
People with a disability	30%	69%	63%	48%
Roma or other minorities	20%	37%	36%	15%
People requiring long-term care	20%	34%	33%	33%
Recipients of minimum income schemes	10%	41%	31%	18%
People having a chronic health problem	10%	44%	39%	40%
Single parents	10%	42%	49%	28%
Unemployed for less than 12 months	0%	31%	33%	23%
Part-time employed	0%	22%	16%	13%
Self-employed	0%	14%	10%	5%
People with a migrant or foreign background	0%	47%	35%	25%
Unemployed and not looking for a job	0%	20%	28%	20%
Other group(s)	0%	20%	8%	3%

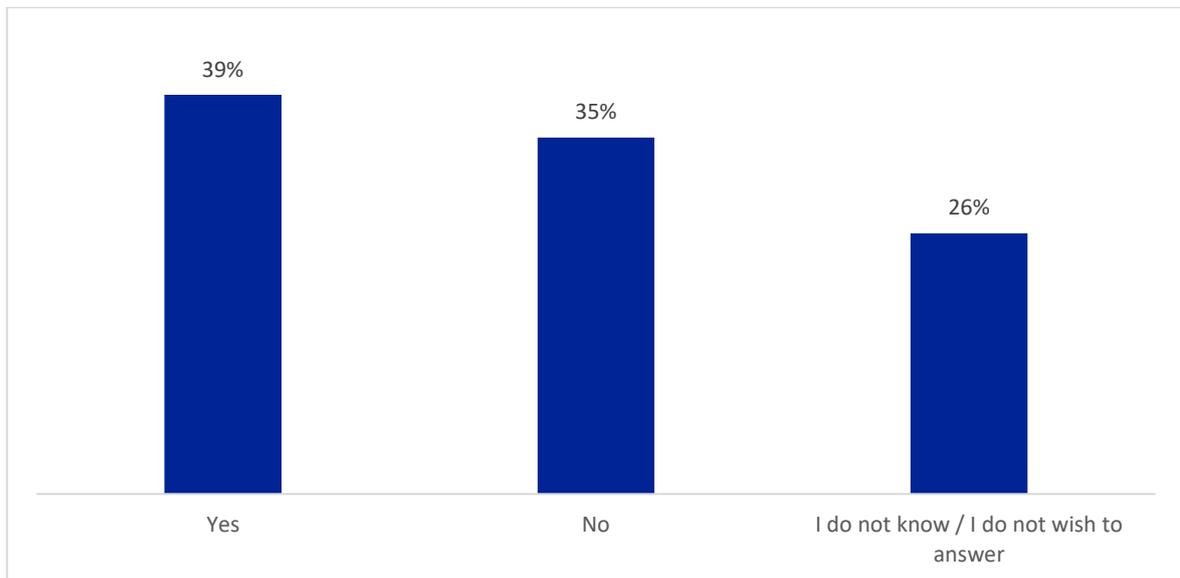
Source: PC results; multiple answers possible

A handful of responding organisations (12) and of individual respondents (7) aware of the ESF but not playing a role in its delivery or having never received ESF support (Strand II) believed ESF TO9 support should also be targeted at *Other groups*, such as: informal carers (most frequent answer), people at risk of homelessness, and children with disabilities.

Respondents from Strands II and V were also asked to indicate whether **they thought the above target groups were being reached** (see Figure 7).

Respondents' views in relation to this matter were rather mixed, with 39% (75) believing that the target groups have indeed been reached, and 35% (67) believing that they have not. Over one quarter (26%, 49) said that they did not know or did not wish to answer. Opinions across Strands II and V are similar and consistent.

Figure 7. Do you think these target groups are being reached? (II-5, V-5)



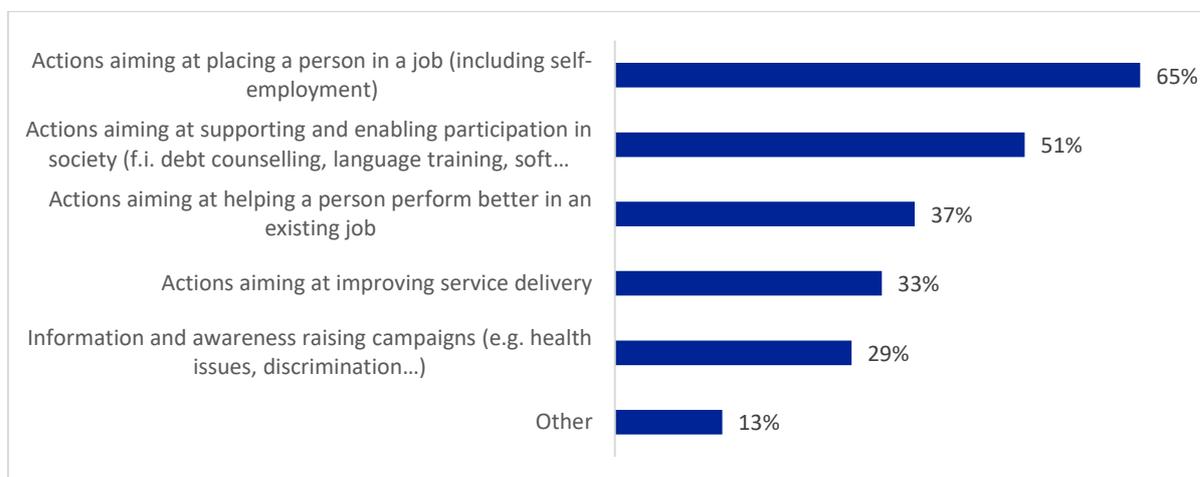
N=191. Source: PC results

Organisations directly involved in the delivery of ESF (Strand III) were asked to specify **what kind of support they provide through ESF to promote social inclusion, combat poverty and any discrimination** (see Figure 8).

Almost two thirds of them (191, 65%) provide actions *aiming at placing a person in a job (including self-employment)* and over half of them (149, 51%) provide *actions aiming at supporting and enabling participation in society (f.i. debt counselling, language training, soft skills, ...)*. A further 37% (109) of respondents provide *actions aiming at helping a person perform better in an existing job*, followed by one third who provide *actions aiming at improving service delivery* (97, 33%) and 29% (86) who provide *information and awareness raising campaigns (e.g. health issues, discrimination...)*.

These results are consistent with the expectations of organisations and individuals not involved in ESF who believe the ESF should above all serve to place (long-term) unemployed people in a job and support groups' participation in society (see Figure 4 and Figure 6 above).

Figure 8. What kind of support is provided with ESF funding to promote social inclusion, combat poverty and any discrimination? (Q III-1)



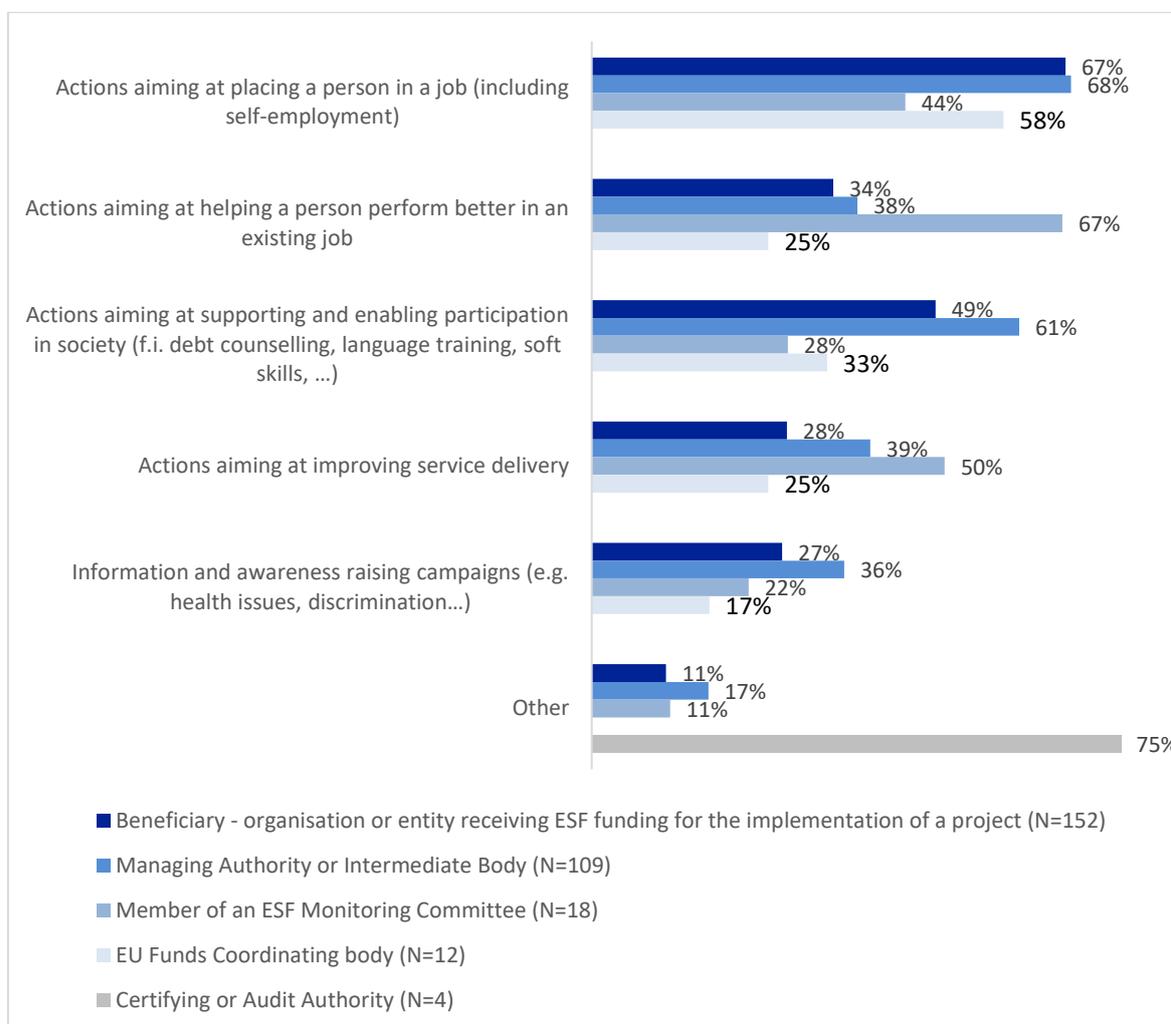
N=295. Source: PC results; multiple answers possible

As shown in the figure above, 13% or 38 responding organisations involved in ESF delivery indicated providing *Other* types of support through ESF, the most recurrent being for the development of social innovation or the social economy and for the initiatives to develop social service provision at local or regional level.

Looking at the specific roles of responding organisations directly involved in ESF delivery (see Figure 9), it is possible to notice that beneficiary organisations (i.e. ESF funding for the implementation of projects) and Managing Authorities or Intermediate Bodies are involved in the same ESF actions in relatively similar proportions. A slight difference can however be noted in relation to *actions aiming at supporting and enabling participation in society (f.i. debt counselling, language training, soft skills, ...)* and *actions aiming at improving service delivery* as Managing Authorities/Intermediate Bodies are more frequently involved in these types of action compared to beneficiary organisations.

Organisations with other roles in ESF delivery were underrepresented in the sample compared to beneficiary organisations and Managing Authorities/Intermediate Bodies, therefore their results may not be considered as statistically representative with the exception of Certifying or Audit Authorities – 75% of them indicated providing other types of support (administrative and reporting support). Views provided by ESF monitoring committees, EU funds coordinating bodies and certifying or auditing authorities are at a high risk of bias due to the small sample size (N<50).

Figure 9. What kind of support does your organisation provide through ESF to promote social inclusion, combat poverty and any discrimination? (broken down by Strand III respondents' role in ESF delivery)



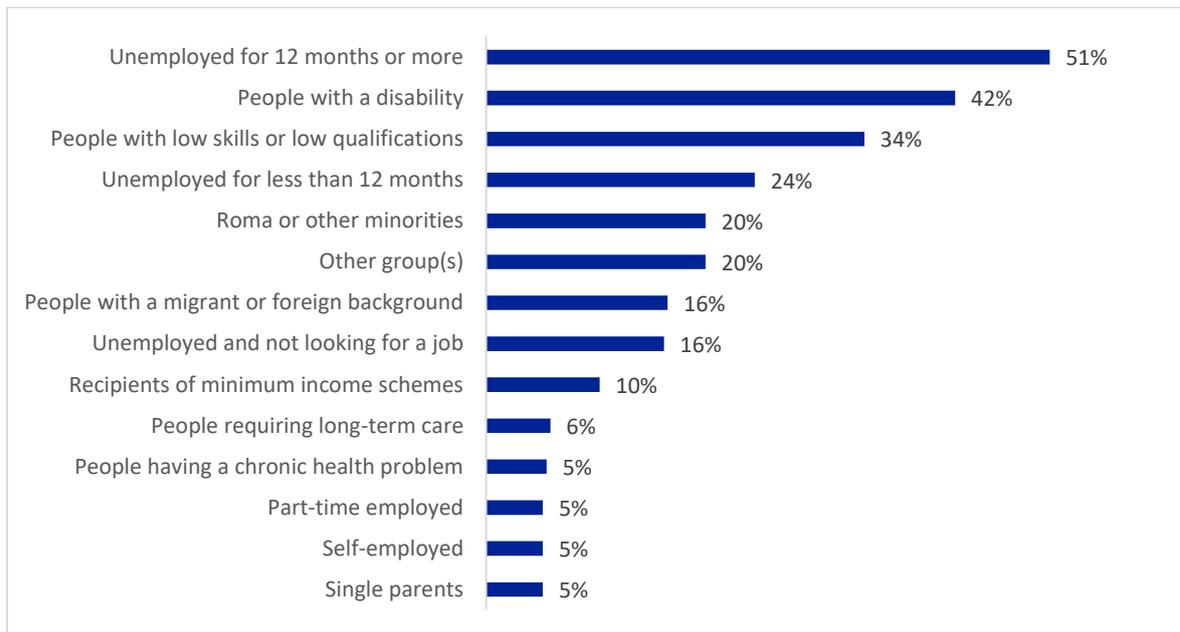
Source: PC results; multiple answers possible

It is also worth noting from the above figure that beneficiary organisations are also more frequently involved in providing *Other* types of support compared to Managing Authorities or Intermediate Bodies.

Regarding **ESF support to target groups**, Figure 10 shows that more than half of Strand III respondents (149, 51%) indicated that the support actions they provide are directed at people *unemployed for 12 months or more*. A further 42% (124) indicated that the support actions they provide are directed at *people with a disability* and just over one third (100, 34%) mentioned at *people with low skills or low qualifications*.

The data below shows that the target groups with the least support actions directed at them are the *self-employed; single parents; part-time employed; people having a chronic health problem; and people requiring long-term care*, with approximately 5% of respondents mentioning providing actions directed at them.

Figure 10. Which target groups are these actions directed at? (Q III-2)

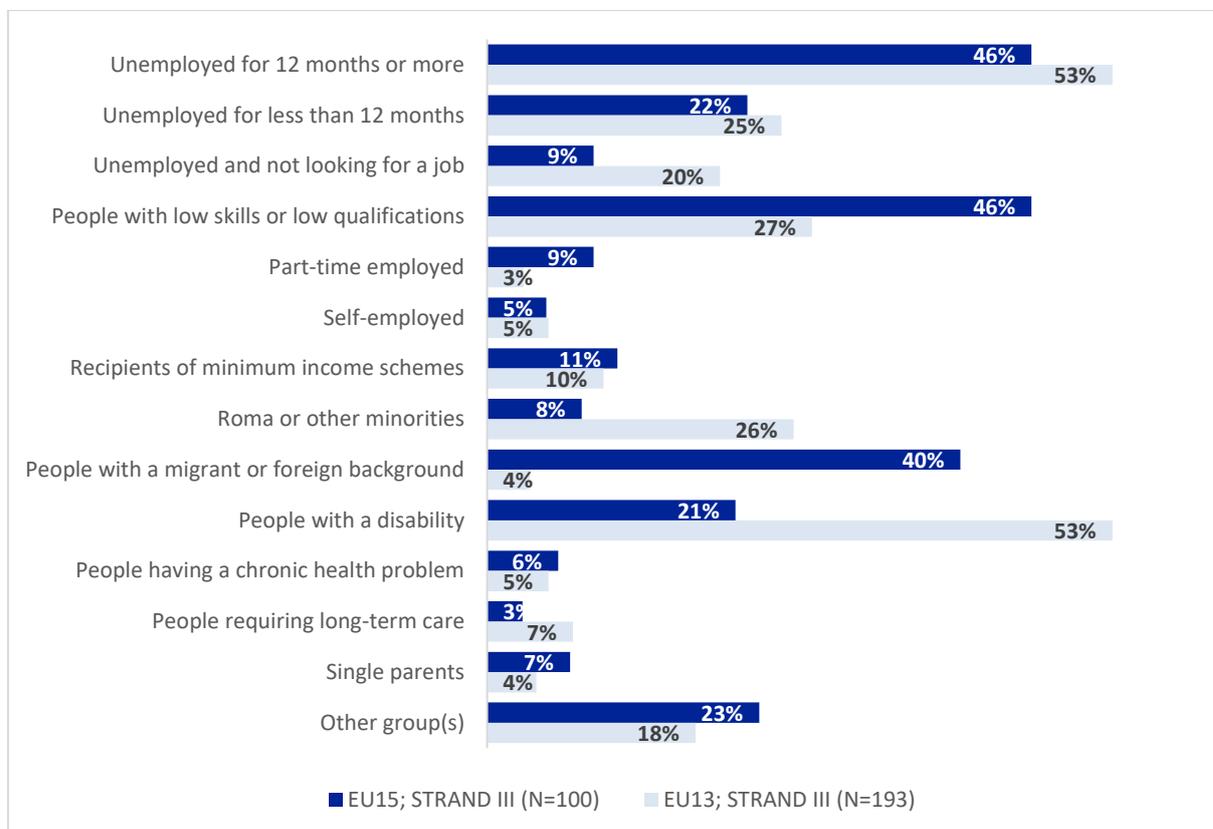


N=295. Source: PC results; multiple answers possible.

Among the 20% of responding organisations who indicated their ESF actions supported *Other group(s)*, the most frequently indicated group was people at risk of social exclusion in general – including people with multiple disadvantage.

As shown in Figure 11, **considerable differences could be observed between the responses from EU15 and responses from EU13** (i.e. Member States joining the EU in or after 2004) with respect to **target groups**. The most significant differences relate to actions targeted at *people with a disability* (53% in EU13 vs. 21% in EU15); actions targeted at *people with a migrant or foreign background* (40% in EU15 vs. 4% in EU13) actions targeted at *people with low skills or qualifications* (46% in EU15 vs. 27% in EU13).

Figure 11. Which target groups are these actions are directed at? Comparison of EU15 and EU13 responses within Strand III – organisations involved in ESF delivery



Source: PC results; multiple answers possible

## Effectiveness

Respondents from strands II, III and V were asked to state their opinion in relation to the **effectiveness of the different actions in promoting social inclusion and in combating poverty and discrimination** (see Table 10).

Overall and on average, **80% of respondents believe that all ESF actions are either very useful or mostly useful.**

According to the respondents' views, the most useful actions (>80%) are:

- (i) *basic skills training (e.g. social skills, IT, language)* (90%, 438);
- (ii) *training and education (including vocational training)* (89%, 433);
- (iii) *support to people with disabilities (e.g. promotion of community-based care)* (86%, 419);
- (iv) *support to overcome barriers to job search actions (e.g. transport or childcare)* (85%, 413);
- (v) *information, guidance, tutoring in the search for a job* (85%, 412);
- (vi) *internships, traineeships to learn a trade* (84%, 406);

(vii) *skills assessment and recognition* (83%, 403); and

(viii) *help with care obligations (e.g. childcare, long-term care)* (82%, 399).

On the other hand, actions relating to *Studies and evaluations of existing institutions* were least frequently considered very useful or mostly useful (62%).

Table 10. *In your opinion how effective are the following actions in promoting social inclusion and in combating poverty and discrimination? (Q II-6, Q III-3, Q V-6)*

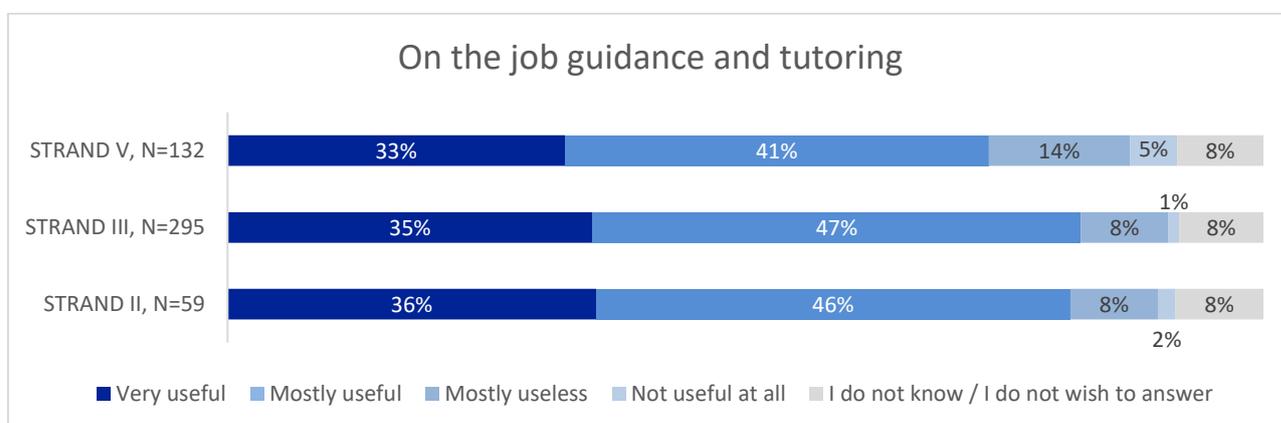
	<b>Very useful + Mostly useful</b>	<b>Very useful</b>	<b>Mostly useful</b>	<b>Mostly useless</b>	<b>Not useful at all</b>	<b>I do not know / I do not wish to answer</b>
Basic skills training (e.g. social skills, IT, language)	<b>90%</b>	49%	42%	5%	1%	4%
Training and education (including vocational training)	<b>89%</b>	50%	39%	6%	0%	5%
Support to people with disabilities (e.g. promotion of community-based care)	<b>86%</b>	50%	36%	4%	1%	9%
Support to overcome barriers to job search actions (e.g. transport or childcare)	<b>85%</b>	45%	40%	6%	2%	7%
Information, guidance, tutoring in the search for a job	<b>85%</b>	40%	45%	8%	2%	5%
Internships, traineeships to learn a trade	<b>84%</b>	43%	40%	6%	2%	9%
Skills assessment and recognition	<b>83%</b>	35%	48%	8%	2%	8%
Help with care obligations (e.g. childcare, long-term care)	<b>82%</b>	39%	43%	6%	1%	10%
Second chance education	<b>80%</b>	36%	44%	9%	1%	11%
On the job guidance and tutoring	<b>80%</b>	35%	45%	10%	2%	8%
Incentives for employers	<b>79%</b>	29%	49%	10%	4%	8%
Counselling (e.g. debt or health)	<b>76%</b>	29%	47%	12%	2%	10%
Assistance in a situation of crisis (e.g. shelters)	<b>75%</b>	40%	35%	8%	3%	14%
Awareness raising and information campaigns	<b>72%</b>	23%	49%	16%	4%	8%
Help in setting up a business	<b>71%</b>	27%	44%	10%	4%	14%

	Very useful + Mostly useful	Very useful	Mostly useful	Mostly useless	Not useful at all	I do not know / I do not wish to answer
Structural support for strengthening institutional capacity	<b>70%</b>	25%	45%	12%	3%	15%
Studies and evaluations of existing institutions	<b>62%</b>	15%	47%	17%	6%	15%

N=486. Source: PC results.

Opinions among respondents across Strands II, III and V are overall consistent. Slight differences can be observed in relation to *On the job guidance and tutoring* where the share of respondents in Strand V (persons aware of ESF but not having received ESF support) who viewed this action as 'very/mostly useful' is lower by approximately 9 percentage points than the share of respondents with the same view across Strand II (organisations aware of ESF but not involved in delivery) and Strand III (organisations involved in ESF delivery).

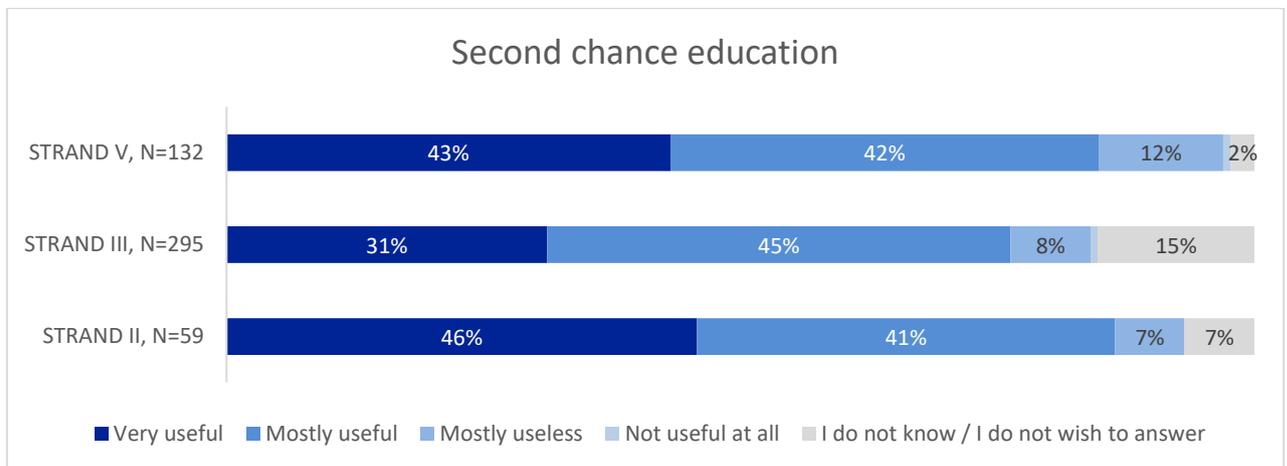
Figure 12. In your opinion how effective are the following actions in promoting social inclusion and in combating poverty and discrimination? (Strands II, III and V)



Source: PC results

Another difference of opinion across Strands II, III and V relates to *Second chance education* where the share of respondents in Strand III who viewed this action as 'very/mostly useful' is lower by approximately 9 percentage points than the share of respondents with the same view across Strand II (organisations aware of ESF but not involved in delivery) and Strand V (person aware of ESF but having received ESF support).

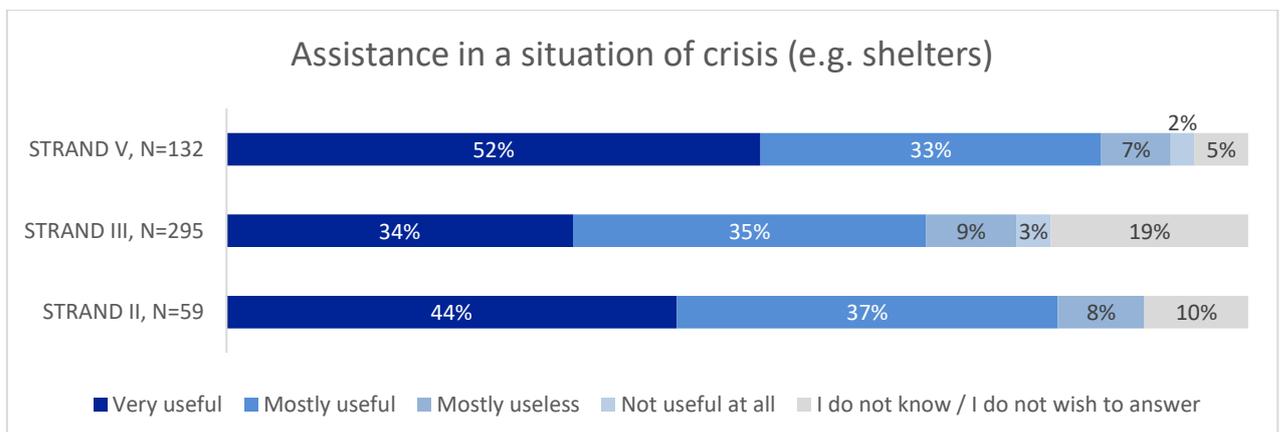
Figure 13. In your opinion how effective are the following actions in promoting social inclusion and in combating poverty and discrimination? (Strands II, III and V)



Source: PC results

Furthermore, respondents also expressed different views in relation to *assistance in a situation of crisis (e.g. shelters)*: 68% of respondent from Strand III indicated that this was a very/mostly useful action, compared to 81% from strand II and 86% form strand V who indicated the same.

Figure 14. In your opinion how effective are the following actions in promoting social inclusion and in combating poverty and discrimination? (strands II, III and V)



Source: PC results

Respondents on behalf of organisations directly involved in the delivery of ESF (Strand III) were asked to explain **which factors have contributed most to the success or failure of ESF actions**<sup>613</sup>.

<sup>613</sup> Open Question III-4

Among this group of respondents, **a majority felt positively** about the collaborative efforts and partnership present in the delivery of ESF.

Particularly, **cooperation between civil society organisations and Managing Authorities were indicated most often as a success factor of ESF actions.** Beneficiary organisations or entity receiving ESF funding for the implementation of a project felt most strongly about the positive effects of partnership between different actors in the successful delivery of ESF actions. Among the different types of organisations, mostly Public Authorities indicated collaborative actions as a success factor in the delivery of ESF.

Respondents also indicated **targeted or individualised support as a success factor of ESF actions.** There was appreciation for well-tailored and flexible measures to address the needs of target groups. Beneficiaries of ESF funding for the implementation of a project felt most strongly about the positive effects of support tailored for the specific needs of target groups. Respondents from Public Authority organisations mostly attributed individualised support to the success of ESF actions. For example, a respondent from a Public Authority organisation mentioned, adapting support to the needs of the target group and taking a flexible approach to building a support pathway, contributed to the success of their ESF project.

**Knowledge and understanding of the specific circumstances and need of the target group** likely had positive effects on the delivery of ESF actions. Respondents from both Beneficiary organisations and Managing Authorities equally regarded this as a success factor of ESF actions. Particularly, respondents felt intimate knowledge of the region where the project is implemented and understanding of the needs of its inhabitants led to the success of ESF actions. Respondents from Public Authorities mostly indicated knowledge and understanding of the needs of the target group to be a factor in successful delivery of ESF actions.

**Adequate financial contribution of the EU through ESF was also regarded as a possible success factor.** Both, Beneficiaries and Managing authorities equally believe providing of ESF funds significantly affected the successful delivery of their projects. Respondents from all types of organisations from Public authorities to private business, trade unions as well as non- governmental organisations are very much in agreement about the overall positive effect of EU funds in successfully delivering intended outputs.

In contrast, respondents mostly cited **structural rigidity and excessively bureaucratic processes as a contributing factor in failure of ESF actions.** Among respondents who indicated this, they specially mentioned the standardised nature of programmes and the regulated processes that are often unable to effectively address the diverse needs and issues of all the target groups. Beneficiaries of ESF particularly held this view. In addition, critical observations relating to the bureaucratic processes in the monitoring and delivery of ESF actions were most frequently made by public authorities and non-governmental organisations.

**Administrative burden was also a highly likely cause of failure of ESF actions.** Specially, respondents mentioned that excessive requirements for record- keeping, monitoring as well as collecting data on indicators deter organisations from engaging in ESF projects and individual participants from engaging in ESF supported measures. Beneficiaries of ESF and respondents representing Managing authorities equally hold this view. Similarly, respondents from public authorities and non-governmental

organisations equally strongly attributed the rigidity in ESF structure and bureaucratic complexities to failure of ESF actions.

**Delays in financing of ESF projects has also been identified as a factor of failure.** This factor was specifically identified by ESF Beneficiary organisations as a likely cause of failure. Particularly, respondents indicated that pre-financing over long periods of time proved to be problematic for grass-roots businesses. In addition, respondents indicated that delays in disbursement of funds led to discontinuity of interventions, the lack of sustainability of activities and services, and thus affected the quality of project management.

Again, respondents representing organisations directly involved in the delivery of ESF (Strand III) were asked to their opinion in relation to **how successful the ESF actions were in providing support to the different target groups** (see Table 11).

The actions that were deemed most successful – in a majority of cases (>50%) – are related to the following target groups:

- (i) *Persons having a disability* (61%, 180);
- (ii) *Unemployed for 12 months or more* (60%, 178);
- (iii) *Unemployed for less than 12 months* (59%, 174); and
- (iv) *Low-skilled* (57%, 168).

Actions were deemed the least frequently successful for *Persons requiring Long Term Care* (36%) as well as *Other – unspecified – groups* (22%).

A relatively significant share of the Strand III respondents could not or did not want to give an opinion as to how effective ESF actions were for the different target group (on average 36%).

*Table 11. In your opinion, how successful were the ESF actions in providing support to the following target groups? (Q III-6)*

	<b>Very successful + Mostly successful</b>	<b>Very successful</b>	<b>Mostly successful</b>	<b>Neither successful nor unsuccessful</b>	<b>Mostly unsuccessful</b>	<b>I do not know/ I do not wish to answer</b>
Persons having a disability	<b>61%</b>	18%	43%	12%	5%	22%
Unemployed for 12 months or more	<b>60%</b>	12%	48%	17%	4%	19%
Unemployed for less than 12 months	<b>59%</b>	13%	46%	12%	4%	25%
Low-skilled	<b>57%</b>	11%	46%	18%	6%	19%
Single parents	<b>43%</b>	12%	31%	17%	5%	35%
Persons with 'multiple disadvantage'	<b>43%</b>	10%	33%	16%	4%	38%
Migrants or people with a foreign background	<b>42%</b>	11%	31%	15%	4%	39%

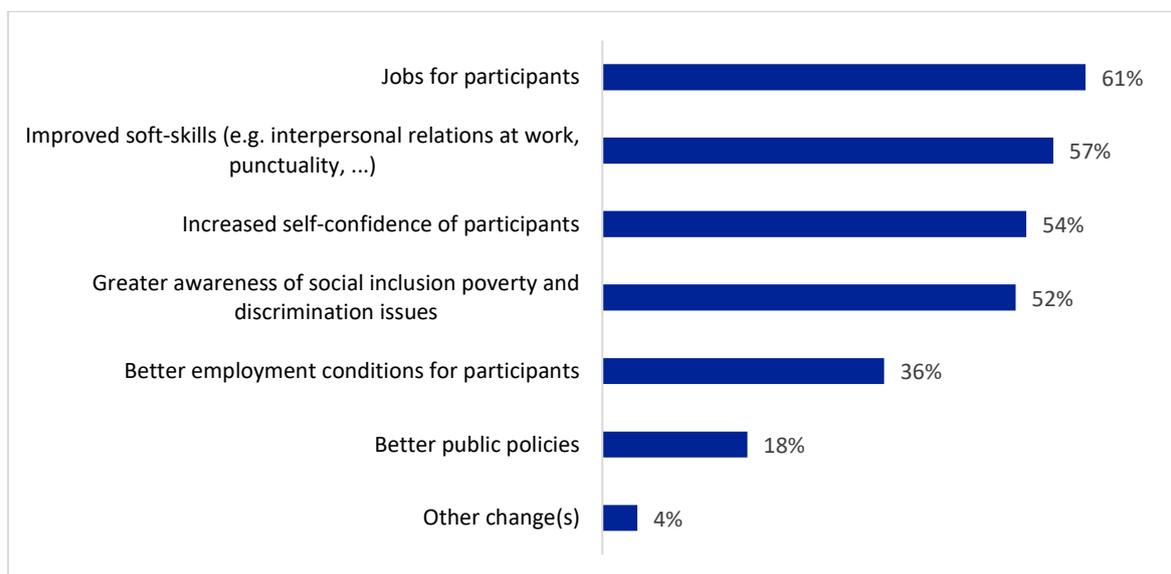
	<b>Very successful + Mostly successful</b>	<b>Very successful</b>	<b>Mostly successful</b>	<b>Neither successful nor unsuccessful</b>	<b>Mostly unsuccessful</b>	<b>I do not know/ I do not wish to answer</b>
Recipients of minimum income schemes	<b>40%</b>	5%	35%	20%	4%	36%
Unemployed and not looking for a job	<b>39%</b>	9%	30%	18%	11%	33%
Roma or other minorities	<b>39%</b>	9%	30%	15%	6%	40%
Part-time employed	<b>38%</b>	5%	33%	21%	5%	36%
Persons having a chronic health problem	<b>36%</b>	9%	27%	15%	6%	42%
Self-employed	<b>36%</b>	6%	30%	16%	4%	44%
Persons requiring Long Term Care	<b>30%</b>	7%	23%	15%	9%	46%
Other	<b>22%</b>	4%	18%	9%	2%	67%

*N=295. Source: PC results*

Respondents in Strand III (i.e. organisations involved in ESF delivery) were also asked to specify **what changes the ESF supported actions to promote social inclusion, combat poverty or any discrimination brought about** (see Figure 15).

The majority agree that the ESF supported actions brought *jobs for participants* (180, 61%), *improved soft skills* (168, 57%), *increased self-confidence of participants* (158, 54%), as well as *greater awareness of social inclusion poverty and discrimination issues* (154, 52%). Over one third of respondents (105; 36%) also believed that the ESF supported actions have brought about *better employment conditions for participants* and a further 18% (54) thought it has contributed to *better public policies*.

Figure 15. What changes did the ESF supported actions to promote social inclusion, combat poverty or any discrimination bring about? (Q III-5)



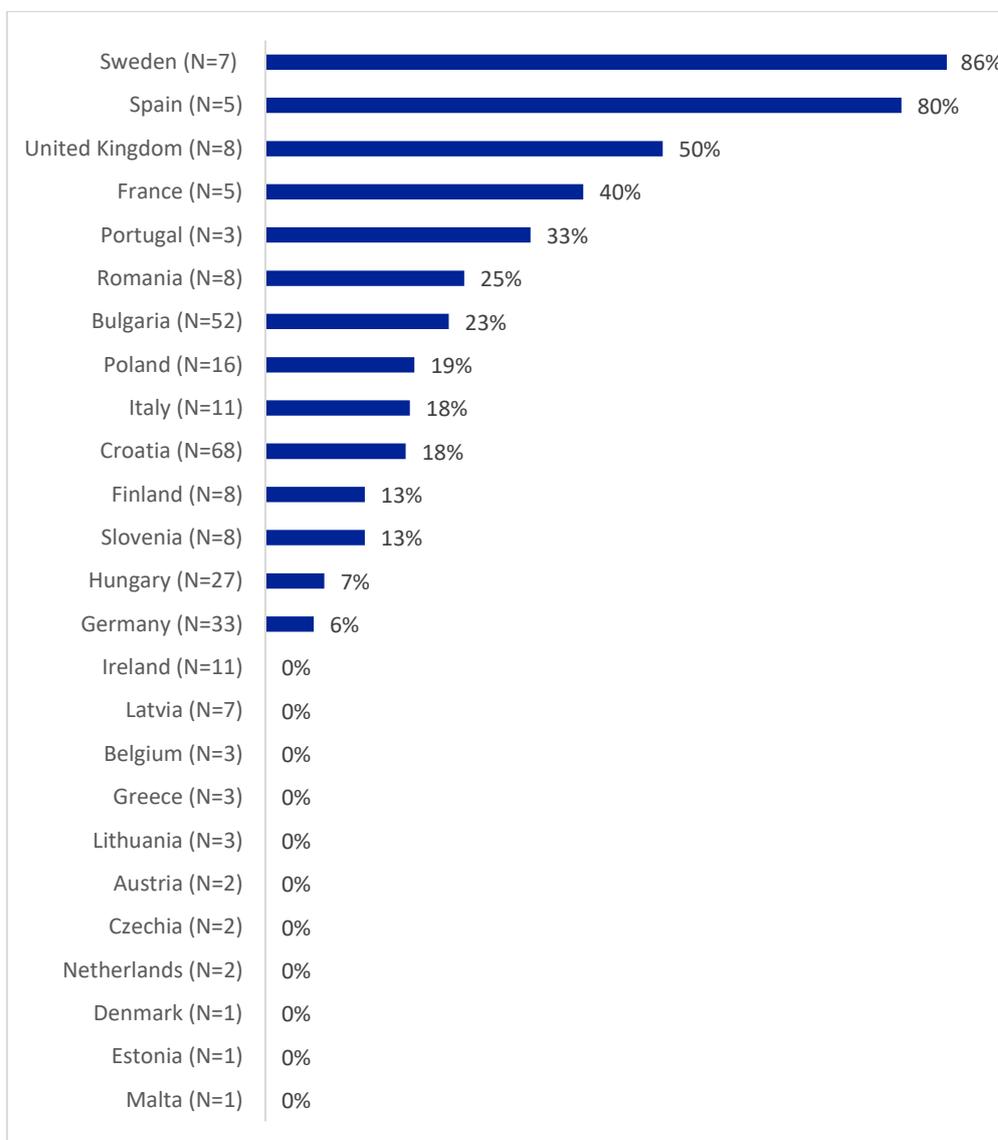
N=295. Source: PC results; multiple answers possible.

As shown above, 4% (10) of responding organisations involved in ESF delivery noted *Other change(s)* brought about by ESF, such as improved access to healthcare and assistance services, especially for older people.

In relation to those who indicated that ESF supported actions contributed to better public policies, looking at the number of respondents by country, most respondents from Sweden (86%, 6) and Spain (80%, 4) agreed with this statement. However, given the low number of respondents from these countries, the results should be interpreted with caution.

As shown in Figure 16, looking at the countries with a higher number of respondents (Croatia, N=68 and Bulgaria, N=52), the share of respondents who agree with this statement is considerably lower (18% and 23% respectively). Notably, only 6% of respondents from Germany (N=33) and 7% from Hungary (N=27) believe the same. Furthermore, none of the 11 respondents from Ireland believe that ESF supported actions contributed to better public policies.

Figure 16. Share of respondents to Q III-5 who indicated that ESF supported actions contributed to better public policies, broken down by country



N=295. Source: PC results

As shown Table 12, certain differences can be noted among respondents on behalf of organisations with different roles in ESF delivery. For instance, Beneficiary organisations slightly more frequently indicated that ESF brought about jobs for participants, improved soft skills and increased self-confidence compared to Managing Authorities/Intermediate Bodies (MA/IB) – a difference of 7 to 9 percentage points.

More significant differences can be observed in relation to responses received from Members of an ESF Monitoring Committee, EU Funds Coordinating body and Certifying or Audit Authority. However, given the low number of respondents of these types, these results may not be statistically representative and should therefore be interpreted with caution.

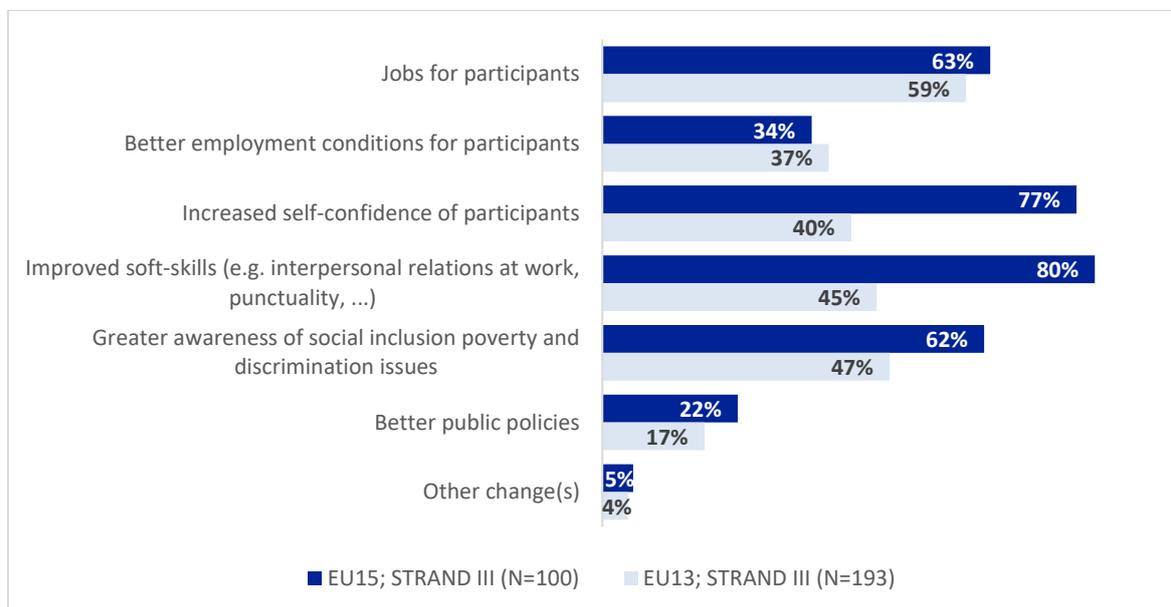
Table 12. What changes did the ESF supported actions to promote social inclusion, combat poverty or any discrimination bring about? (broken down by Strand III respondents' role in ESF delivery)

	Beneficiary org. receiving ESF funding (N=152)	MA / IB (N=109)	Member of an ESF Monitoring Committee (N=17)	EU funds Coordinating body (N=12)	Certifying or Audit Authority (N=4)
Jobs for participants	63%	55%	88%	75%	75%
Improved soft skills (e.g. interpersonal relations at work, punctuality, ...)	57%	50%	94%	42%	75%
Increased self-confidence of participants	57%	48%	82%	17%	50%
Greater awareness of social inclusion poverty and discrimination issues	49%	56%	65%	33%	50%
Better employment conditions for participants	33%	37%	53%	50%	0%
Better public policies	18%	18%	6%	50%	0%
Other change(s)	4%	6%	6%	0%	0%

N=295. Source: PC results; multiple answers possible.

As shown in Figure 17, the **responses of EU15 and EU13** organisations involved in ESF delivery regarding the **changes brought about by ESF** are quite distinctive relation to *increased self-confidence of participants* (77% in EU15 vs. 40% in EU13) and *improved soft skills* (80% in EU15 vs. 45% in EU13).

Figure 17. What changes did the ESF supported actions to promote social inclusion, combat poverty or any discrimination bring about? (comparison of EU15 and EU13 responses within Strand III)



Source: PC results; multiple answers possible.

## Efficiency

Respondents on behalf of organisations aware of ESF but not involved in its delivery (Strand II) and on behalf of organisations involved in ESF delivery (Strand III) were asked to indicate whether they thought that **the different activities implemented with the European Social Fund are cost-effective** (see Table 13).

Overall the activities rated as most frequently cost-effective (>70%) are<sup>614</sup>:

- (i) *basic skills training (e.g. social skills, IT, language)* (80%, 283);
- (ii) *training and education (including vocational training)* (78%, 275);
- (iii) *information, guidance, tutoring in the search for a job* (73%, 259);
- (iv) *internships, traineeships to learn a trade* (72%, 256); and
- (v) *skills assessment and recognition* (70%, 249).

The only activity that was judged cost-effective by less than half of the respondents (48%) was *Studies and evaluations of existing institutions*.

Table 13. If we define cost-effectiveness as the fact that the resources invested were proportionate to the results achieved, to what extent do you agree or disagree

<sup>614</sup> Based on combined figures for 'I agree' and 'I strongly agree' for Q II-7 and Q III-7

*that the following activities implemented with the European Social Fund are cost-effective? (Q II-7, Q III-7)*

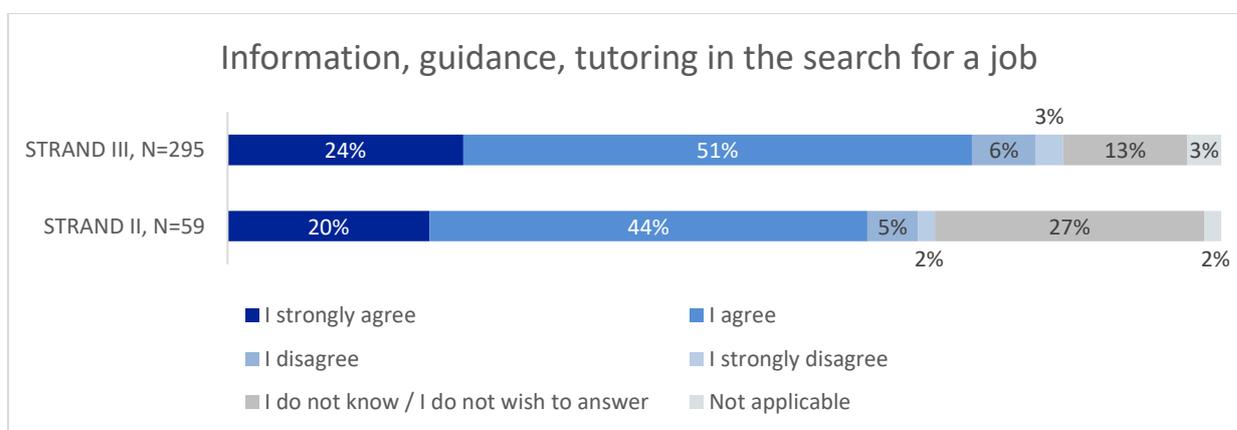
	<b>Strongly agree + Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Do not know/ Do not wish to answer</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
Basic skills training (e.g. social skills, IT, language)	<b>80%</b>	32%	47%	3%	1%	13%	3%
Training and education (including vocational training)	<b>78%</b>	34%	44%	3%	1%	15%	3%
Information, guidance, tutoring in the search for a job	<b>73%</b>	23%	50%	6%	3%	15%	3%
Internships, traineeships to learn a trade	<b>72%</b>	29%	44%	2%	1%	19%	6%
Skills assessment and recognition	<b>70%</b>	22%	49%	5%	2%	17%	5%
On the job guidance and tutoring	<b>68%</b>	21%	47%	7%	1%	19%	5%
Support to overcome barriers to job search actions (f.i. transport, childcare)	<b>67%</b>	24%	44%	6%	1%	19%	6%
Support to people with disabilities (e.g. promotion of community-based care)	<b>66%</b>	30%	36%	6%	1%	19%	7%
Second chance education	<b>64%</b>	22%	42%	4%	2%	22%	8%
Incentives for employers	<b>62%</b>	21%	41%	8%	3%	19%	7%
Awareness raising and information campaigns	<b>62%</b>	15%	47%	10%	1%	21%	6%
Counselling (e.g. debt, health).	<b>60%</b>	18%	43%	6%	3%	21%	9%
Help with care obligations (e.g. childcare, long-term care)	<b>59%</b>	22%	36%	6%	1%	23%	10%
Structural support for strengthening institutional capacity	<b>57%</b>	18%	39%	8%	2%	22%	11%
Help in setting up a business	<b>53%</b>	17%	36%	9%	3%	23%	12%
Assistance in a situation of crisis (e.g. shelters)	<b>51%</b>	17%	33%	4%	1%	29%	16%

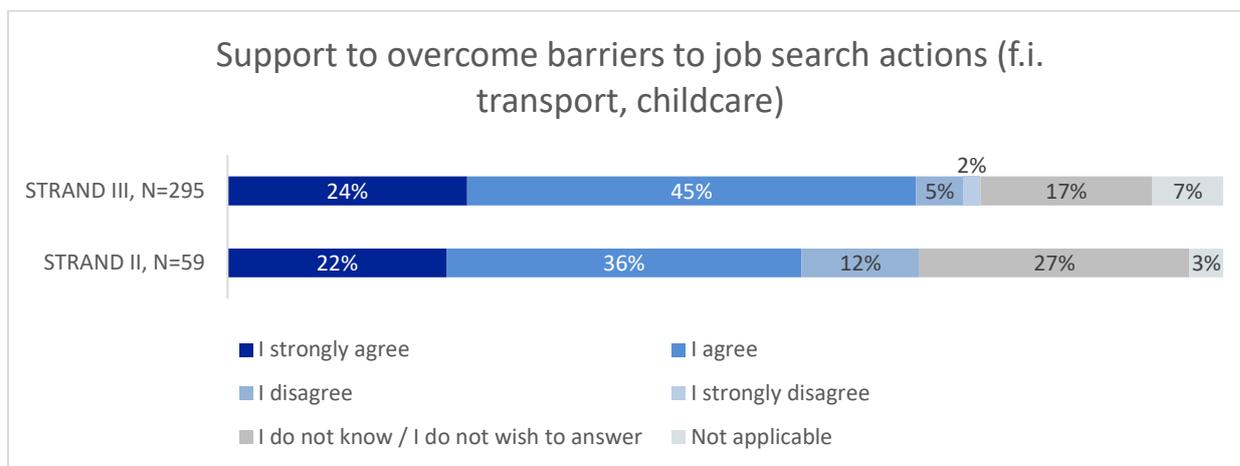
	Strongly agree + Agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know/ Do not wish to answer	Not applicable
Studies and evaluations of existing institutions	48%	9%	39%	9%	4%	29%	11%

N=354. Source: PC results

Comparing the responses across Strands II and III, opinions are overall consistent. However, some differences can be observed in relation to the following activities: *information, guidance, tutoring in the search for a job*; *basic skills training (e.g. social skills, IT, language)*; and *support to overcome barriers to job search actions (f.i. transport, childcare)*. The share of respondents from Strand III who indicated that these activities are cost-effective is higher by approximately 12 percentage points than the share of respondents from strand II who indicated the same (see Figure 18).

Figure 18. If we define cost-effectiveness as the fact that the resources invested were proportionate to the results achieved, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the following activities implemented with the European Social Fund are cost-effective?





Source: PC results

Respondents in Strands II and III were asked to **explain their answers in relation to the cost-effectiveness of ESF actions**<sup>615</sup>.

Within organisations not directly involved in ESF delivery (Strand II), **non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and company/ business organisations were the most likely to provide additional explanations to support their answers.**

In general, respondents often suggested that **investments in community-based care is the most cost-effective ESF action** in the long run compared to funds spent on institutional care, as it provides better outcome for vulnerable children and persons with disabilities.

ESF was also deemed **most cost-effective when actions are coordinated with other funding schemes**, particularly in **strengthening individuals on their way to becoming financially self-sufficient.**

Meanwhile, **respondents from both NGOs as well as company/ business organisations** were most likely to agree on the **negative effect on the efficiency of ESF actions due to high administrative costs.** Specifically, evidence suggests disproportionate expenditure on documentation particularly related to data collection and maintaining specific processes which are burdensome.

Respondents from NGOs also highlighted **'creaming' effects, in which success measured solely by cost-effectiveness** is thought to contribute to the **failure of a project.** This occurs if a project fails to address the needs of harder-to-reach groups or the multi-dimensional aspects of an issue due to cost concerns.

Most organisations with a role in the delivery of ESF (Strand III) indicate **direct, practical and individualised support followed by flexible and multidimensional support**, as well as **support for integration to employment as the most cost-effective.** ESF actions with a wider scope of support are also likely to be more cost-effective. In contrast, most Strand III respondents agree that structural rigidity and

<sup>615</sup> Open Questions II-8, III-8 (follow-up to Q II-7, Q III-7)

singular focus of actions, in addition to 'creaming' effects, lead to inefficiencies in ESF actions.

**All respondents on behalf of organisations involved in ESF delivery** (i.e. beneficiaries of ESF funds, Managing Authorities/Intermediate Bodies, members of ESF monitoring committee as well as Certifying/Audit authorities) are **most likely to agree that flexible and multi-dimensional support provided to target groups lead to better value for money**, particularly when projects are able to adapt to the needs of the target group and assume a holistic approach to addressing their needs, this yield more value for money in the long run.

Beneficiary organisations and managing authorities are most likely to agree that **rigidly structured ESF interventions are likely to yield less value for money**. Evidence suggest, efficiency of ESF actions are often mistakenly associated with standardised services that do not appropriately meet the needs of the target groups. Hence, funding of such programmes does not yield real value. In addition, both beneficiary organisations and members of ESF monitoring committees agree that excessive focus on cost-effectiveness of projects lead to 'creaming' effects as this leads to engaging with target groups that are the easiest or less costly to support.

**Other salient points** were raised by Strand II and Strand III respondents regarding the efficiency of ESF actions<sup>616</sup>:

- Multidisciplinary project teams and multi-dimensional support are most likely to contribute to the efficiency of ESF actions (response trend observed in Strand II, particularly among NGOs)
- Education and training when combined with other integrated measures such as affordable housing and health promotion, provide the most value for money (response trend observed in Strand II, particularly among NGOs).
- Family support services with a combination of support for transition to community-based care lead to intended benefits in a shorter amount of time which eliminates costs of prolonged support (response trend observed in Strand II, particularly among NGOs).
- Funding structure is often segregated, and funding is not effectively disbursed due to lack of coordination by operators closest to the target groups (response observed trend in Strand III).
- There are up to two years of delay in receiving funding following the implementation of projects. This is a real challenge for ESF beneficiary organisations, especially those limited in size and capacity and with little experience in implementing ESF projects. This in turn discourages organisations without prior experience of ESF from getting involved with ESF supported measures (response trend observed in Strand III, particularly among Beneficiary organisations).
- Potential beneficiary organisations that are highly specialised in social inclusion matters are not necessarily advantaged in the application process due to administrative complexity and their own limited financial absorption capacity. In such cases, this affects the efficiency of ESF actions not only in terms of delivery but also

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<sup>616</sup> Follow-up open question (II-9, III-9): *Is there anything you wish to add regarding the efficiency of the actions implemented by the ESF to promote social inclusion, to combat poverty and to combat any discrimination?*

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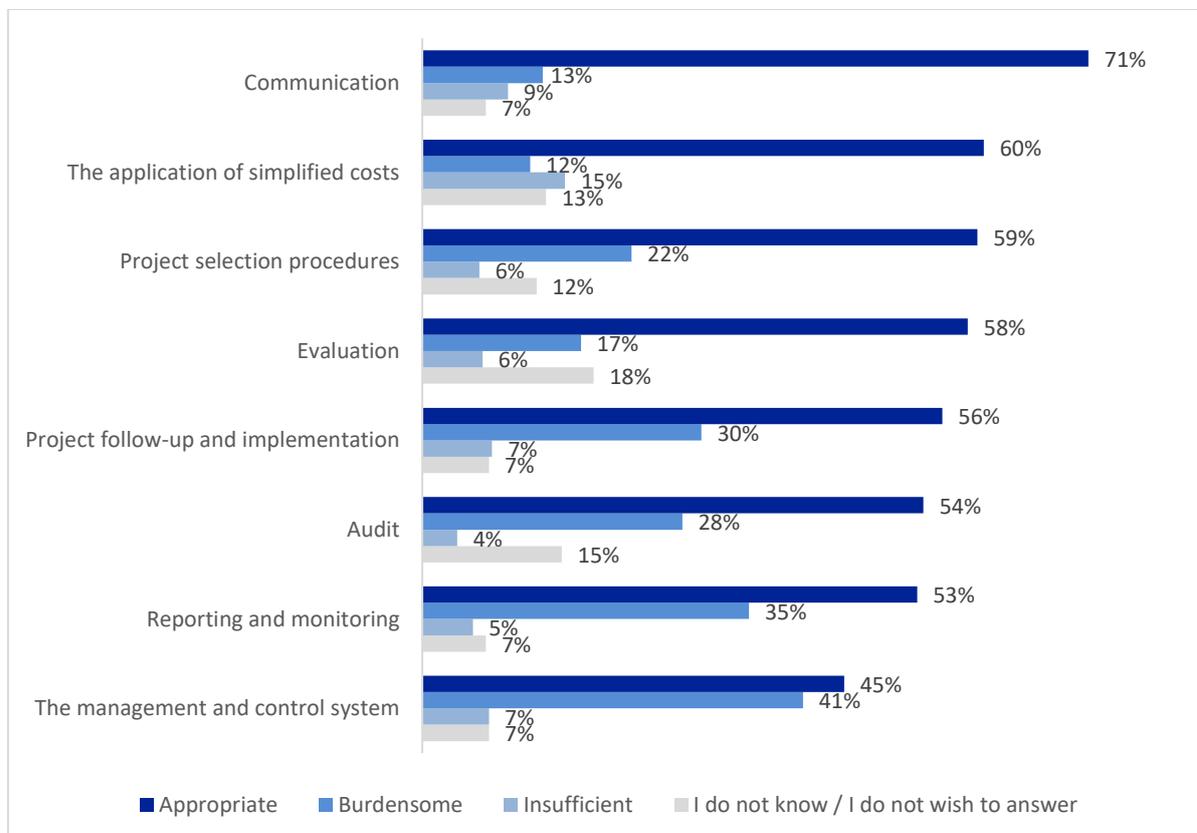
performance monitoring (response trend observed in Strand II among NGOs and Strand III among Beneficiary organisations).

- Simplified cost options have significantly reduced administrative costs and risk of error when submitting project expenses (response trend observed in Strand III).
- Success in improving the condition of hard to reach group is a direct effect of greater efficiency (response trend observed in Strand III, particularly among Beneficiary organisations).
- The inefficiency of ESF actions is due to the shorter timeframe of projects, which can lead to 'creaming effects' whereas the time required to successfully implement actions often tends to be longer than the project duration, which means projects rarely produce sustainable results in the long run (response trend observed in Strand III, particularly among Beneficiary organisations).

Respondents from Strand III were asked to specify how they would **qualify the administrative arrangements for the implementation of operations** (see Figure 19).

The results suggest that the most effective administrative arrangement of all is *Communication*, with 71% of the respondents rating it as appropriate. Opinions were however mixed in relation to the *management and control system*, with 45% of respondents believing it is effective and 41% thinking it is burdensome.

Figure 19. How would you qualify the following administrative arrangements for the implementation of operations? (Q III-10)



N= 295. Source: PC results

Respondents on behalf of organisations directly involved in ESF delivery (Strand III) were asked **if they know of examples of gold plating or any other case of excessive administrative burden in the management and implementation of social inclusion related programmes and initiatives**<sup>617</sup>.

Of the 295 Strand III respondents, 35 (12%) were able to provide instances of gold plating. These can be distinguished into the following broad categories:

Excessive monitoring and reporting requirements in the sense that national rules can go above and beyond ESF regulations. Reported examples include:

- DE: personal data collection requirements considered as too intrusive by some participants leading to dropouts among young participants and participants from disadvantaged groups.
- LV: requirements regarding the collection of personal data has led some participants to drop out of certain activities.
- SI: Excessive reporting and monitoring at all levels of the management and control system.
- SE: all activities undertaken require documentation and administration that create unnecessary systems for running and reporting in projects; a great deal of time in the projects thus appears to carry out follow-up rather than focusing on achieving results.

Complicated and inconsistent methods of record keeping. Reported examples include:

- FR: variability in rules regarding the processing of receipts and the verification of time sheets and other supporting documents; spread of non-centralised documents with no real legal value (guides, notices, etc.) in several versions.
- DE: in some cases, audit authorities have requested proofs of actually incurred costs even where a flat rate funding was applied.
- HU: Duplication in the verification of paper-based and electronic documentation in addition to electronic documentation; duplication in the processing of financial data.
- PL: the obligation to scan all financial documents and upload them to a poor IT system creates unnecessary work

Extensive proof of compliance in procurement procedures over and above ESF regulations. Reported examples include:

- HR: requirements for compliance with indicators in calls for proposals are in excess of the requirements set under the operational programme.
- DE: the auditors are often required to provide detailed evidence for each expenditure during the audits even if the ESF regulations allow simplified cost options such as standard unit costs or lump sums.

Excessive eligibility requirements for projects over and above those of Operational Programmes causing hindrance to their implementation. Reported examples include:

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<sup>617</sup> Open question III-11 as follow-up to Q III-10

- IE: excessive regulations requiring organisations to tender for a national social inclusion programme.
- PL: the requirement set at the national level for all operational programmes to only accept under one call projects reimbursed based on simplified cost options or actual expenditure results in a situation where project promoters with low potential or those who want to implement larger projects (e.g. of over € 100k) are excluded from that call.
- RO: The Managing Authorities impose certain regulations, such as instructions and clarifications to the law, not published in the Official Gazette, with retroactive effects, which go beyond the legal framework and require their compliance in a discretionary manner.
- UK: Requirement to provide Value for Money arguments at multiple stages of appraisal; national guidance is restrictive, making it difficult to work with the intended target group; onerous eligibility evidence requirements which incur costs for the most disadvantaged target groups (copies of passports and driving licences which many participants do not have).

Several beneficiary organisations and Managing Authorities/Intermediate Bodies highlighted that requirements related to the administration, collection, and monitoring of indicators and implementation data were considered excessive and hindered implementation and achievement of the objectives of ESF Operational Programmes.

Issues were raised regarding reporting requirements in both written and digital formats which substantially increase administrative costs. Some Managing Authorities also agreed that audit authority checks are disproportionate and exceed the requirements of ESF regulations stated for Operational Programmes. Meanwhile, some members of ESF monitoring committees indicated excessive eligibility requirements placed for the recruitment of project participants which increase implementation costs for the smaller beneficiary organisations.

After expressing their views on the cost-effectiveness of ESF actions, respondents on behalf of organisations aware of ESF but not involved in its delivery (Strand II) and organisations directly involved in ESF delivery (Strand III) were asked if they had **any good practice examples regarding the efficiency of actions promoting social inclusion or combating poverty and discrimination** they would like to share with the Commission<sup>618</sup>.

Of the 59 Strand II respondents, 17 (29%) provided some good practice examples in this regard.

Respondents on behalf of EU-level NGOs and company/businesses were most likely to identify positive examples of efficiency in ESF support for certain disadvantaged or high-

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<sup>618</sup> Open questions: Q II-10, Q III-12

risk groups: such as the Roma<sup>619</sup> in Spain, and people at risk of homelessness in Czechia, Finland and Italy<sup>620</sup>.

Respondents on behalf of academic or research institutions gave examples of efficient support measures outside the scope of ESF, such as:

- a funding programme for social innovation in Germany supporting participants' socially innovative ideas<sup>621</sup>;
- the Social-Bee programme in Germany for refugees to access the job market with an integration programme;
- a training programme for the long-term unemployed in the Netherlands<sup>622</sup>;
- an employer engagement programme to employ people with dyslexia in the United Kingdom.

Of the 295 Strand III respondents, 29 (10%) provided good practice examples of efficiency in actions promoting social inclusion.

Beneficiary organisations and Managing Authorities were most likely to suggest examples of efficient support measures outside the scope of ESF concentrated on integration into employment. These include:

- the Employing Digital project run by *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* in Spain to train vulnerable people on digital skills – this project was later integrated into an ESF action.
- the EUOKAZ project in Croatia targeting people over 55 years of age to boost their creativity and encourage their return to employment.
- the Network-IQ programme in Germany and the Star-T programme in the Netherlands, both supporting people with a migration background in realising their ambition of starting a business.
- the WISE (Women in STEM Enterprises) project and campaign in Ireland and the United Kingdom supporting gender balance in science, technology and engineering both at universities and in employment.

## Coherence

Respondents from Strands II, III and V were asked to indicate to **what extent European Social Fund actions promoting social inclusion combating poverty or combating discrimination are coherent with other schemes** (see Figure 20).

Most of the respondents who answered this question across Strands II, III and V agree these ESF actions are coherent with national, regional or local programmes (58%, 280).

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<sup>619</sup> *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* ESF actions for the labour market inclusion of Roma

<sup>620</sup> Czechia: municipal Housing First pilot programme that was later scaled up elsewhere; Finland: municipal homelessness prevention strategies; Italy: FEAD-ESF OP to support a shift towards housing-led responses in cities and regions.

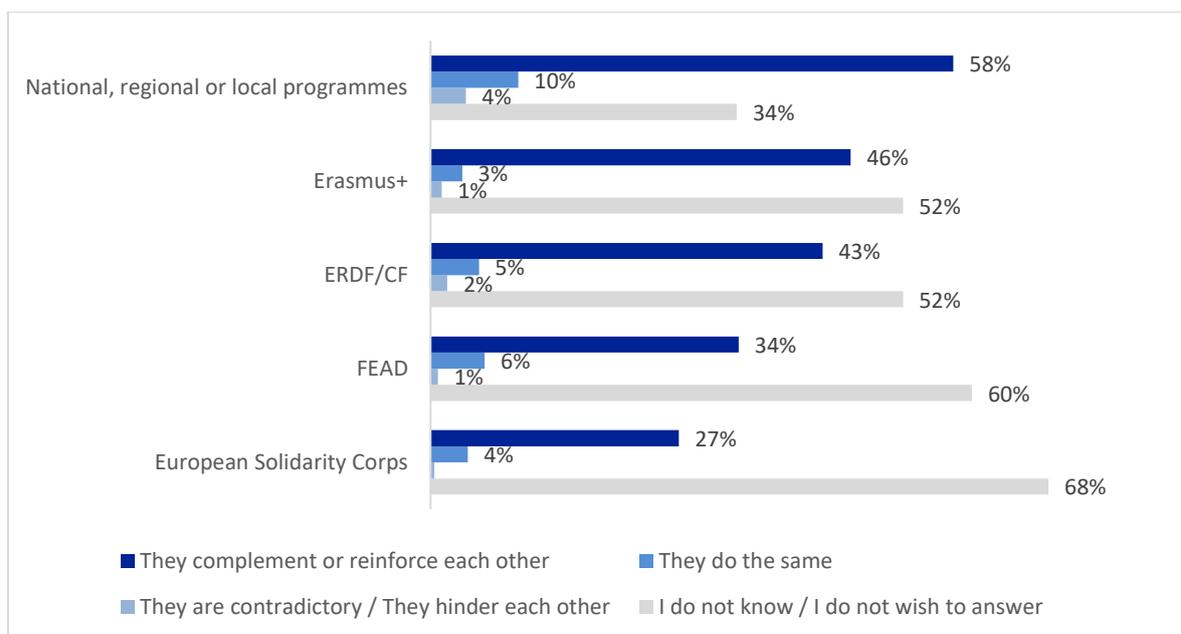
<sup>621</sup> German federal state of Lower Saxony: <https://stelle-fuer-soziale-innovation.de/forderinfos>

<sup>622</sup> LKU Foundation: National Framework Training Beneficiaries

Over 40% of them also believed that they are coherent with Erasmus+ (46%, 225) and ERDF/CF (43%, 210) programmes. Just over one third agreed that they are coherent with FEAD (34%, 165) and a further 27% (133) thought that they are also coherent with the European Solidarity Corps.

More positively, very few respondents indicated that the ESF actions contradicts or hinders other schemes promoting social inclusion combating poverty or combating discrimination – whether at local, regional, national or European level. Some of examples given include: the existence of national or regional funding programmes mixing social inclusion and education (e.g. Portugal) or the lack of coordination with the minimum wage scheme (e.g. Italy). However, a significant share of respondents indicated that they did not know or did not wish to answer (more than 50% in the case of coherence with other European programmes, and more than a third in the case of coherence with national, regional or local programmes).

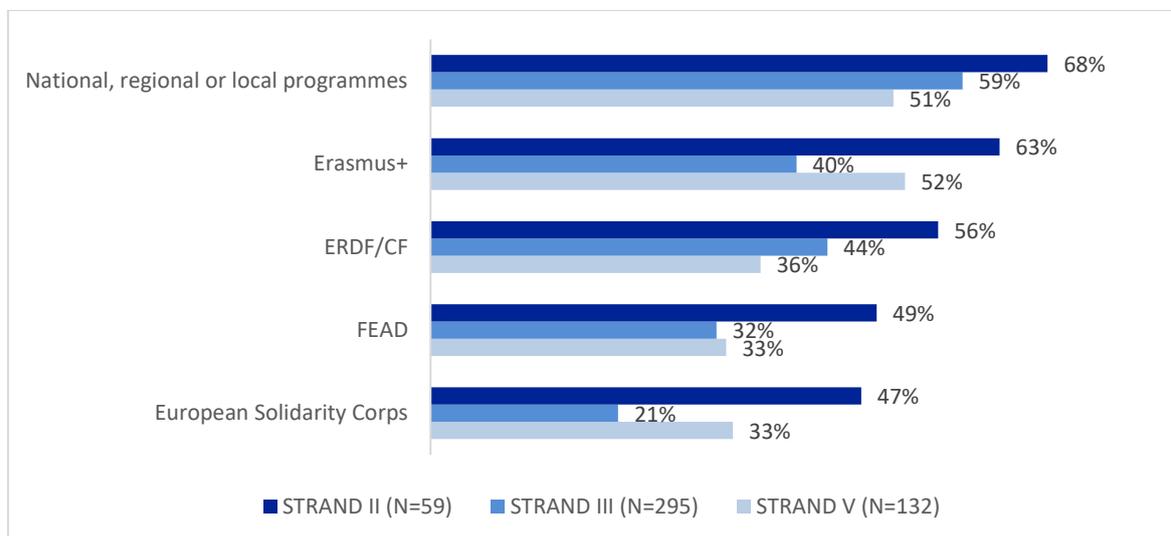
Figure 20. In your opinion, to what extent are European Social Fund actions promoting social inclusion combating poverty or combating discrimination coherent with other schemes? (Q II-11, Q III-13, Q V-7)



N=486. Source: PC results

As shown in Figure 21, respondents on behalf of organisations involved in ESF delivery (i.e. Strand III) less frequently indicated that ESF actions complement or reinforce other schemes in the area of social inclusion compared to respondents on behalf of organisations aware of ESF but not involved in its delivery (Strand II). The same comparative trend was observed against individuals aware of ESF but having never received its support (Strand V), except for national, regional or local programmes.

Figure 21. Comparison of the share of Strand II, III and V respondents who believed ESF actions promoting social inclusion combating poverty or combating discrimination complement or reinforce other schemes in the same areas.



Source: PC results

Respondents in Strands II, III and V were asked to **briefly explain their answers and opinions regarding the coherence of ESF actions with other schemes**<sup>623</sup>.

Among respondents on behalf of organisations aware of ESF but not involved in its delivery (Strand II):

- NGOs were the most likely to indicate that ESF interventions strengthen actions funded by other schemes and vice-versa.
- In contrast, academic/research institutions and trade unions were most likely agree that synergy can be improved between ESF and other EU, national, regional or local funding schemes.
- In addition, organisations from Belgium were most likely to indicate coherence between ESF and other funding instruments, specifically with other EU-level funding schemes such as Erasmus+ and FEAD.
- Meanwhile, organisations from Germany were most likely to indicate that ESF and other EU funds run in parallel rather than complementing measures to reduce administrative burden. Organisations from Bulgaria, Cyprus and Lithuania mirror this sentiment, specifically identifying the difficulty in combining ESF funding instruments with other funding schemes.

Among respondents on behalf of organisations directly involved in ESF delivery (Strand III):

- Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies were most likely to indicate that ESF actions not only complements other EU funds but also prove to be coherent with national programmes and policies.

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<sup>623</sup> Follow-up open question: Q II-12, Q III-14, Q V-8

- Evidence from Strand III respondents also suggest high complementarity between ESF and FEAD activities, specifically in supporting the deinstitutionalisation of children and adults.
- Similarly, members of ESF Monitoring committees indicated that ESF funds complements actions provided by other EU funds. Specifically, ESF provides support to people who are experiencing poverty or social exclusion to build a more equal society, while FEAD provides food and material assistance to the most deprived.
- Audit authorities also positively regarded complementarity of ESF mechanisms particularly with ERDF and Erasmus+ activities, all of which are increasingly planned and implemented effectively.

Among individual respondents aware of ESF but having never received ESF support (Strand V):

- Those who agreed that ESF actions complement activities or other funding schemes indicated that they increase the scope of national, regional and local programmes and adequately address the needs of the target groups. Respondents with this view mostly originated from France, Poland, Luxembourg, Germany and Croatia.
- Respondents were also likely to indicate that complementarity between ESF Operational Programmes on the one hand, and national and regional priorities on the other should be further investigated; actions proposed by different funding mechanisms are often unclear can hinder complementarity.
- Respondents from France, Italy and Belgium were more likely to indicate coherence between different EU funding schemes was mostly due to accident. Meanwhile, respondents who indicated lack of clarity in actions proposed by different funding schemes (originating France and Portugal), specifically indicated that the network of support available from different mechanisms is often unclear and that actions proposed are inconsistent.

Respondents in Strands II, III and V were then asked if they knew **any other EU or national/regional scheme which is or should be coherent with EU support to promote social inclusion, or combat poverty or combat discrimination**<sup>624</sup>.

Among respondents on behalf of organisations aware of ESF but not involved in its delivery (Strand II):

- Respondents from both NGOs and trade unions are most likely to agree that other EU schemes such as Interreg, FEAD and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) are in synergy with projects targeting social inclusion, combatting poverty and fighting various forms of discrimination. These respondents were more likely to agree about the added value of complementing measures provided by third sector organisations and EU support concentrated on social inclusion.
- EU support through increased funding or hands-on support for programmes run by civil society organisations were considered highly successful.
- When there was an indication of coherence between national schemes and EU support in the area of social inclusion this mostly involved support provided to persons with disability.

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<sup>624</sup> Open questions: Q II-13, Q III-15, Q V-9

Among respondents on behalf of organisations directly involved in ESF delivery (Strand III):

- Respondents broadly indicated that support provided to refugees by the AMIF and the European Globalization Adjustment Fund (EGF) have complementary mechanisms to prevent social exclusion of this target group.
- Some respondents indicated that priorities of the ESF and ERDF can be better aligned by focusing on providing different types of support target groups such as the Roma population.
- Respondents from Managing Authorities and member of ESF monitoring committees indicated that national programmes that are most likely to coordinate with EU actions involve talent development measures, youth guarantee schemes and support measures dedicated to persons with disability.
- Some respondents on behalf of Managing Authorities highlighted that regional social policy programmes are often coherent with measures funded by Interreg, specifically in promoting social innovation at a regional level.

Among individual respondents aware of ESF but having never received ESF support (Strand V):

- There was general agreement greater alignment could be achieved between national and regional schemes as well as measures supported by third sector organisations with EU support for social inclusion and for combatting poverty and discrimination.
- Some respondents from Germany, Hungary and Italy agreed that EU funding could increase the scope of national measures through the greater integration of national and EU-level priorities; specifically, national strategy for fighting poverty is an area that can benefit from active policy and social inclusion services co-financed by the ESF.
- Similarly, respondents from Italy indicate that regional schemes and measures provided by third sector organisations targeting NEETs population can benefit from further EU funding to put in place further trained and specialised personnel.
- In contrast, respondents from Poland and Austria agree that national measures, especially those supporting older workers are well-aligned with priorities of EU support in their country.

## EU added value

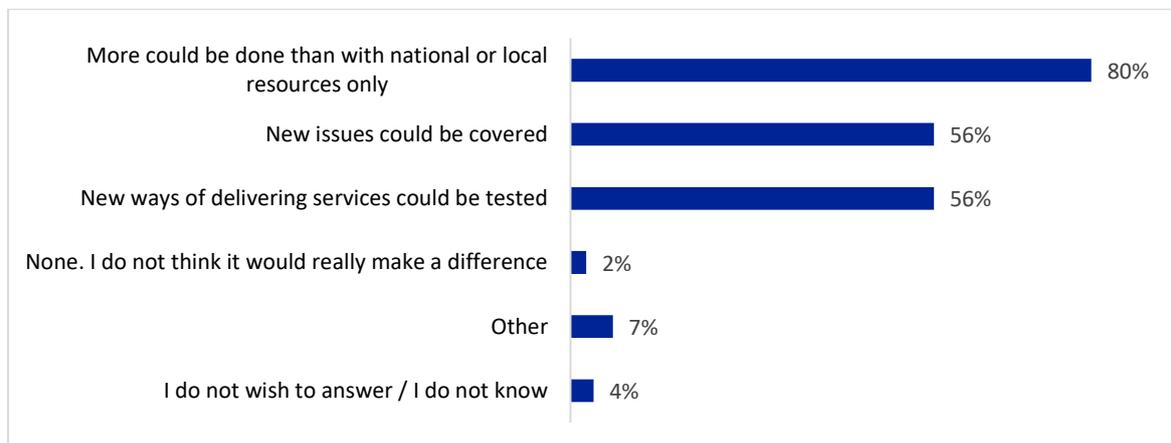
Respondents from Strands I, II, III, V and VI were asked about **the advantages of having European Union interventions promoting social inclusion combating poverty or combating discrimination** (see Figure 22).

An overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that one of the advantages is that *more could be done than with national or local resources only*, implying that EU interventions allow certain actions to be taken that would otherwise not be possible at the national, regional or local level.

More than half of respondents (300; 56%) also believe that *new issues could be covered*, and that *new ways of delivering services could be tested*. Only 13 respondents (2%) mentioned that they didn't think it would really make a difference, while 35 of them

(7%) indicated there were other advantages and 19 (4%) did not know or did not wish to answer.

Figure 22. *In your view, what would be the advantage of having European Union interventions? (Q I-4, Q II-14, Q III-16, Q V-10, Q VI-4)*

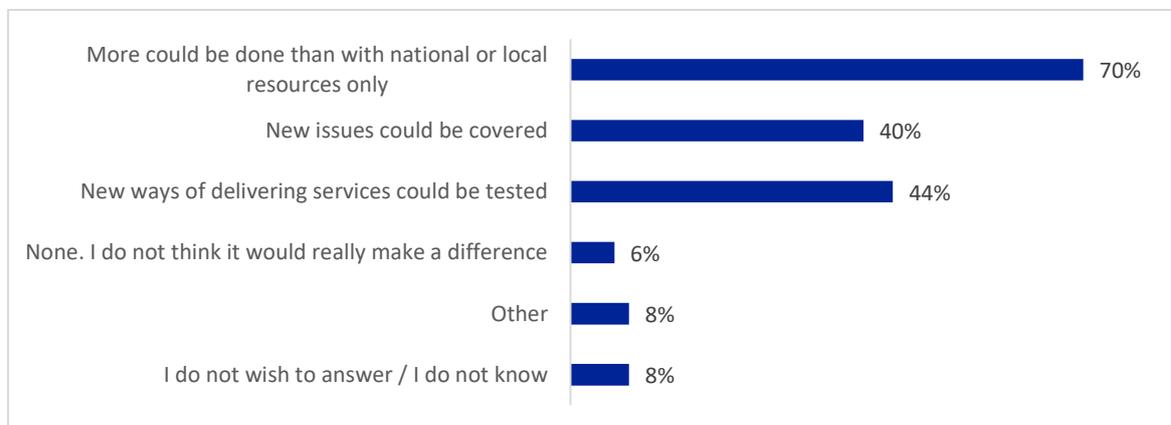


N=536. Source: PC results; multiple answers possible.

Eight responding organisations involved in ESF delivery (Strand III) identified *other advantages* associated with ESF interventions, the most recurrent one being increased cooperation and coordination between local and regional bodies as well as improved transnational coordination of social inclusion policies. Four respondents from Strand V also identified *other advantages*, two of them seeing EU interventions as allowing for the development of wider inclusive models for all citizens.

Figure 23 shows that among **respondents that have no knowledge or experience of ESF** (Strands I and VI), over two thirds (35; 70%) believe that one of the advantages of having European Union interventions is that *more could be done than with national or local resources only* while 44% (22) indicated that *new ways of delivering services could be tested*, and similarly, 40% (20) said that *new issues could be covered*. These findings are at a high risk of bias due to the small sample size (N=50).

Figure 23. *In your view, what would be the advantage of having European Union interventions? (Strands I and VI)*



N=50. Source: PC results; multiple answers possible.

In relation to respondents on behalf of **organisations directly involved in the delivery of ESF** (Strand III), the large majority (252; 85%) indicated that one of the advantages of having European Union interventions is that *more could be done than with national or local resources only*. More than half also think that *new issues can be covered* (175; 59%) and that *new ways of delivering services can be tested* (166; 56%).

As Table 14 shows, opinions are overall consistent among respondents who have different roles in the delivery of the European Social Fund. Some differences can be noticed in relation to responses from EU Funds Coordinating bodies and Certifying or Audit Authorities, however this can be due to the low number of respondents of these types, which means these results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 14. In your view, what would be the advantage of having European Union interventions? (broken down by Strand III respondents' role in ESF delivery)

	Beneficiary org. receiving ESF funding (N=152)	MA / IB (N=109)	Member of an ESF Monitoring Committee (N=18)	EU funds Coordinating body (N=12)	Certifying or Audit Authority (N=4)
More could be done than with national or local resources only	88%	84%	94%	50%	100%
New issues could be covered	55%	62%	78%	58%	75%
New ways of delivering services could be tested	57%	58%	61%	33%	50%
None. I do not think it would really make a difference	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Other	3%	2%	6%	0%	0%
I do not wish to answer / I do not know	2%	6%	0%	17%	0%

N=295. Source: PC results; multiple answers possible.

Regarding respondents on behalf of **organisations aware of ESF but not playing a direct role in the delivery** (Strand II), similarly to other strands, the large majority of them (80%; 47) believed that *more can be done* [by having European Union interventions] *than with national or local resources only*. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents in Strand II also think that *new issues can be covered* (68%; 40) and that *new ways of delivering services can be tested* (66%; 39).

Regarding **individual respondents with knowledge of ESF but having never received support from it** (Strand V) and their views on the benefits of EU/ESF interventions, 72% (96) indicated that *more can be done than with national or local resources only*. Within Strand V, respondents more frequently indicated that *new ways*

of delivering services can be tested (55%, 73) than new issues can be covered (49%, 62).

A negligible number of respondents in Strand II and V indicated that such interventions would make no difference at all.

Some slight discrepancies could be observed in the **responses from EU15 and EU13** across Strands I, II, III, V and VI: 65% of respondents from EU15 indicated that ESF allows for *new issues to be covered* compared to only 52% of EU13 respondents<sup>625</sup>; similarly, 63% of EU15 respondents indicated that ESF allows for new ways of testing services compared to 53% of EU13 respondents<sup>626</sup>.

### Respondents having received ESF support

This section of the report provides an overview of the responses received from persons who indicated having recently received ESF support (strand IV). A total of 38 responses were received from this type of respondents, from the following countries. These findings are at a high risk of bias due to the small sample size (N<50).

*Table 15. Overview of respondents indicating having recently received ESF support by country*

Country	Number of responses	% of responses
Bulgaria	10	26%
Hungary	7	18%
Poland	5	13%
Italy	3	8%
Greece	3	8%
Slovenia	2	5%
Latvia	1	3%
Portugal	1	3%
Spain	1	3%
Ireland	1	3%
Lithuania	1	3%
Germany	1	3%
Croatia	1	3%
Colombia	1	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100%</b>

*N=38. Source: PC results*

<sup>625</sup> 129 out of 198 EU15 respondents; 165 out of 320 EU13 respondents

<sup>626</sup> 124 out of 198 EU15 respondents; 168 out of 320 EU13 respondents

Regarding the employment status of the 38 respondents who indicated having recently received ESF support:

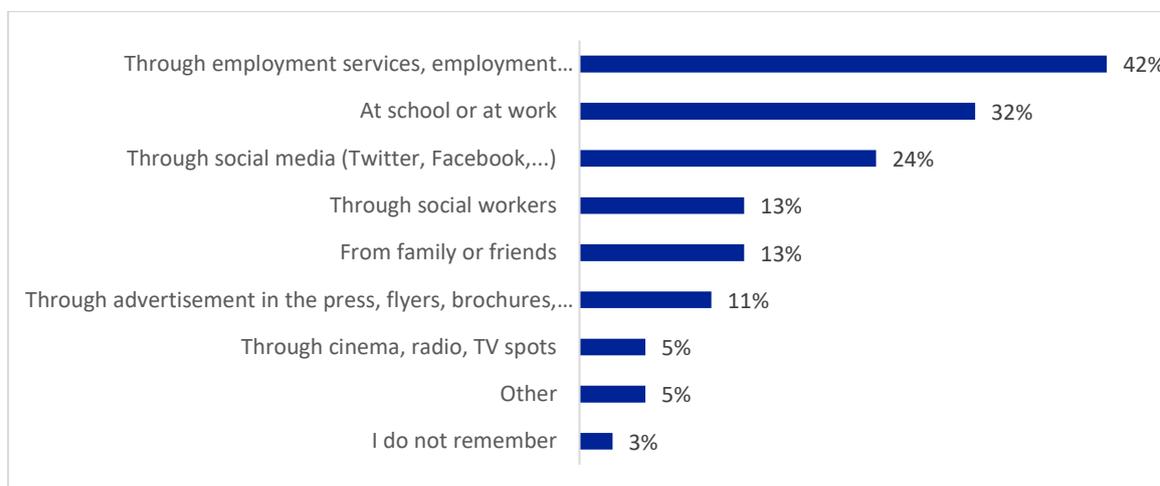
- 23 respondents indicated being full-time employed (61%);
- seven respondents indicated being unemployed for less than 12 months (18%);
- three respondents indicated being unemployed for 12 months or more (8%);
- three respondents indicated being part-time employed (8%);
- and two respondents (5%) indicated being self-employed.

By comparison, official data shows that 53% of ESF TO9 participants were unemployed (see section 3.1 of the Final Report) whereas only 26% of the public consultation respondents having received ESF support indicated being unemployed; as such they have a stronger employment profile than ESF participants overall albeit the fact the sample is small (N=38).

### Relevance

As shown in Figure 24, most respondents in Strand IV **learned about the ESF support they had benefited from** through employment services, employment information centres (16, 42%), at school or at work (12, 32%), followed by social media channels (9, 24%).

*Figure 24. How did you learn about the action you benefitted from? Two respondents also learned about ESF through other means: one by attending evening classes, and another by being involved in a local charity? (Q IV-1)*



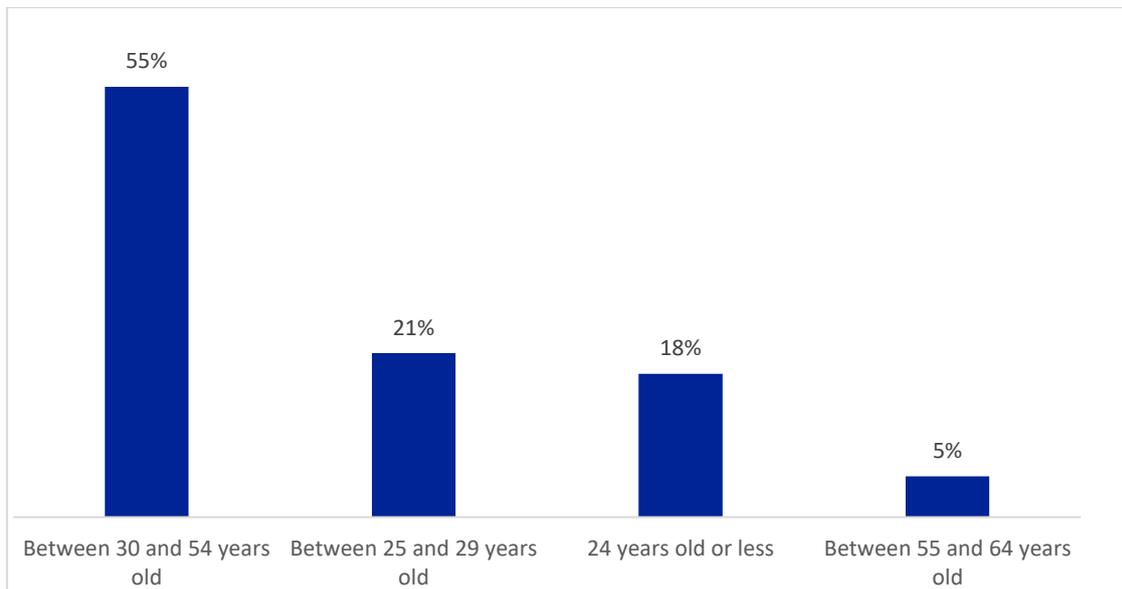
*N=38. Source: PC results; multiple answers possible.*

Two respondents indicated that they learned about ESF support through *Other* means: one was by attending evening classes, and another by being involved in a local charity.

Respondents were asked about the **age at which they started receiving ESF support** (see Figure 25).

Over half of respondents (21, 55%) were aged between 30 and 54 when they started receiving ESF support. A further 21% (8) were between 25 and 29 years old and 18% (7) were 24 years old or younger. Two respondents were aged between 55 and 64.

Figure 25. What was your age when you started receiving ESF support? (Q IV-2)

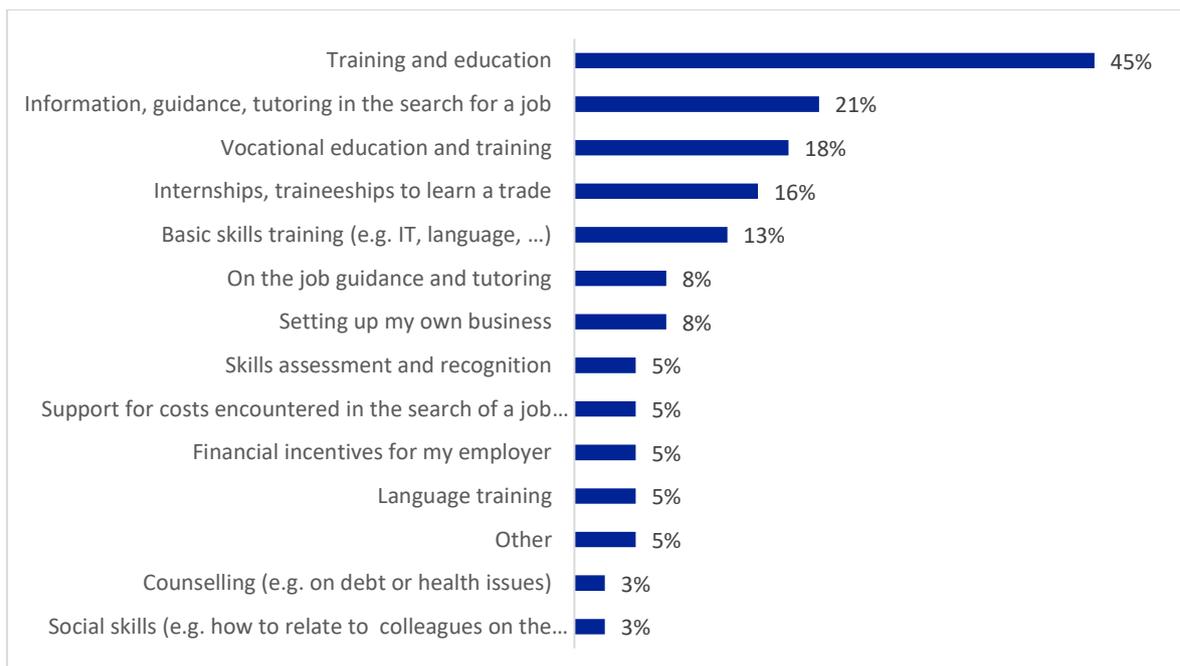


N=38. Source: PC results

Respondents were also asked to indicate **what kind of support measures they benefited from** (see Figure 26).

They most frequently indicated having benefitted from actions related to *training and education* (45%, 17). To a lesser extent, respondents also indicated having benefitted from measures related to *information, guidance, tutoring in the search for a job* (8, 21%), *vocational education and training* (7, 18%), *internships, traineeships to learn a trade* (6, 16%) and *basic skills training (e.g. IT, language, ...)* (5, 13%).

Figure 26. What kind of support measure(s) did you benefit from? (Q IV-3)



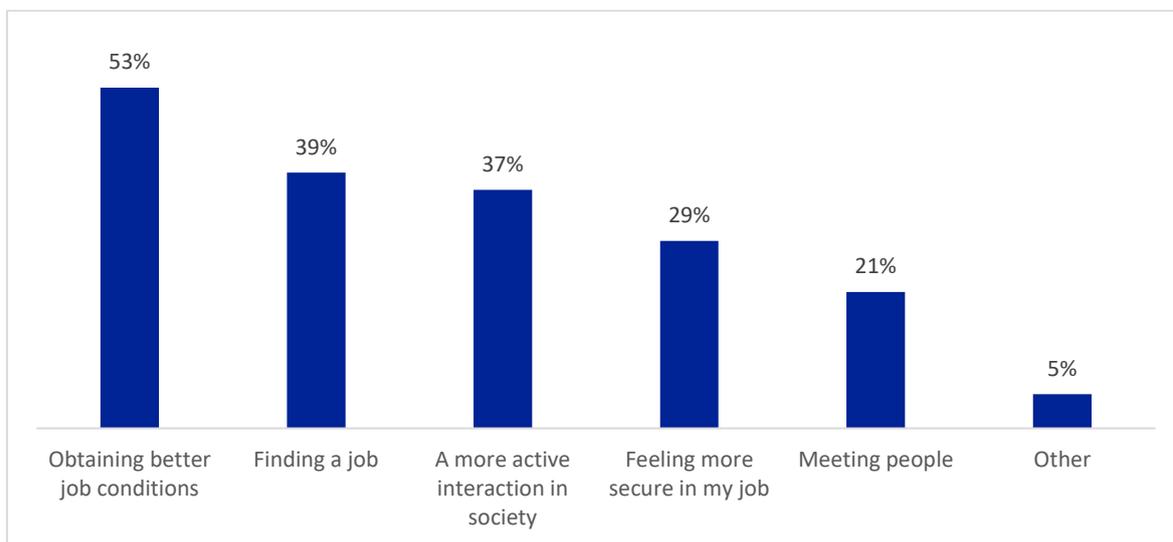
*N=38. Source: PC results; multiple answers possible.*

Two respondents indicated benefiting from *Other* actions: one from attending events linked to the promotion of public health, the other respondent had their sociological research project financed by ESF.

Respondents were then asked **what their expectations were from participating in ESF support measures** (see Figure 27).

More than half of them (20, 53%) stated that it was to obtain better job conditions. Further 39% (15) wanted to find a job, 37% (14) expected a more active interaction in society, 29% (11) wanted to feel more secure in their job and 21% (8) expected to meet new people.

*Figure 27. What was (or is) your expectation from participating in the support measure(s)? (Q IV-4)*



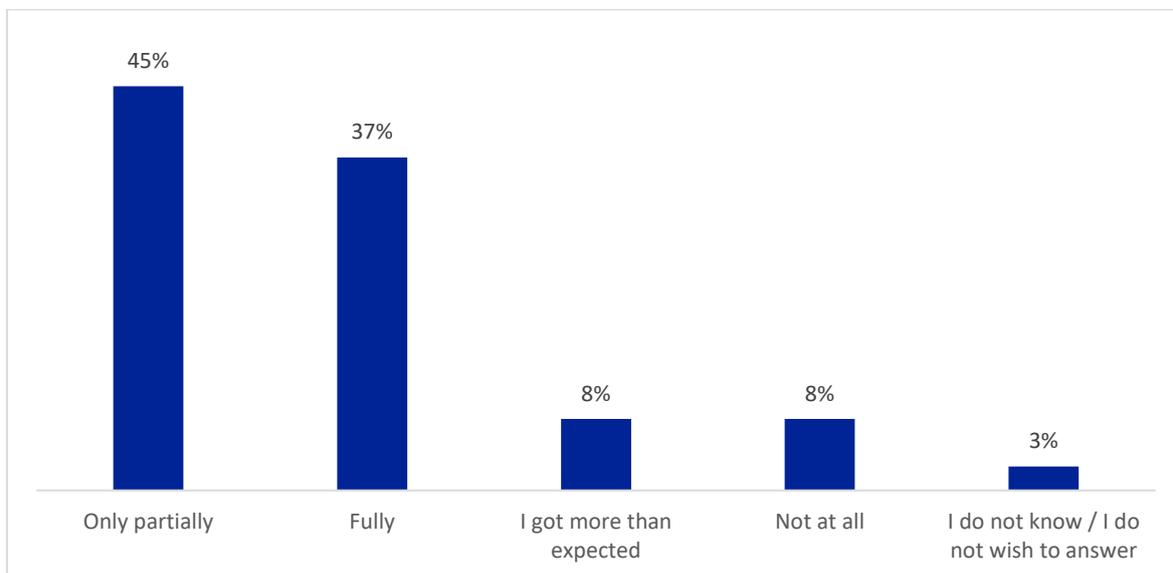
*N=38. Source: PC results; multiple answers possible.*

Two respondents indicated having from *Other* expectations: one to improve their physical and mental condition, the other to extend their period of study.

### **Effectiveness**

As a gauge of ESF effectiveness, respondents were then asked **whether their expectations from participating in ESF activities had been met** (see Figure 28): 45% (17) suggested that they were partially met and 37% (14) said that they were fully met. Three respondents said that they got more than they had expected and a further three indicated that their expectations were not met at all.

Figure 28. Were your expectations met? (Q IV-5)



N=38. Source: PC results; multiple answers possible.

Among the 20 respondents who indicated that their expectations have not been met or have only been partially<sup>627</sup> met:

- Six mentioned that the ESF action was *not adapted to their needs*
- Another five respondents indicated that *more time is needed, the action is still ongoing or only just finished*.
- A further seven respondents selected *other* (unspecified) reasons.

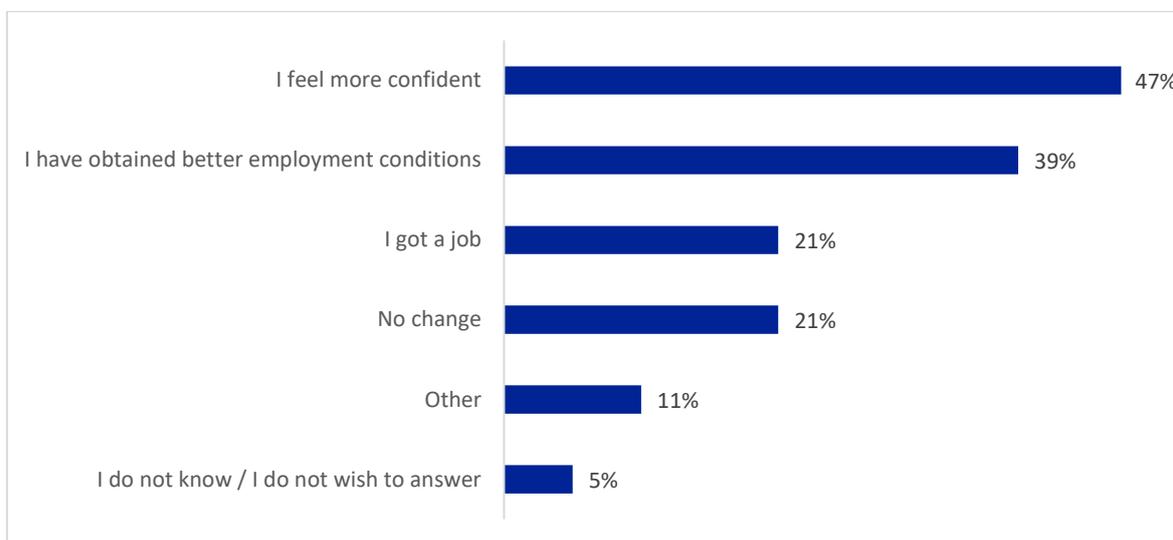
In terms of **changes that the participation in the ESF support measures brought them** (see Figure 29), almost half of respondents (47%, 18) stated that they *feel more confident* and a further 39% (15) stated that they *have obtained better employment conditions* while 21% (8) said that they *got a job*.

Four respondents indicated that participation in ESF brought *Other* changes to them: two deemed their mental health improved, one was able to complete a master's degree and another respondent felt better informed about which training programmes to undertake to obtain certain skills.

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<sup>627</sup> Follow-up Q VI 5-1

Figure 29. Which changes did your participation in the support measure(s) bring you? (Q IV-6)



N=38. Source: PC results; multiple answers possible.

### EU added value

By way of gauging the EU added value of actions promoting social inclusion or combating poverty and discrimination among individuals receiving ESF support, the respondents were also asked to **indicate if this support made a difference** (see Figure 30).

An overwhelming majority (32; 84%) stated that it did make a difference. Among them, 45% (17) mentioned that without EU support *there would not be enough money to pay for such actions* and a further 39% (15) stated that without EU support *there would be less or no attention for people like them*. Only two of the 38 respondents (5%) did not think it made a real difference.

Figure 30. Do you think that having ESF support made a difference? (Q IV-7)



N=38. Source: PC results

These results are consistent with the view most frequently shared by respondents not having received ESF support – individuals and organisations alike – that ESF generates the greatest

added value by giving countries, regions or localities the means to do more than if they had acted alone or without any such support (see Section 2.5).

### **Additional comments provided to the public consultation questionnaire**

The public consultation concluded with the open question: "*Would you like to add any comments concerning ESF support to promote social inclusion, combat poverty and any discrimination?*"

Across all six strands, 116 respondents<sup>628</sup> took this opportunity to make some additional comments. The comments are a summary of the observations made in the previous questions relating to the five evaluation criteria. Most of the additional comments could be identified as highlighting certain areas needing improvement or special attention while the remaining comments were rather miscellaneous, relating to personal observations or experiences<sup>629</sup>.

**The most recurrent comment relates to the idea that the scope of ESF interventions in the area of social inclusion could be even further extended<sup>630</sup>**; there is however some recognition among these respondents that the ESF has already brought considerable value on certain aspects such as deinstitutionalisation, quality of life for vulnerable groups. Overall, several of the respondents have called for strengthened ESF support for the elderly and disabled people in terms of access to care, as well as for young people on the labour market. This comment most frequently came from NGOs .

**Issues regarding the efficiency of ESF administrative arrangements were raised relatively frequently** particularly in relation to burdensome reporting and accounting requirements which tend to penalise smaller organisations. Again, NGOs were the most likely to comment on matters of administrative efficiency<sup>631</sup>.

In equal measure, **comments were made relatively frequently regarding the importance of further involving smaller organisations** (particularly civil society and local communities) in the design of ESF programmes and interventions as well as further supporting them financially to deliver relevant projects and activities. This comment most frequently came from NGOs<sup>632</sup>.

Some comments related to the fact that specific groups should be better targeted by ESF<sup>633</sup>. These comments came from NGOs representing and assisting groups such as

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<sup>628</sup> 116 of 574 respondents (20%)

<sup>629</sup> 68 of the 116 responses (59%) were coded as relevant; 48 (41%) as miscellaneous

<sup>630</sup> 16 coded responses; 8 of the 16 responses came from NGOs

<sup>631</sup> 12 coded responses; 6 of the 12 responses came from NGOs

<sup>632</sup> 12 coded responses; 7 of the 12 responses came from NGOs

<sup>633</sup> 9 coded responses

people with disabilities, people with dyslexia, people suffering from blindness, the Roma<sup>634</sup>.

Swedish regional authorities all noted that the ESF should be used for structural investments to scale up social innovations at the regional level to rethink traditional welfare systems<sup>635</sup>.

Other relevant points raised by the respondents include:

- Improvements to multi-stakeholder cooperation (4 responses).
- More microfinancing for the self-employed (3 responses).
- Continued support to social innovation (3 responses).
- Improved awareness raising (3 responses).
- Actions to promote the circular economy (1 response).
- Enhanced monitoring of how funding is channelled (1 response).

Some of these points were also present in the position papers certain organisations submitted together with their survey response (see Section 3).

## Review of documents received

A total of 25 documents were received together with the public consultation responses<sup>636</sup>. These came from certain respondents on behalf of organisations and include mostly position papers, but also reports.

Of these 25 documents, 21 had their information processed and analysed<sup>637</sup> in accordance with the criteria defined for this evaluation: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and EU added value.

The following subsections highlight the main trends and some more specific points captured following the documentation review across the five evaluation criteria.

Some of the respondents on behalf of organisations who submitted a document together with their survey answers indicated their contribution should remain anonymous – as such, only certain organisations are explicitly mentioned as holding or sharing a view in the following subsections.

## Considerations of relevance

It was argued that too narrowly defined target groups or themes can create accessibility difficulties. For instance, in Adult Education, the EAEA highlights that it is better to focus on specific needs and challenges shared by various target groups. Eurocities points out

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<sup>634</sup> 3 coded responses on the better targeting for people with disabilities in general; each of the remaining groups were mentioned in two responses.

<sup>635</sup> 4 Swedish regional authorities provided a similarly worded response

<sup>636</sup> 24 documents were submitted via the EU Survey online platform, the 25<sup>th</sup> was emailed directly to the EU Commission.

<sup>637</sup> Four duplicate documents were received.

that calls for projects can be too narrow in scope to address the challenges faced by local-level stakeholders or cities, which prevent the effective use of ESF to that effect.

In the same vein, it was remarked that projects can lose their relevance over time because of changing circumstances that can occur over a seven-year programming period and little room for reviewing the objectives and activities that were set at the beginning.

The relevance of indicators was questioned, as the generic ones tend to focus too much on labour market integration for groups whose primary needs are not employment-related: carers and people at risk of homelessness.

Certain topics of relevance were highlighted as deserving more attention under ESF such as mental health, microfinancing and the circular economy.

Both Eurocarers and the Social Platform are of the view that the relevance of projects would also be improved through the involvement of specialist organisations such as carers' organisations or civil society organisations in funding opportunities or in the preparation of operational programmes and project calls.

### **Considerations of effectiveness**

Overall, ESF was recognised as contributing effectively to capacity-building among project promoters.

The ESF was reported as being particularly effective in supporting deinstitutionalisation with ex-ante conditionality 9.1 on social inclusion. This view was shared by COFACE and LUMOS.

It was however noted that the greater involvement of NGOs in the provision of labour market integration services should be pursued systematically to improve the effectiveness of such actions while greater cooperation between social services and housing providers would improve the effectiveness of activities targeting people at risk of homelessness. On the other hand, Eurocities note that ESF has enabled cities to act as intermediate bodies, which has demonstrated their ability to use grants effectively to set up strategic plans to boost employment and social inclusion in metropolitan areas.

Finally, according to Social Platform, the effectiveness of ESF in favouring the development and scaling up of innovative social projects was deemed affected by the fact performance indicators focus on short-term economic profit.

### **Considerations of efficiency**

Suggestions for improvements and demands were frequently made regarding efficiency.

Several organisations held the view that administrative burdens linked to project implementation must be reduced to allow civil society organisations and municipalities or cities better access to the funds. In addition, some organisations have commented on the forthcoming ESF programming period, arguing that co-financing amounts should not be changed, and there should be no reduction in advanced payments.

It was added that simplifying indicators for ESF measures is essential with follow up monitoring only to take place once (after six months) rather than twice (after 12 months) given the burden this creates for small organisations. The identification and recruitment of suitable participant for labour market activation or social inclusion

projects would be improved through multi-stakeholder cooperation, especially involving NGOs and local authorities.

### **Consideration of coherence**

Remarks and observations regarding considerations of coherence had a strong forward-looking dimension overall.

Some organisations noticed some coherence between ESF and the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) on the one hand – particularly on access to education and sustainable employment – and between ESF and Interreg on the other – particularly on social innovation; they believe synergies with the EPSR and Interreg can be strengthened under ESF+.

Creating synergies between Erasmus+ and ESF+ was also mentioned, for example by supporting young people's skills, and access to the labour market through ESF+, as well as offering them international mobility.

Elsewhere, COFACE highlights that actions to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and foster the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society should be strengthened under ESF+. Euro cities mentioned that combining ESF with other EU funding programmes remains difficult.

### **Considerations of EU added value**

There was recognition overall that ESF adds value in terms of enabling more actions addressing the social inclusion needs of vulnerable people overall. Through this, it both influences and supports policy reforms at the national and regional level.

This was highlighted by various organisations for areas such as inclusive education, access to housing and social care services. The mainstreaming of good practices generated from ESF is recognised as adding value to national policies dealing with social inclusion.

### **Other points**

It was mentioned that the collection of personal data should be made within reason; either by ensuring that sensitive personal data is appropriately protected or by making the collection of sensitive personal data voluntary.

Another point highlighted was the necessity to ensure that funding is not channelled to the wrong causes (e.g. funding to institutions segregating persons with disabilities) or diverted to other actions than initially planned (e.g. funding dedicated to Roma inclusion actions diverted to broader social inclusion actions).

## **Conclusions**

This section presents the conclusions for each evaluation criterion based on the findings presented in Section 2 (replies to the questionnaire) and Section 3 (position papers received).

### **Relevance**

A clear majority of respondents not aware of ESF – individuals and organisations alike - thought that EU interventions are relevant to promote social inclusion or to combat poverty and discrimination.

ESF actions aiming at getting people into employment were most frequently deemed relevant among all the respondents, regardless of their extent of their knowledge of or experience with ESF.

However, respondents on behalf of organisations aware of ESF but not playing role in its delivery most frequently identified ESF actions aiming at supporting and enabling participation in society as the most relevant.

Almost two thirds of organisations involved in ESF delivery indicated providing actions getting people into employment while just over half of them indicated providing actions aiming at supporting and enabling people's participation in society more broadly. These results are consistent with the views and expectations of organisations and individuals not involved in ESF.

Two-thirds of the respondents who indicated having received ESF support mentioned having participated in ESF actions focused on training and education or on information and guidance in job searching.

More than half of the respondents on behalf of organisations directly involved in ESF delivery indicated that the support actions they provide are directed at people unemployed for 12 months or more. A significant share of respondents within this type indicated that the support actions they provide are directed at people with a disability and just over one third mentioned providing support targeted at people with low skills or low qualifications.

Respondents with no direct involvement or experience with ESF thought that the most relevant groups it should target include people unemployed for 12 months or more, people with a disability, and people with low skills or low qualifications. However, views were rather mixed as to whether these groups are being reached under ESF.

Just under half of the respondents who indicated having received ESF support explained having come across ESF through employment services and information centres. Just under a third mentioned having learned about ESF at school or at work and a quarter through social media channels.

The review of position papers suggests that ESF Thematic Objective 9 is overall deemed to have an appropriate remit, supporting actions addressing social inclusion and anti-discrimination issues which are as relevant today as they were in 2014. However with the new programming period due to start in 2021, there is scope to extend the remit of ESF+ to other areas of relevance to social inclusion – e.g. mental health, microfinancing and the circular economy – and to ensure ESF+ continues to support social innovation even further.

### **Effectiveness**

Organisations involved in ESF delivery most frequently identified training (for basic skills, vocational) as the most effective ESF actions, followed by actions to support people with disabilities, and actions to provide guidance and job search support.

Unsurprisingly, ESF actions supporting unemployed people (either for 12 months or more or for less than 12 months) as well as people with a disability and people with low skills or low qualifications were deemed the most effective.

Several factors contributed to the success of ESF actions were identified, such as: partnerships between Managing Authorities and NGOs, targeted or individualised support actions.

On the other hand, structural rigidities, bureaucratic processes and delays in the financing of ESF projects were frequently identified as factors negatively affecting the effectiveness of ESF actions.

Organisations involved in ESF delivery most frequently identified labour market insertion as the key change brought about by ESF actions to promote social inclusion or to combat poverty and discrimination. There was also wide recognition that ESF results in changes in the participants themselves such as increased self-confidence and the enhanced acquisition of soft skills.

Nearly all the respondents who indicated having received ESF support mentioned that their expectations from participating in ESF activities had either been partially or fully met. Expectations most frequently related to obtaining better job conditions, finding a job or being actively included in society. Nearly half of them indicated that participation in ESF activities had made them feel more self-confident while four in ten indicated having been able to obtain better job conditions.

The review of position papers reveals that the effectiveness of ESF actions could however be further improved by involving smaller specialised and grassroots organisations in designing programmes and contributing to project calls.

## **Efficiency**

Training actions and guidance and job search support actions were broadly identified as the most cost-effective by organisations directly involved in ESF delivery.

Organisations aware of ESF but not involved in its delivery were slightly less likely to identify such actions (e.g. basic skills training, information and guidance in job search, support to overcoming personal barriers to job search actions) as cost-effective compared to organisations directly involved in their provision under ESF.

Organisations not involved in ESF delivery understood that community-based care actions (favouring deinstitutionalisation) are particularly cost-effective as opposed to investments in institutional care.

Most organisations with a role in the delivery of ESF indicate direct, practical and individualised support followed by flexible and multidimensional support, as well as support for integration to employment as the most cost-effective.

So-called 'creaming' effects were frequently identified as a factor of inefficiency, with projects focusing on achieving set targets rather than real social change; such situations leading to projects having no effects in the long run.

The standardisation and rigidity of ESF delivery structures and timeframes were also deemed as creating inefficiencies, mainly not allowing enough time or possibilities to amend activities for projects to make a positive difference.

Delays in receiving funding was identified as causing inefficiencies, discouraging organisations without prior experience in ESF from applying to implement projects.

Administrative and reporting burdens have been relatively frequently reported in the position papers, constraining the efficiency of ESF Thematic Objective 9 actions. Options should be explored to make administrative and reporting requirements lighter for smaller organisations to spend more time delivering actions making a difference to people.

### **Coherence**

Respondents frequently indicated not being sufficiently informed to provide a judgement on the level of coherence between ESF and other schemes promoting social inclusion or combating poverty and discrimination.

Nevertheless, a majority among them thought ESF actions to complement and reinforce national, regional or local programmes.

Regarding EU schemes, Erasmus+ was most frequently identified as complementing and reinforcing ESF actions promoting social inclusion or combating poverty and discrimination.

Among organisations aware of ESF but not involved in its delivery, NGOs were the most likely to indicate that ESF interventions strengthen other schemes while academic/research institutions were most likely to identify room for improvement in this regard.

Among organisations directly involved in ESF delivery, complementarities between ESF and FEAD were identified specifically in terms of support deinstitutionalisation in care.

A trend worth highlighting in the review of position papers is that there will be scope under ESF+ to further strengthen coherence with the European Pillar of Social Rights (on access to education and sustainable employment) and with Interreg (on social innovation).

### **EU added value**

ESF was broadly recognised as generating the greatest added value by giving countries, regions or localities the means to do more than if they had acted alone or without any such support.

In the same vein, individual respondents who indicated having benefitted from ESF support believed that the activities they had taken part in made a difference to them, which would not have been possible otherwise.

Among all the respondents, more than half also thought that ESF interventions allow for the coverage of new social issues or the testing of new social services.

Very few respondents thought that ESF or even EU-supported interventions do not make a difference in terms of promoting social inclusion or combating poverty and discrimination.

Other examples of EU added value were identified such as increased cooperation and coordination between local and regional bodies as well as improved transnational coordination of social inclusion policies.

The review of position papers suggests that ESF overall adds value by building the capacity of beneficiary organisations in addressing issues around social inclusion and discrimination. This in turn can be a driver of policy change at the national, regional or local level.

### **Lessons learned**

From the public consultation results and the conclusions presented above, several lessons have been drawn which might usefully inform policy for the next ESF programming period:

- ESF TO9 is highly relevant in terms of contributing to the social inclusion of individuals through their labour market insertion and adequately covers all vulnerable groups. Increasing participation among the most vulnerable groups deserves some consideration; this could be done through actions dedicated to the common challenges they face or by extending the scope of support to other areas of relevance to social inclusion.
- ESF actions to promote social inclusion and to combat poverty and discrimination are widely recognised as helping individual beneficiaries to acquire the skills enabling participation in society (i.e. 'soft skills'). The acquisition of such skills importantly contributes towards the labour market insertion of the supported individuals.
- Demanding administrative requirements and delays in funding can affect the performance of ESF actions. These difficulties can also impede the involvement of specialist organisations in ESF TO9 because of their limited capacity for financial absorption.
- It is generally recognised that ESF TO9 is coherent with other EU funding programmes as well as Member States' own social inclusion programmes. Even greater coherence could be achieved through the programmes' simultaneous alignment with the principles of the EPSR.
- ESF TO9 allows for new issues to be covered, which strengthens the scope of national and regional social inclusion programmes and supports policy reforms in the Member States. This can potentially improve cooperation and coordination across multiple levels of governance (national, regional, local). In this context, it may be worth ensuring that small-sized organisations specialised in social inclusion are appropriately consulted in the design and implementation of future programmes.

### **Appendices**

### Number of respondents per country, by strand

Country	Total	Responses from Strand I	Responses from Strand II	Responses from Strand III	Responses from Strand IV	Responses from Strand V	Responses from Strand VI
Bulgaria	123	7	13	52	10	36	5
Hungary	82	3	3	27	7	28	14
Croatia	79			68	1	10	
Germany	56		8	33	1	11	3
Italy	30		3	11	3	10	3
Poland	29		1	16	5	5	2
Belgium	22		18	3		1	
France	15		2	5		7	1
Greece	15		1	3	3	5	3
Romania	13		2	8		3	
Spain	13		1	5	1	2	4
United Kingdom	13		3	8			2
Ireland	12			11	1		
Slovenia	10			8	2		
Finland*	9			8		1	
Latvia	9			7	1	1	
Portugal	9			3	1	4	1
Sweden	8			7		1	
Lithuania	5		1	3	1		
Austria	3			2		1	
Czechia	3			2			1
Netherlands	3		1	2			
Estonia	2			1		1	
Slovakia	2		1			1	
Colombia	1				1		

Study supporting the evaluation promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination by the European Social Fund (Thematic Objective 09)

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Country	Total	Responses from Strand I	Responses from Strand II	Responses from Strand III	Responses from Strand IV	Responses from Strand V	Responses from Strand VI
Cyprus	1		1				
Dominican Republic	1					1	
Denmark	1			1			
Ecuador	1						1
Luxembourg	1					1	
Malta	1			1			
North Macedonia	1					1	
Vanuatu	1					1	

*N=574, Source: PC results*

*\*Finland includes (2) responses from the Åland Islands*

## ANNEX 8 – CASE STUDIES

### 1 Austria – ESF Operational Programme Employment Austria 2014-2020 (2014AT05SFOP001)

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the National Operational Programme in Austria (2014AT05SFOP001) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared drawing on desk research and interviews with national stakeholders.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'StartWien – Das Jugendcollege'. The selected project was classified as a type 1 operation by the evaluation study. Type 1 operations are employment-focussed actions (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socio-economic indicators of the context, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU-added value of the OP and selected project as well as challenges and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Success rates were estimated as the number of results generated as a share of the relevant number of participations. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation of achievement rates and success rates. The case study also presents estimates for the cost-per-participation. Annex 5 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation.

#### OP Case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p><b>OP:</b> ESF Operational Programme Employment Austria 2014-2020 (<i>Operationelles Programm Beschäftigung Österreich 2014-2020</i>);</p> <p><b>Regions covered by the OP:</b> 1 transition region (Burgenland) and 8 more developed regions (the other 8 Federal entities (<i>Länder</i>));</p> <p><b>Priority Axes:</b> Axis I (TO8) Employment; Axis II (TO9) Social Inclusion; Axis 3 (TO10) Education and Training; Axis 4 (TOs 8,9,10) Transition Region Burgenland; Axis 5 Technical Assistance</p> <p><b>IPs covering TO9:</b> IP9i.</p> <p><b>Type of OP:</b> Mono fund</p>
OP implementation context	<p>Austria performs better than most EU countries regarding the Social Scoreboard indicators of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Though Austria is making progress towards meeting its employment goal of the Europe 2020 strategy, progress towards the reduction of poverty and social exclusion remains limited. The population share at risk of poverty or social exclusion decreased only slightly from 19,2% to</p>

Section	Description
	<p>17,5% from 2014 to 2018. Women remain disadvantaged compared to men with respect to both labour market participation and financial well-being.</p> <p>The central organisation involved in the ESF at the national level in Austria is the Federal Ministry for Labour, Family and Youth (BMAFJ)<sup>638</sup>. The ESF Managing Authority (MA), the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority are all part of the same ministry<sup>639</sup>. 16 Intermediate Bodies (IBs) have been delegated by the MA with implementing specific activities<sup>640</sup>. Next to the ESF MA, the Monitoring Committee comprises representatives from relevant ministries and regions, social partners, and NGOs.</p> <p>There were no significant changes to planned resources made until July 2019; neither in terms of planned resources between PAs nor for the overall OP.</p>
ESF Priorities and actions	<p>Type of TO9 actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type 1: actions with an employment objective.</li> </ul> <p>The share of ESF funds dedicated to TO9 has significantly increased in the programming period 2014-2020 compared to 2007-2013<sup>641</sup>. The main challenge identified by the Austrian OP related to social inclusion is (the risk of) poverty across different groups of society. ESF funds support the implementation of national policies on reducing poverty and enhancing social inclusion through active inclusion measures with a view to promote equal opportunities, active participation and improve employability of individuals excluded from society and marginalised groups. The aim of the funds is to complement existing policies in Austria in this policy area with innovative measures and to fill policy-gaps where necessary<sup>642</sup>.</p> <p>The ex-ante evaluation found that the measures of activities proposed in the OP are generally well-suited to address the specific objective of reducing barriers to employment for people remote from the labour market<sup>643</sup>.</p>

<sup>638</sup> Until January 2020, the responsible ministry was the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection (BMASGK)

<sup>639</sup> Operational programme, last extraction 01/07/2019, p. 174

<sup>640</sup> <https://www.esf.at/esf-in-oesterreich/abwicklung/>

<sup>641</sup> Annual Implementation Report 2019, p. 126.

<sup>642</sup> WIFO (2014). Ex-ante-Evaluierung des Operationellen Programms Beschäftigung: Österreich 2014-2020, p. IV

<sup>643</sup> WIFO (2014). Ex-ante-Evaluierung des Operationellen Programms Beschäftigung: Österreich 2014-2020, pp. 27-28

Section	Description										
Target groups	<p>There were no significant changes to planned resources made until July 2019; neither in terms of planned resources between PAs nor for the overall OP. However, support for Austria’s reaction to the refugee crisis became a significant new priority not foreseen in the OP<sup>644</sup>.</p> <p>The target group comprises people remote from the labour market, working poor, people at risk of becoming working poor (e.g. low-skilled and economically active individuals) and women. Non-discrimination, gender mainstreaming and disability mainstreaming are included as horizontal principles. The target groups and operations in the OP were deliberately defined in encompassing terms to provide IBs with the flexibility to develop operations in line with local needs and contexts<sup>645</sup>.</p> <p>There has not been an explicit change of the target groups. However, ESF funds have been significantly refocused to support individuals with a migration background in the context of the migration crisis.</p>										
Operations	<p>143 operations were implemented under TO9. The largest share of operations (58) aimed to “stabilise through counselling, support, occupation and <i>qualification</i>”. 41 operations offered easily accessible employment opportunities. 24 operations were implemented for excluded youth or young adults and 12 projects were implemented in the field of empowerment and inclusion into the labour market of Roma. Only 4 projects were implemented improving the situation of working poor and another 4 to prevent working poor.</p>										
Partnerships	<p>New partnerships were formed for individual projects. For example, the Youth College Vienna (<i>see below</i>) was financed by a partnership between the IB for Vienna, the city of Vienna, the public employment service and the Vienna Social Funds. The implementation was carried out by a consortium of nine organisations which included several NGOs, education providers and welfare organisations.</p>										
Funding of the OP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions)</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>IP</th> <th>Planned (a)</th> <th>Allocated (b)</th> <th>Spent</th> <th>Project Selection Rate (b/a)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>IP9j<sup>646</sup></td> <td>€274,403,565</td> <td>€140,241,059</td> <td>€20,954,169</td> <td>51%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	IP	Planned (a)	Allocated (b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)	IP9j <sup>646</sup>	€274,403,565	€140,241,059	€20,954,169	51%
IP	Planned (a)	Allocated (b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)							
IP9j <sup>646</sup>	€274,403,565	€140,241,059	€20,954,169	51%							

<sup>644</sup> Interview ESF MA

<sup>645</sup> Interview ESF MA

<sup>646</sup> The total amount of planned funds includes €8,000,000 for interventions for the “socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma” (intervention category 110) which falls under IP9ii in the nomenclature of the European Commission. The Austrian OP and the AIRs, however, do not include IP9ii as an own investment priority with own objectives, actions or targets. All

Section		Description			
	Total	€274,403,565	€140,241,059	€20,954,169	51%
	<p>Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. Note: Planned amounts refer to the whole 2014-2020 programming period while allocated and spent amounts refer to the period up to the end of the 2018 calendar year (31 December 2018).</p> <p>In Austria, the national co-financing rate for all the regions is 50% except in Burgenland (the only transition region) where it is 60%. There is little overlap between ESF funding and actions funded by other EU funding instruments such as ERDF, EARD, EaSi, FEAD or AMIF<sup>647</sup>. National funds and regional funds are used to support actions under the OP.</p>				
Outputs and results (2014/2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total number of participants: 67,062</li> <li>Common Output Indicators:</li> </ul>				
	Code	Indicator			Number
	CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed			49,500
	CO02	Long-term unemployed			21,563
	CO03	Inactive			12,209
	CO04	Inactive, not in education or training			10,583
	CO05	Employed, including self-employed			5,353
	CO07	Above 54 years of age			10,793
	CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training			9,957
	CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)			36,119
	CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)			52,790
	CO16	Participants with disabilities			1,012
	CO17	Other disadvantaged			11,751
	CO18	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion			1,894
	CO19	From rural areas			681
	CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)			-
	<p>Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.</p>				

funding related to TO9 including for measures to support marginalised communities such as the Roma is subsumed under IP9i.

<sup>647</sup> Operational programme - last extraction 01/07/2019, pp.180-183.

Section	Description																								
	<p>The largest share of participants in TO9 activities (79%) were migrants, individuals with foreign background or members of minorities including marginalised communities such as the Roma. The share of participants from rural areas (1%) and of participants with disabilities (2%) was low. The share of female participants (39%) was below the target of at least 50%<sup>648</sup> (<i>not shown in the table above</i>). The higher share of male participants can be explained largely by the targeting of migrants who are primarily male<sup>649</sup>.</p> <p>With 10,583 recorded participations so far, the 2023 target of 12,000 for CO04 was already nearly achieved. The OP specified three specific output indicators: the number of projects (excluding projects targeted at Roma), the number of economically active participants and the number of inactive participants not in education or training with education up to ISCED 1-2 or less. The 2023 targets for these indicators were respectively achieved to 436%, 58% and 92%.</p> <p>A total of 17,736 immediate results (CR01-CR04) and 3,246 long-term results (CR06+CR07) were achieved. Two specific result indicators, the share of completed participations among economically inactive, not in education or training and the share of projects which completed the entire development cycle were defined. The 2023 target of 35% for the first indicator is currently overachieved (72.82%). The target for the second indicator is 50%, but none of the projects so far has completed the full cycle (0%).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common Result Indicators:</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CR01</td> <td>Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving</td> <td>625</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR02</td> <td>Participants in education/training upon leaving</td> <td>4,018</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR03</td> <td>Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving</td> <td>7,571</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR04</td> <td>Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving</td> <td>5,522</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR05</td> <td>Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving</td> <td>14,526</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR06</td> <td>Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving</td> <td>16,430</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR07</td> <td>Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving</td> <td>1,603</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Code	Indicator	Number	CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	625	CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	4,018	CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	7,571	CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	5,522	CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	14,526	CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	16,430	CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	1,603
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<sup>648</sup> Operational programme - last extraction 01/07/2019, p.318

<sup>649</sup> Interview with ESF MA

Section	Description
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CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	2,743
CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	15,144

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Assessment of the OP

**Effectiveness:** Austria is well on track to achieve its targets for common and specific output indicators (see above). The targeted number of projects has already been overachieved several times. The target of the first specific result indicator, the share of completed participations among economically inactive, not in education or training, is also likely to be achieved while the target of a 50% share of projects which underwent the full development cycle seems unlikely to be met.

The underachievement seems to be partially due to a shift in priorities from the development of novel projects to tried-and-tested projects to address the refugee crisis. Underreporting may be another factor. While many projects are based on considerations of past experiences and are evaluated and adapted continuously, these processes may not be formalised and hence not counted as full development cycle<sup>650</sup>. The low number of operations targeted at working poor can be explained with difficulties in reaching this target group<sup>651</sup>.

The success rate (the recorded results as a share of the relevant recorded outputs) for Type 1 operations was rather low for CR04. This low number may partially be explained by the fact that the main target group, newly arrived migrants, are difficult to place and partially because the several measures like the Youth College (see Annex) aimed at integration of participants into employment or education and training. This is also reflected in the higher numbers of individuals in education/training (CR02) or gaining a qualification upon leaving (CR03).

Code	Indicator	Success rate for OP (type 1 operations)
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	9%
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	27%

<sup>650</sup> Focus group with ESF stakeholders

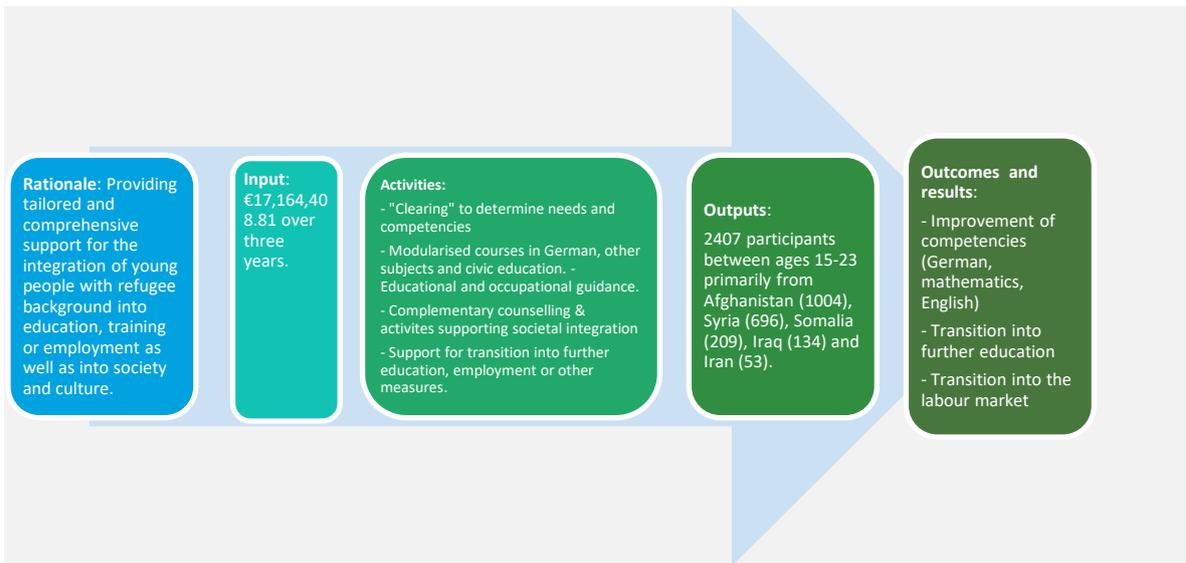
<sup>651</sup> Focus group with ESF stakeholders

Section	Description			
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>CR07</td> <td>Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> </table> <p><i>Source:</i> SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.</p> <p><b>Efficiency:</b> The costs per participation in IP9i in Austria were €1,040. There is evidence that the MA and the IBs are cooperating efficiently with beneficiaries for example by providing information on how to apply for EU funding<sup>652</sup>. At the same time, excessive reporting requirements and a lack of legal certainty were seen as problematic (see lessons learned below). A general assessment of the efficiency of the ESF in Austria is difficult because the ESF is used to support a large number of diverse projects.</p> <p><b>Relevance and coherence:</b> The objectives and operations identified for the target groups are relevant to the needs of the target groups. There is a clear coherence between the ESF interventions under TO9 and other policies on social inclusion.</p> <p><b>Added value:</b> The added value regards actions for target groups that would otherwise not have been targeted by national/regional programs to the respective extent and that support reaching the EU 2020 goal of Austria of reducing poverty by 235,000 individuals.</p> <p>Challenges and lessons learned</p> <p>The implementation was initially delayed because of a lengthy process of designating the MA which was only completed in the Fall of 2016. Despite the delay, Austria has allocated 51% of total planned spending for TO9 and spent roughly 21 million euro. At this pace, the 2023 target of 274 million euro is likely to be met.</p> <p>The OP proved to be flexible enough to adapt to new challenges arising from the influx of refugees.</p> <p>Excessive reporting requirements and a (perceived) lack of legal certainty regarding how spending rules will be applied are the main problems regarding the effective and efficient use of ESF funds. The Simplified Cost Option (SCO) and the related delegated acts are seen by stakeholders as a step in the right direction.</p>	CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	30%
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	30%		

<sup>652</sup> Focus group with ESF stakeholders

## **In-depth analysis of selected project: StartWien – Das Jugendcollege (StartVienna - The Youth College)**

Section	Description
Basic facts box	<p><b>Name:</b> StartWien – Das Jugendcollege (The Youth College)</p> <p>Duration: 27.06.2016 – 30.06.2019.</p> <p><b>OP:</b> "Operationelles Programm Beschäftigung Österreich 2014-2020" (2014AT05SFOP001)</p> <p>Priority Axis (PA): 2.1 Active Inclusion</p> <p><b>Total allocated funds:</b> €17,164,408.81. Total allocated ESF funds: €8,582,204.41.</p> <p>Funding was provided by the ESF (50%) in cooperation with the Viennese PES (25%), the city of Vienna (12.5%) and the Vienna Social Fund (12.5%).</p> <p>The target group were young people not in education, employment or training aged 15-21 years with a refugee background who are no longer subject to compulsory education.</p> <p>The objective is to support the integration of participants in education, training and the labour market as well as into Austrian society and culture in general.</p> <p>Participants are provided with 16-20 hours of teaching and counselling per week.</p> <p>A total of 2407 individuals participated for an average of about 9 months.</p> <p>The project has been regarded highly by participants and stakeholders.</p> <p>The project has been replaced by two more specialised follow-up projects focussing on education and labour market integration (rather than both) respectively.</p>
Intervention logic of the project/operation	



#### Rationale

The rationale for the project was developed by the funding organisations WAFF, AMS Vienna, Vienna Social Fund and the magistrate of the city of Vienna responsible for immigration policy (MA17). The rationale was to support young people with a refugee background between the ages of 15 and 21 in the integration into education, training or employment and thereby address a target group with specific needs, which so far had not been comprehensively addressed<sup>653</sup>: Young people aged 15 or younger are subject to compulsory education. People at this age are expected to participate in further education, training or enter the labour market. Young people with a refugee background, however, often do not have the competencies to do so and no adequate measures existed in Vienna to support this target group. Hence, the Youth College "filled a gap in the integration of refugees between compulsory education and labour market measures"<sup>654</sup>.

#### Objectives

The primary objective of the project was to provide young people with a refugee background a way into employment, education or training. In addition, the project aimed at improving the social and cultural inclusion of participant.

Both objectives were regarded as complementary to each other: While integration in education or the labour market helped societal integration, deeper integration into Austria's society and culture was perceived as conducive to participants' motivation to engage in education and training as well as to their chances of finding employment.

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<sup>653</sup> Interview VHS Wien.

<sup>654</sup> Press statement „StartWien – Das Jugendcollege“ startet mit 1000 Kursplätzen für nicht schulpflichtige Flüchtlinge. Available at [https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS\\_20160706\\_OTS0067/startwien-das-jugendcollege-startet-mit-1000-kursplaetzen-fuer-nicht-schulpflichtige-fluechtlinge](https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20160706_OTS0067/startwien-das-jugendcollege-startet-mit-1000-kursplaetzen-fuer-nicht-schulpflichtige-fluechtlinge)

Further, designing the Youth College analogous to regular education served the immediate objective of providing unemployed young people with a structured daily routine and clear goals to work towards<sup>655</sup>.

“I know now what an apprenticeship is. Before the Youth College, we were refugees and migrants. Now, I learn everything”

*Youth College participant interviewed in the context of an external evaluation<sup>656</sup>*

Relevance and coherence/ synergies

The project filled a policy gap in Vienna. Young people up to the age 15 are mandated to participate in compulsory education while older youth are expected to participate in further education, training or the labour market. There are a range of federal and regional policies targeted at individuals in this age group not in education, training or employment<sup>657</sup>. However, these measures were regarded as not well-suited to address the specific needs of young people with a migration background.

Against this background, the concept for the Youth College was developed by the funding organisations Waff, AMS Vienna, Vienna Social Fund and MA 17 to fill “a gap in the integration of refugees between compulsory education and labour market measures”<sup>658</sup>.

The reported results strongly suggest that the project is highly relevant. The project was considered highly relevant by participants and stakeholders. In particular, stakeholders working with young people with a refugee background had a very positive view of the project<sup>659</sup>.

The project is part of the Viennese training guarantee (*Ausbildungsgarantie*)<sup>660</sup> and in line with the nation-wide training obligation

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<sup>655</sup> Interview VHS Wien; L&R (2019). Zusammenfassung: Evaluierung „Start Wien – das Jugendcollege“; Press statement „StartWien – Das Jugendcollege“ startet mit 1000 Kursplätzen für nicht schulpflichtige Flüchtlinge. Available at [https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS\\_20160706\\_OT0067/startwien-das-jugendcollege-startet-mit-1000-kursplaetzen-fuer-nicht-schulpflichtige-fluechtlinge](https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20160706_OT0067/startwien-das-jugendcollege-startet-mit-1000-kursplaetzen-fuer-nicht-schulpflichtige-fluechtlinge)

<sup>656</sup> L&R (2019). Zusammenfassung: Evaluierung „Start Wien – das Jugendcollege“

<sup>657</sup> For example, see the website of the Vienna Employment Fund on the Youth Guarantee in Vienna <https://www.waff.at/wiener-ausbildungsgarantie/>

<sup>658</sup> Press statement „StartWien – Das Jugendcollege“ startet mit 1000 Kursplätzen für nicht schulpflichtige Flüchtlinge. Available at [https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS\\_20160706\\_OT0067/startwien-das-jugendcollege-startet-mit-1000-kursplaetzen-fuer-nicht-schulpflichtige-fluechtlinge](https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20160706_OT0067/startwien-das-jugendcollege-startet-mit-1000-kursplaetzen-fuer-nicht-schulpflichtige-fluechtlinge)

<sup>659</sup> L&R (2019). Zusammenfassung: Evaluierung „Start Wien – das Jugendcollege“, p.6.

<sup>660</sup> <https://www.waff.at/wiener-ausbildungsgarantie/>

Outputs	<p>(<i>Ausbildung bis 18</i>) which mandates that young people up to the age 18 participate in education or (firm-based) training<sup>661</sup>.</p> <p>Until June 2019, 2407 young people participated in the programme for an average of 300 days. Most participants – about three quarters – were male. Participants originated mostly from Afghanistan (1004), Syria (696), Somalia (209), Iraq (134) and Iran (53).</p> <p>Participation was open to both asylum seekers – i.e. individuals whose asylum claims were still being processed – as well as individuals who had already been granted asylum or subsidiary protection status.</p> <p>Most participants had received very little formal education before starting the Youth College. Over half had not graduated from any regular education system, one third had received basic education and 18% had education similar to a secondary education degree. However, 56% of participants – in particular male participants – already had some form of work experience<sup>662</sup>.</p>
Delivery method and partnerships	<p>The project was financed by the ESF represented by the Vienna Employment Fund (<i>Wiener ArbeitnehmerInnen Förderungsfonds - Waff</i>), the public employment service (AMS Vienna), the city of Vienna represented by the department for integration and diversity (<i>Magistratsabteilung (MA) 17 – Integration und Diversität</i>) and the Vienna Social Funds (<i>Fonds Soziales Wien – FSW</i>). The implementation was carried out by a consortium of nine organisations which included education providers, cultural organizations, social welfare organisations, NGOs supporting the integration of migrants and refugees and the city of Vienna. The lead partner of the implementing organisations was the Vienna further education centre (<i>Volkshochschule (VHS) Wien</i>)<sup>663</sup>. The funding organisations did not have one dedicated lead organisation.</p> <p>Both consortiums, the funding organisations as well as the organisations implementing the project, were newly formed for the purpose of this project. The idea for the project was developed by the funding organisations. The project was awarded to the consortium led by VHS Vienna based on a call<sup>664</sup>.</p> <p>The project was implemented in two locations. Participants were not recruited directly by the programme but referred to it by two of the organisations providing co-financing. Accepted asylum seekers or individuals with subsidiary protection statuses were referred to the project by the AMS Vienna. Asylum seekers – i.e. individuals who had applied for asylum but</p>

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<sup>661</sup> <https://ausbildungbis18.at/>

<sup>662</sup> L&R (2019). Zusammenfassung: Evaluierung „Start Wien – das Jugendcollege“, p.3

<sup>663</sup> For further information on the project partners, see [http://www.interface-wien.at/system/attaches/148/original/Presseunterlage\\_PK\\_Jugendcollege\\_FINAL.pdf?1468593872](http://www.interface-wien.at/system/attaches/148/original/Presseunterlage_PK_Jugendcollege_FINAL.pdf?1468593872)

<sup>664</sup> Interview VHS Wien

had not yet been granted asylum or subsidiary protection – could be referred to the project by the FSW<sup>665</sup>.

According to the project leaders, the status as ESF-project provided the Youth College with high visibility also at the European level. As such, several delegations from other EU countries came and visited the project<sup>666</sup>.

The project was evaluated by a team of external experts in 2018<sup>667</sup>. In addition, an evaluation and monitoring system was set in place. Data was collected on the level of competencies of participants in core subjects (German, math, English) at the start of the participant in the programme and at the end. Further, the information was collected on what participants did upon leaving the measure<sup>668</sup>.

#### Funding and efficiency

Funding for the project was provided by the ESF represented by the Vienna Employment Fund (50%), the AMS Vienna (25%), the Vienna Social Fund (12.5%) and the city of Vienna through the department responsible for integration and diversity, MA 17 (12.5%). As such, organisations covering different aspects of support for refugees joined forces to fund a comprehensive measure supporting the integration of young people not in education, training or employment with a refugee background.

Assessing the overall efficiency of the Youth College is difficult because of novelty of the measure, there is little to compare it too. However, the cost-benefit analysis (CBA)<sup>669</sup> estimates a total net benefit of the project over 2 years of EUR 7.5 million based on the benefits created by participants receiving a degree or entering different forms of education, employment or an apprenticeship. This means that each Euro spent on the project can be expected to generate EUR 1.4 worth of benefits *even without* taking into consideration other likely outcomes like a better integration of the participants into the Austrian society as well as like positive effects which materialise only after 3 years. As such, the project offers good value for money.<sup>670</sup>

The project leaders suggested two areas in which improvements could be made<sup>671</sup>. First, the reporting on the progress of the project to four funding partners and deliberating the next steps with all of them was described as

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<sup>665</sup> VHS Wien. Präsentation „StartWien – Das Jugendcollege“ available at [http://www.interface-wien.at/system/attachs/148/original/Presseunterlage\\_PK\\_Jugendcollege\\_FINAL.pdf?1468593872](http://www.interface-wien.at/system/attachs/148/original/Presseunterlage_PK_Jugendcollege_FINAL.pdf?1468593872)

<sup>666</sup> Interview VHS Wien

<sup>667</sup> L&R (2019). Zusammenfassung: Evaluierung „Start Wien – das Jugendcollege“.

<sup>668</sup> Interview VHS Wien

<sup>669</sup> For more information on the detailed CBA, please refer to Annex 5.

<sup>670</sup> For more information about the cost-benefit analysis, please refer to Annex 5.

<sup>671</sup> Interview VHS Wien

Effectiveness

very time intensive. This issue was intensified by the fact that the project was novel and had to be continuously adapted during the implementation process. Against this background, representatives of the lead partner suggested that it would have been easier if the funding organisation had decided on one lead organisation in charge of monitoring and able to make bilateral decisions with the lead project partner.

Second, the financial reporting requirements for ESF funding were described as very demanding. While the simplified cost option (SCO) was used and appreciated, representatives of the lead partner felt that the reporting bound resources which otherwise could have been used to further support the participants and contribute to the objectives of the project.

Additional funding would have been useful to support measures for the societal integration of participants which were largely carried out by volunteers<sup>672</sup> as well as increasing support in the transition from the Youth College into further education, employment or other measures<sup>673</sup>.

The project resulted in the improvement of competencies of most participants as well as the integration into further education or the labour market of a significant share of participants<sup>674</sup>.

Of the 1688 individuals graduating from the Youth College, 690 proceeded into another education or training measure, 628 received a degree from the Youth College and were referred back to the organisations from which they were referred to College, 153 started employment, 122 went into the secondary education system, 61 started apprenticeships, 32 entered a form of tertiary education and 2 entered into an alternative to employment<sup>675</sup>.

The improvement of competencies was strongest at the core subject German. 61% of participants reached the highest level of courses offered by the Youth College by the time they left the programme. Progress in the subjects English and especially mathematics was less pronounced. Further, a survey among representatives of organisations supporting participants upon leaving the Youth College found that former participants had made significant improvements towards their integration into education or the labour market.

While difficult to quantify, the external evaluation also found that participants had made important progress in their social and cultural integration which was regarded as helpful if not necessary factor for participants' integration in education or employment<sup>676</sup>.

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<sup>672</sup> Interview VHS Wien

<sup>673</sup> L&R (2019). Zusammenfassung: Evaluierung „Start Wien – das Jugendcollege“.

<sup>674</sup> L&R (2019). Zusammenfassung: Evaluierung „Start Wien – das Jugendcollege“ p. 4,5

<sup>675</sup> Data provided by VHS Wien.

<sup>676</sup> L&R (2019). Zusammenfassung: Evaluierung „Start Wien – das Jugendcollege“

Participants' path upon leaving the measure was strongly influenced by their legal status. Asylum seekers who have not yet been granted asylum or subsidiary protection status are not permitted to work in Austria and integration into paid employment was not possible. 51% of participants in this group hence enter other forms of education or training upon leaving. Among participants granted asylum or subsidiary protection, 23% entered employment upon leaving the measure while 41% continued with further education.

Among the latter group, an external evaluation remarked that integration in apprenticeships was very low and should be further improved.

"The Youth College was where I learned the most. The teachers were very good! And we always had to speak German with everybody"

"I was in the Youth College for about one and a half years. I started at A1 [German] and finished with B2".

*(Youth College participant interviewed by the evaluation team)*

#### Challenges and success factors

Several challenges and success factors have been identified<sup>677</sup>.

- Only refugees with an approved asylum claim or subsidiary protection status receive work permits in Austria. Hence, success in terms of labour market integration is conditional to achieving such a status. Further, the external project evaluation found that only few participants entered firm-based apprenticeships and if they did so, it was mostly in low-paying occupations in the service sector. This creates a long-term challenge because it risks that participants remain stuck in low-wage jobs. Hence, the integration into high-quality apprenticeships should be improved.
- On the organisational level, the coordination with multiple funding organisations was perceived as challenging and time consuming by the lead project partner. Instead, it was recommended that one lead funding organisation should have been designated.
- The financial reporting requirements for ESF funding were regarded as overly demanding and one factor decreasing the efficiency of the project.
- A crucial success factor identified by the evaluation was the continuous support through individual counsellors. For participants, it was very useful to have one dedicated contact person they could turn to.
- The combination of measures to support inclusion in education and the labour market with measures for social and cultural integration was found to be important as well. While cultural and social integration is difficult to measure, the evaluation found that it is often a necessary precondition for individuals with a refugee background to work towards their integration in the education system or the labour market.
- In addition, time and resources were identified as an important factor in the integration process. According to the external evaluation and representatives of the lead partner, the level of competencies of

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<sup>677</sup> L&R (2019). Zusammenfassung: Evaluierung „Start Wien – das Jugendcollege“.

participants in core areas like literacy was initially overestimated while the speed of integration as underestimated. Hence, providing sufficient time and support for participants was regarded as crucial.

“The best thing were the teachers and other employees. They were really good!”

“10 participants always had one counsellor. We could approach them with any kind of problem. How can we solve a problem? Where can we find help? This was really great!”

*(Youth College participant interviewed by the evaluation team)*

EU Added  
value

ESF funding provided added value by temporarily bringing together several important regional actors to fill an important policy gap: support for young people not in employment, education or training with a migration background. Without the support of the ESF, this project is unlikely to have been implemented.<sup>678</sup>

The project complemented regional and national policies and political priorities in form of the Viennese training guarantee and the nation-wide Training obligation.

Two follow-up projects of the Youth College are being implemented. The projects are being implemented separately by organisations which had been involved in funding the Youth College. This means that the cooperation structures among funding organisations developed for the Youth College did not continue.

Elements for  
transferability  
/ good  
practices

The intervention logic and the rationale were well suited to address the needs of a target group which was underserved by existing measures. This is evidenced by the high level of satisfaction among participants, the promising results in terms of integration into education, training and the labour market and the high relevance attributed to the project by various stakeholders<sup>679</sup>.

While transferability depends on the context in the target country, many European Member States are struggling with the integration of young people with a refugee background. Further, the transition from school to work or into further education is a time of high vulnerability of young people. Hence, the general concept of the Youth College seems very relevant to many EU MS.

The comprehensiveness of the intervention – the provision of education in German and other core subjects in combination with courses on cultural and value subjects as well as counselling – was regarded as positive by the

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<sup>678</sup> Interview VHS Vienna

<sup>679</sup> L&R (2019). Zusammenfassung: Evaluierung „Start Wien – das Jugendcollege“, p.6.

project leaders and the external evaluation<sup>680</sup>. However, the project leaders also stressed that more support for the active societal inclusion of participants would have been useful. Similarly, more intensive support for participants in their transition out of the Youth College and into education, training or the labour market was identified as an area for further improvements.

## **2 Bulgaria - Science and Education for Smart Growth Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014BG05M2OP001)**

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the Science and Education for Smart Growth Operational Programme in Bulgaria (2014BG05M2OP001) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared drawing on desk research and interviews with national stakeholders.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP – full support for pre-school education and training for disadvantaged children from Burgas Municipality'. The selected project was classified as a type 3 operation by the evaluation study. Type 3 operations focus on basic school education (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socio-economic indicators of the context, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU-added value of the OP and selected project as well as challenges and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Success rates were estimated as the number of results generated as a share of the relevant number of participations. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation of achievement rates and success rates. The case study also presents an estimated cost-per-participation. The methodological approach for the calculation is presented in Annex 5 of the study.

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<sup>680</sup> Interview VHS Wien, L&R (2019). Zusammenfassung: Evaluierung „Start Wien – das Jugendcollege“, p.6.

## OP Case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p><b>OP:</b> Science and Education for Smart Growth Operational Programme 2014-2020</p>
OP implementation context	<p><b>Regions covered by the OP:</b> Less developed (Severozapaden, Severen Tsentralen, Severoiztochen, Yugoiztochen, Yugozapaden, Yuzhen tsentralen)</p> <p><b>Priority Axes:</b> Axis 1: (TO1) Research and technological development; Axis 2: (TO10) Education and lifelong learning; Axis 3: (TO9) Educational environment for active social inclusion; Axis 4: (TO11) Technical assistance</p> <p><b>IPs covering TO9:</b> IP9i and P9ii</p> <p><b>Type of OP:</b> Multi-fund (ERDF and ESF)</p> <p>In 2014, the main problems related to the access to school education are the access to education for children with special educational needs, a high drop out of school rate related to poverty and family environment.</p> <p>The share of people aged 18-24 years who left the education system in the Republic of Bulgaria prematurely was 12.5% in 2012 below the average for the 27 EU Member States (12.6%). This indicator still exceeds both the level set by the Europe 2020 strategy (10%) and the national target of 11%. In Bulgaria, dropping out occurs due to a complicated set of factors, where discrimination, poverty and illiteracy levels interplay.</p> <p>One of the country specific recommendation in 2014 was to reach out to non-registered young people who are neither in employment, education nor training. The Bulgarian government was advised to pursue reforms of vocational and higher education in order to increase the level and relevance of skills acquired at all levels and improve access to quality inclusive pre-school and school education of disadvantaged children, in particular Roma. In 2016 Bulgaria adopted a new Pre-School and School Education Act.</p>
ESF Priorities and actions	<p>Type of actions prioritised in the OP: Systemic operations and grant schemes, designed and implemented by the Ministry of Education and targeting children with special educational needs and children from Roma minorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Type 1: Employment-focused actions</li> <li>- Type 3: Basic school education</li> <li>- Type 4: Access to services</li> <li>- Type 6: Actions influencing attitudes and systems</li> </ul> <p>There were no changes to OP Science and Education for Smart Growth that concerned the allocation of funds for TO9 or any changes in the corresponding target groups.</p>

Section	Description																				
Target groups	<p>The intended target groups included children with special educational needs and educational institutions, attended by children with special educational needs; students from ethnic minorities, Roma, in particular.</p> <p>The intended target groups at planning stage were also reached at the implementation stage. The target groups did not change during the implementation.</p>																				
Operations	<p>Number of TO9 operations by IP: IP9i: 1; IP9ii: 129</p> <p>Under IP9i there is only one systemic operation focused on the provision of equal opportunities for development to children with special educational needs.</p> <p>Most of 129 operations under IP9ii are small-scale and mainly include municipality-level or school-level actions to keep students from ethnic minorities in school. There is one systematic operation under IP9ii, focused on the formation of key competences of illiterate people.</p>																				
Partnerships	<p>The Managing Authority is the Executive Agency "Science and Education for Smart Growth Operational Programme" (Изпълнителна Агенция Оперативна Програма Наука и образование за интелигентен растеж).</p> <p>Stakeholders were involved in the implementation of OP Science and Education for Smart Growth through their participation in the Monitoring Committee. The members of this committee include representatives of authorities, managing other EU-funded operational programmes; national institutions involved in developing educational, child protection and social inclusion policies; regional authorities; labour and employers' organisations, the teachers' unions; NGOs representing Roma people and people with disabilities.</p> <p>No changes to the partnerships or differentiation by IP are present.</p>																				
Funding of the OP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions)</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>IP</th> <th>Planned(a)</th> <th>Allocated(b)</th> <th>Spent</th> <th>Project Selection Rate (b/a)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>IP9i</td> <td>€30,000,000</td> <td>€8,616,332</td> <td>€8,027,734</td> <td>29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9ii</td> <td>€98,860,921</td> <td>€30,757,412</td> <td>€16,207,003</td> <td>31%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>€128,860,921</b></td> <td><b>€39,373,743</b></td> <td><b>€24,234,737</b></td> <td><b>31%</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source:</i> SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. <i>Note:</i> Planned amounts refer to the whole 2014-2020 programming period while allocated and spent amounts refer to the period up to the end of the 2018 calendar year (31 December 2018).</p> <p>Co-financing rate: 85%</p> <p>OP Science and Education for Smart Growth is a multi-fund OP (ERDF and ESF), but the ERDF funding is directed towards the priority axis</p>	IP	Planned(a)	Allocated(b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)	IP9i	€30,000,000	€8,616,332	€8,027,734	29%	IP9ii	€98,860,921	€30,757,412	€16,207,003	31%	<b>Total</b>	<b>€128,860,921</b>	<b>€39,373,743</b>	<b>€24,234,737</b>	<b>31%</b>
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Section	Description
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focused on strengthening research, technological development and innovation.

There are some integrated measures funded by several OPs, including the OP Science and Education for Smart Growth (ESF).

ESF funding under OP Science and Education for Smart Growth is also allocated to strategies under community-led local development operations approved under the Rural Development Programme (EAFRD).

Outputs and results (2014/2018)

- Total number of participations: 62,094
- Common Output Indicators:

Code	Indicator	Number
CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	6,361
CO02	Long-term unemployed	5,014
CO03	Inactive	49,517
CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	736
CO05	Employed, including self-employed	6,216
CO07	Above 54 years of age	1,404
CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	507
CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	49,828
CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	34,928
CO16	Participants with disabilities	865
CO17	Other disadvantaged	7,666
CO18	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	226
CO19	From rural areas	21,813
CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	-

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

- Common Result Indicators:

Code	Indicator	Number
CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	948
CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	-
CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	44

Section	Description
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CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	22,689
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	-
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	44
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	19,624
CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	-
CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	-

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Assessment of the OP

**Effectiveness:** As reflected in the recorded results, the ESF support has to a certain extent contributed to the promotion of social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination in Bulgaria. The specific achievement rate of the Operational programme is 43%. The success rate of the indicator "participants in education/training upon leaving" under Type 3 operations supporting basic education was 47%. The success rate of the indicator "Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving" under Type 4 operations was 17%. However, the Managing Authority has noted that some of the indicators under the OP have not been informative of the effectiveness of its operations.

**Efficiency:** The Managing Authority considers systemic operations of the Ministry of Education are more efficient than the grant operations because of their scale and method of implementation. Operations under IP9i and IP9ii under the OP had a lower cost per participant than the EU average. The costs per participant in operations under IP9i were 851 euro, which is 41% less than the EU average costs. The costs per participant in operations under IP9ii were 308 euro, which is approximately 63% of the EU average.

**Relevance and coherence:** The operations under OP Science and Education for Smart Growth and OP Human Resources Development are in line with social inclusion objectives, set by EU2020 and national strategies for Roma integration.

**Added value:** Owing to the ESF support under OP Science and Education for Smart Growth, methodologies for working with children with special educational needs were developed.

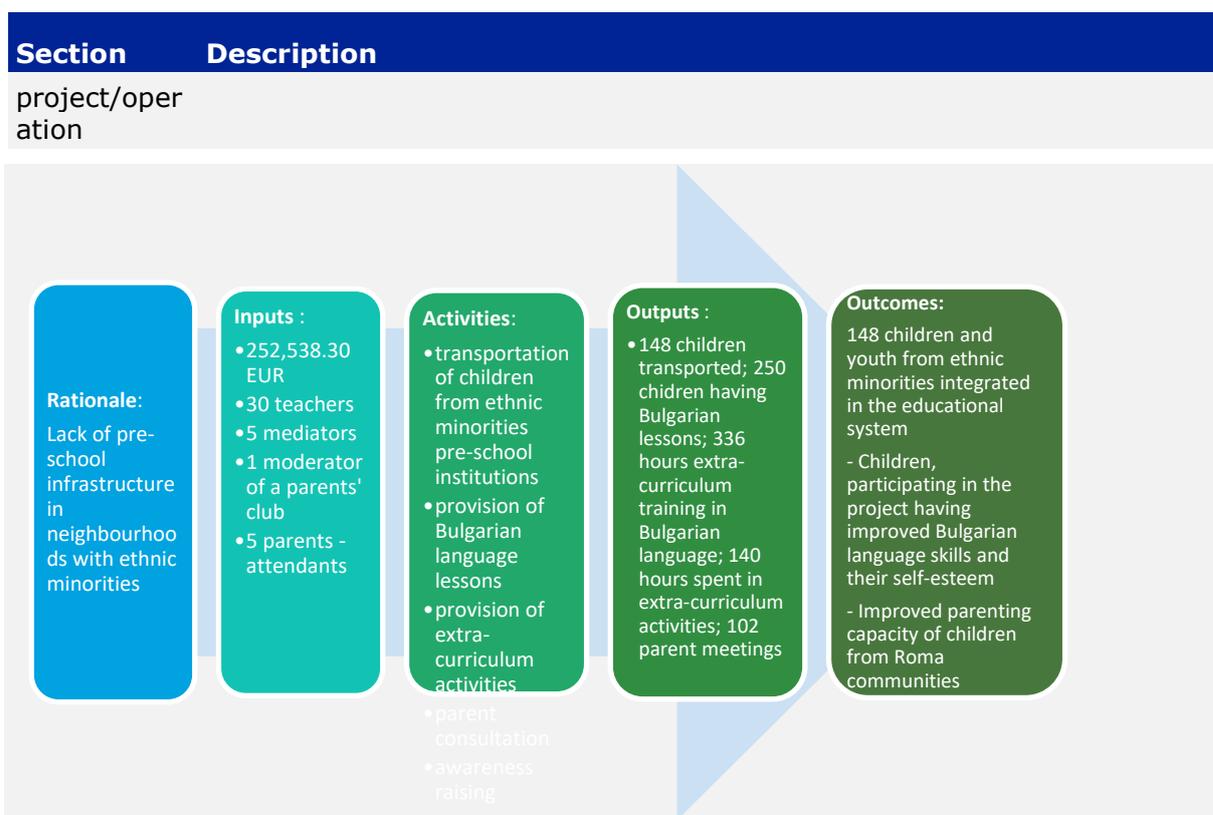
Challenges and lessons learned

1. There was an initial delay in implementation of OP Science and Education for Smart Growth and some target groups, such as illiterate youth have been more difficult to reach.

Section	Description
	<p>2. During the implementation, the Managing Authority is trying to simplify application and reporting procedures, including through the introduction of simplified costs options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The participants from ethnic minorities were in many cases reached through the appointment of mediators within the framework of the operation. This proved a successful strategy for engaging the communities in the operations.</li> </ul>

### In-depth analysis of the project - Full support for pre-school education and training for disadvantaged children from Burgas Municipality

Section	Description
Basic Facts Box	<p><b>Name:</b> Full support for pre-school education and training for disadvantaged children from Burgas Municipality</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> Implemented in the period 27 July 2017 – 28 January 2020. On-going operation</p> <p><b>OP:</b> Science and Education for Smart Growth Operational Programme 2014-2020; IP9ii: Socio-economic integration of marginalized communities such as the Roma</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> The idea of the project is to support 250 disadvantaged children by applying an integrated approach: providing organized transport for the children from Pobeda quarter to central pre-schools, conducting Bulgarian language classes for children with different mother tongue, improving the conditions of the educational environment by purchasing the necessary equipment and materials and organizing a variety of extracurricular activities and working with parents to accept diversity and education as a value.</p> <p><b>Participants:</b> 634</p> <p><b>Total allocated funds:</b> 493,922.00 BGN (252,538.30 EUR)</p> <p><b>Total allocated ESF funds:</b> 419 833.70 BGN</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> 5 pre-schools (Pre-school No. 35 "Temenuga" – Ravnets; Pre-school No. 2 "Zvezditsa - Zornitsa" – Burgas; Pre-school No. 16 "Develina" - Burgas with a branch "Svetulka" в Balgarovo; Pre-school No.17 "Veselushko" – Burgas; Pre-school No. 4 "Калинка" – Rudnik neighbourhood with a branch in Chernomore neighbourhood) and one NGO (Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance)</p> <p><b>Target groups:</b> Children from 3 to 7 years old from the ethnic minority neighbourhoods in Burgas and their parents</p>
Intervention logic of the	



#### Rationale

The past experience of Burgas municipality showed that integrating children from ethnic minorities into a mixed pre-school environment is delivering good results in terms of their early childhood development. Since 2010 the municipality has implemented a programme for transportation of disadvantaged children from an ethnic minority neighbourhood to pre-schools in other parts of the city<sup>681</sup>. One of the reasons was also that there was no pre-school educational infrastructure in the afore neighbourhood.

As a result of the programme, the children adapted to the mixed pre-school environment, acquired hygiene habits and social skills, expanded their knowledge of Bulgarian language and acquired skills in other educational areas<sup>682</sup>. At the same time, in adjacent villages - Ravnets and Bulgarovo and Rudnik, also with compact ethnic minority population, the pre-schools have difficulties financing extra-curriculum activities for the socialization of children. Villages near Rudnik with compact ethnic minorities also do not have pre-school facilities. In many cases the families of the children are unemployed and singles mothers, which cannot afford the transport costs.

ESF support was allocated to the project under open procedure BG05M2OP001-3.001 Support for pre-school education and training of

<sup>681</sup> Interview – Burgas Municipality

<sup>682</sup> Ibid.

disadvantaged children.<sup>683</sup> Out of the 136 project proposals, 31 were supported under the procedure. The Burgas Municipality project proposal proved the needs of children from ethnic minorities of quality pre-school educational environment<sup>684</sup>. The management of the municipality allowed pre-schools with no administrative capacity to receive ESF funding under OP Science and Education for Smart Growth and compact ethnic minority population to take part.

**Story box**

“The ESF support gave us with an opportunity to continue providing Roma children with mixed pre-school environment. There is no pre-school infrastructure in the neighborhood, where they live and most of the parent don’t have a desire or an opportunity to take the children to a pre-school in other areas.”

Objectives

- To support the social inclusion of Roma children by providing them with access to appropriate pre-school educational environment ;
- To support the socialization of children from ethnic minorities in mixed environment and motivate them to participate in the educational process through the provision of Bulgarian language lessons. Language training involves the building of social connections, integrating with culture, developing social self-awareness, developing learning habits and a system of social orientation .
- To create an integrated multicultural pre-school environment through the promotion of communication and joint activities between children of different ethnicities.
- To keep children from ethnic minorities in the school system by collaborating with their parents.
- Raising awareness among parents of various ethnic backgrounds of the benefits of educational integration and acceptance.

Relevance and coherence/ synergies

The project addresses the need of children from 3 to 7 years old from the ethnic minority neighbourhoods in Burgas to receive quality pre-school education and be integrated in the Bulgarian educational system from an early age. While there is also a need of provision of pre-school infrastructure in these neighbourhoods, the transportation of children to other areas of the city and the creation of a mixed pre-school environment supports their social inclusion.

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<sup>683</sup> Information system for management and monitoring of EU funds in Bulgaria, available at <http://2020.eufunds.bg/bg/0/0/Project/BasicData?contractId=Rs8W%2B29rYyc%3D&isHistoric=False>

<sup>684</sup> Interview – Managing Authority Regional coordinator

	<p>The project addresses the socio-economic needs at both regional and national level. At local level, an analysis of the socio-economic situation in Burgas in 2014 showed that there is a need for improvement of the access to pre-school education in the municipality, especially for children from disadvantaged families . The objectives of the operation are also coherent with the Regional strategy for integration of Roma people in Burgas region. At national level, the operations' objectives are in line with operational goal "Reaching and retaining Roma children and students in the education system and providing them with quality education in a multicultural educational environment" of the National Strategy for Integration of the Roma (2012 – 2020).</p>
Outputs	<p>The Municipality of Burgas has some information about the families from ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups in its area.</p> <p>Target groups were children from 3 to 7 years old from the ethnic minority neighbourhoods in Burgas and their parents.</p>
	<p>Number of participants and other relevant outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 148 children transported from neighbourhoods with compact ethnic population to the participating pre-school institutions</li><li>• mediators appointed</li><li>• parents-attendants appointed</li><li>• moderator of the parents' club appointed</li><li>• 30 teachers appointed in the 5 pre-schools, partners in the operation</li><li>• 250 children with problems with Bulgarian language identified and 250 learning plans for them developed</li><li>• Delivered and assembled furniture and equipment in the 5 pre-schools</li><li>• Delivered learning materials, stationery and sports equipment in the 5 pre-schools</li><li>• Delivered learning materials for the classes in Bulgarian language for 250 children</li><li>• Number and types of activities implemented (e.g. counselling, training, workshops)</li><li>• 336 hours monthly extra-curriculum training in Bulgarian language</li><li>• extra-curriculum academies formed – in basketry, natural sciences, decoupage, needle work</li><li>• extra-curriculum ateliers formed - pottery, sewing, digital skills</li><li>• 140 hours spent in extra-curriculum activities</li><li>• thematic concerts</li><li>• 10 one-day excursions</li><li>• 102 meetings of the parents' club "Responsible parent" held.</li></ul>
Delivery method and partnerships	<p>Through subcontractors the Municipality of Burgas first organised the transportation of the children from ethnic minorities to the participating pre-schools. Each of the pre-schools had a mediator hired within the framework of the project to facilitate the dialogue with the parents and the integration of the children in the pre-schools.</p>

The socialization of children from ethnic minorities in mixed environment was achieved through organization of Bulgarian language lessons by the participating pre-schools, organization of the purchase and delivery of equipment for the extra-curriculum activities by the Municipality of Burgas.

The organization of these activities and the organization of cultural events was entrusted to the directors and teachers in the pre-schools. The NGO – Amalipe supports the awareness raising activities with the parents of the Roma children, organizing meetings with them and explaining to them the importance of education .

The participants from vulnerable groups were recruited with the help of specially appointed educational mediators. It is a practice used in the primary and secondary school system and the operation allowed the beneficiary to adopt it at the pre-school educational stage . They tried hired only people from the neighbourhood community. The mediators smooth the communication between the teachers, parents and children. They have the trust of the ethnic minority group and have especially in the beginning of the operation managed to address the concerns of the parents and provided them with information on the educational process. In the second year of implementation of the project, the recruitment of the participants from the vulnerable groups was easier as the parents from ethnic communities were already acquainted with the process and were satisfied with the results their children were achieving. The moderator from the Roma NGO was supervising the work of the mediators and the parents-attendants, which further smoothed the recruitment process.

During the project implementation the following dissemination activities were carried out: information signs for the beneficiary and the partners in the operation; 2000 information brochures to be disseminated through the education, social, health institutions, NGOs, providing services and support to the targeted group; a booklet presenting the operation – a municipality model for inclusive education, containing the lessons learned and good practice identified, which will be disseminated among all pre-schools in Burgas; opening and closing press conferences; a round table dedicated to the issues of inclusive integration; press media and internet publications about the operations' activities and results .

The recruitment strategy was effective to the extent that the beneficiary managed to reach its output targets on the number of participants. One of the challenges in the recruitment process was that some children were leaving the country with their parents or reached the age for primary school, so the mediators had to start working with new families.

In terms of dissemination, all activities envisaged during the application have taken or taking place, there have been media publications and the events within the framework of the project were well-attended.

6 pre-school institutions and one non-governmental organisation, representing Roma people interests, have been involved as partners in the project. The pre-schools directors considered that the management of the operation by the municipality helped them participate in this ESF action, and that they had very good working relations. The municipality has partnered

Funding and efficiency

with pre-schools and the NGO also in other initiatives, but the operation gave an opportunity to the 6 pre-schools to work together and exchange experiences.

Throughout the project duration, the beneficiary has prepared 6-month reports on the implementation of the project activities and the meeting of the targets.

The Simplified Cost Option (SCO) approach was not used by the managing authority for this operation.

By implementing the project, the Municipality of Burgas wanted to overcome the difficulties it faces in providing pre-educational infrastructure in some Roma neighbourhoods of the city. The project provided them with funding to cover transportation costs and to implement some social inclusion activities in the participating pre-schools. The directors of the participating pre-schools wanted to create extra-curriculum activities for all children attending the pre-school and to work towards creating supportive multi-cultural environment.

The total funds allocated to the project were 493,922.00 BGN, 85% of which came from the ESF - 419 833.70 BGN. 46% of the total funds were sub-contracted for the delivery of the transportation and the delivery of furniture and equipment for the extra-curriculum activities.

The organisational arrangements between beneficiary organisations and MAs and/or between partners was efficient enough to support the delivery the project . The beneficiary stated that while reporting of financial documents might be a bit burdensome, they were supported by the local coordinator of the MA on all management and reporting issues .

The MA and the pre-schools developed the project so that the funding is sufficient and requested the maximum allowed funding under the respective call for proposals. The local coordinator of the MA stated that this is one of the projects, which has been well-planned .

The Municipality of Burgas would have funded the transportation of the children to pre-schools in the city, as it is obliged to provide proper educational infrastructure. However, funding for additional lessons and extra-curriculum activities would not have been available under the delegated budgets of the pre-schools.

Effectiveness

The past experience of Burgas municipality showed that integrating children from ethnic minorities into a mixed pre-school environment is delivering good results in terms of their early childhood development. Since 2010 the municipality has implemented a programme for transportation of disadvantaged children from an ethnic minority neighbourhood to pre-schools in other parts of the city<sup>685</sup>. One of the reasons was also that there was no pre-school educational infrastructure in the afore neighbourhood.

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<sup>685</sup> Interview – Burgas Municipality

As a result of the programme, the children adapted to the mixed pre-school environment, acquired hygiene habits and social skills, expanded their knowledge of Bulgarian language and acquired skills in other educational areas<sup>686</sup>. At the same time, in adjacent villages - Ravnets and Bulgarovo and Rudnik, also with compact ethnic minority population, the pre-schools have difficulties financing extra-curriculum activities for the socialization of children. Villages near Rudnik with compact ethnic minorities also do not have pre-school facilities. In many cases the families of the children are unemployed and singles mothers, which cannot afford the transport costs.

ESF support was allocated to the project under open procedure BG05M2OP001-3.001 Support for pre-school education and training of disadvantaged children.<sup>687</sup> Out of the 136 project proposals, 31 were supported under the procedure. The Burgas Municipality project proposal proved the needs of children from ethnic minorities of quality pre-school educational environment<sup>688</sup>. The management of the municipality allowed pre-schools with no administrative capacity to receive ESF funding under OP Science and Education for Smart Growth and compact ethnic minority population to take part.

#### **Story box**

"The final concert in the Opera house was very moving, you could see how proud the parents of their children were. The children were citing or singing in Bulgarian – something that most of the parents did not believe could happen with their children. So, from parents who initially were reluctant to take their child to a pre-school, they started recommending the project to others in the neighbourhood. They also participated in the parents' meetings. One could see their parental capacity increasing."<sup>689</sup>

Challenges and success factors

Challenges: The beneficiaries have not had significant challenges implementing the project.

Success factors: Burgas Municipality considered that the transportation of children from Roma neighbourhoods to pre-schools in other neighbourhoods is a more effective strategy for their integration in the educational system. The overall approach of creating multi-cultural environment through common extra-curriculum activities, sports and cultural events

EU Added value

The transportation of children from Roma neighbourhoods to pre-schools in other areas of the city was already introduced as a measure by the

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<sup>686</sup> Ibid.

<sup>687</sup> Information system for management and monitoring of EU funds in Bulgaria, available at <http://2020.eufunds.bg/bg/0/0/Project/BasicData?contractId=Rs8W%2B29rYyc%3D&isHistoric=False>

<sup>688</sup> Interview – Managing Authority Regional coordinator

<sup>689</sup> Interview – Managing Authority Regional coordinator

municipality prior to the beginning of the project. It is a measure that they would have been implemented without the ESF-support. There was not going to be state funding for all other extra-curriculum activities – language lessons, crafts workshops, cultural events, that contributed to the socialisation of the children.

Burgas Municipality will keep financing the transportation of the children from Roma Communities to pre-schools, which guarantees the sustainability of the measure. The Pre-schools are now equipped to continue carrying out the extra-curriculum activities with all enrolled children.

It was the first time that the 5 directors of the pre-schools worked together, which helped them exchange good practices for management of the institutions.

Elements for transferability / good practices

Elements that could be transferred to other MS municipalities with neighbourhoods with compact ethnic minority population include:

- The use of mediators in the dialogue with parents of children in pre-school age from ethnic minorities.
- The use of language lessons and crafts workshops to boost the socialisation of the children in the multi-cultural environment.
- The dialogue with the parents of the Roma children, aiming to improve their parental capacity and their understanding of the significance of school education.
- The partnering with a Roma non-government organisation was of key importance for improving the dialogue with the parents.

#### **Story box**

Other municipalities in the region – Sozopol, got interested in the project's delivery process and will probably develop a similar action in their municipality. While the model of project cannot be entirely copied and has to be adapted to local needs, the Burgas municipality has able to share its experience with the project under this OP and thus give ideas to smaller municipalities in the region, which lack the capacity in developing similar projects.

### **3 Bulgaria - Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014BG05M9OP001)**

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the Human Resources Development Operational Programme in Bulgaria (2014BG05M9OP001). The Operational Programme (OP) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared drawing on desk research and five interviews with national stakeholders.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'Foster me'. The selected project was classified as

a type 4 operation by the evaluation study. Type 4 operations focus on access to essential services (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socio-economic indicators of the context, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU-added value of the OP and selected project as well as challenges and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach. The case study also presents an estimated cost-per-participation. The methodological approach for the calculation is presented in Annex 5 of the study.

## OP Case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p><b>OP:</b> (2014BG05M90PO01) Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2014-2020</p> <p><b>Regions covered by the OP:</b> Less developed (Severozapaden, Severen Tsentralen, Severoiztochen, Yugoiztochen, Yugozapaden, Yuzhen tsentralen)</p> <p><b>Priority Axes:</b> Axis 1: (TO8 and TO10) Improving the access to employment and the quality of jobs; Axis 2: (TO9) Reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion; Axis 3: (TO11) Modernization of institutions in the sphere of social inclusion, health, equal opportunities and non-discrimination and work conditions; Axis 4: (TO8) Transnational cooperation; Axis 5 Technical assistance</p> <p><b>TO9 IPs selected:</b> IP9i; IP9ii; IP9iv; IP9v</p> <p><b>Type of OP:</b> Mono fund (ESF)</p>
OP implementation context	<p>The original context for the programme included several factors: (1) the downward trend in the number of economically active people from 15 to 24 years old (from 30.1% in 2008 to 29.6% in 2013) , (2) the reduced employment rate of the population aged 20-64 years (from 70.7% in 2008 to 63.5% in 2013) , (3) an increased unemployment rate (from 5.6% in 2008 to 13.0% in 2013) and (4) the increased rate of long-term unemployment (from 2.9% in 2008 to 7.4% in 2013)) . Since 2013 all these trends have reversed and are now close to the 2008 levels.</p> <p>The risk of poverty and social exclusion nevertheless continue to be unacceptably high. In 2018, 32.8% of the country population were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, the most severe situation being that of the population of the North-West Region where 44.4% of its inhabitants were facing this risk.</p> <p>Analyses show that some of the most pressing social exclusion issues in the country are related to the limited access to social services and information on available services, lack of accessible infrastructure, particularly for people with disabilities, etc.</p>

Section	Description
	<p>A vulnerable group considerably exposed to the risk of poverty and social exclusion are the children (in 2018 33.7% of all people at risk were children). Most commonly, these are children from a disadvantaged background and low-income households, children with disabilities, those deprived of parental care, living in poor housing conditions, etc.</p> <p><b>Managing Authority:</b></p> <p>The Managing Authority is the General Directorate “European funds, international programmes and projects” within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (Главна дирекция "Европейски фондове международни програми и проекти" към Министерство на труда и социалната политика).</p> <p>The key organisations involved in the implementation and delivery of operations under the OP are the Agency for Social Assistance and the Municipalities.</p>
ESF Priorities and actions	<p>The type of actions prioritized in the OP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type 1: Employment-focused actions</li> <li>• Type 2: Actions to enhance basic skills</li> <li>• Type 3: Basic school education</li> <li>• Type 4: Access to essential services</li> <li>• Type 5: Social entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Type 6: Actions influencing attitudes and systems</li> </ul>
Target groups	<p>The intended target groups include children with disabilities and their families; single parents; people with disabilities; people from marginalized communities, ethnic minorities, in particular Roma; elderly people over 65 years old; adults with disabilities, placed in institutions; providers of social services; children and youth with disabilities, placed in institutions; social enterprises.</p> <p>The intended target groups at planning stage were also reached at the implementation stage. The target groups did not shift in implementation.</p>
Operations	<p>Total number of operations under TO9: 418. Most of the operations are under IP9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest.</p>
Partnerships	<p>Stakeholders were involved in the implementation of OP Human Resources Development through their participation in the Monitoring Committee . The members of this committee include representatives of authorities, managing other EU-funded operational programmes; national institutions involved in developing educational, child protection and social inclusion policies; regional authorities; labour and employers’ organisations; NGOs representing Roma people and people with disabilities.</p>

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Funding of the OP	<p>Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2014-2020 has also a sub-committee on the social inclusion topic, representing a wider pool of stakeholders with an interest in this topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions)</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>IP</th> <th>Planned(a)</th> <th>Allocated(b)</th> <th>Spent</th> <th>Project Selection Rate (b/a)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>IP9i</td> <td>€69,369,870</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9ii</td> <td>€69,369,871</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9iv</td> <td>€239,774,088</td> <td>€250,418,609</td> <td>€149,550,578</td> <td>104%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9v</td> <td>€32,972,389</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>€411,486,217</b></td> <td><b>€250,418,609</b></td> <td><b>€149,550,578</b></td> <td><b>61%</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source:</i> SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. <i>Note:</i> Planned amounts refer to the whole 2014-2020 programming period while allocated and spent amounts refer to the period up to the end of the 2018 calendar year (31 December 2018).</p> <p>Co-financing rate: 85%</p> <p>The planned budget under Priority axis 2 of Operational Programme Human Resources Development, which sets the TO9 actions, has been increased. 134.7 million Bulgarian leva were reallocated from actions, focusing on creating employment prospects to Priority axis 2 which is dedicated to social inclusion.</p> <p>There are some integrated measures, funded jointly by ERDF and ESF (through OP Human Resources Development)</p>	IP	Planned(a)	Allocated(b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)	IP9i	€69,369,870	-	-	0%	IP9ii	€69,369,871	-	-	0%	IP9iv	€239,774,088	€250,418,609	€149,550,578	104%	IP9v	€32,972,389	-	-	0%	<b>Total</b>	<b>€411,486,217</b>	<b>€250,418,609</b>	<b>€149,550,578</b>	<b>61%</b>			
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Outputs results (2014/2018) and	<p>Total recorded number of participations: 84,597</p> <p>Common Output Indicators:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CO01</td> <td>Unemployed, including long-term unemployed</td> <td>4,039</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO02</td> <td>Long-term unemployed</td> <td>2,576</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO03</td> <td>Inactive</td> <td>77,312</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO04</td> <td>Inactive, not in education or training</td> <td>42,347</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO05</td> <td>Employed, including self-employed</td> <td>3,246</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO07</td> <td>Above 54 years of age</td> <td>38,417</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO08</td> <td>Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training</td> <td>37,261</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO09</td> <td>With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)</td> <td>53,073</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO15</td> <td>Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)</td> <td>17,371</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Code	Indicator	Number	CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	4,039	CO02	Long-term unemployed	2,576	CO03	Inactive	77,312	CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	42,347	CO05	Employed, including self-employed	3,246	CO07	Above 54 years of age	38,417	CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	37,261	CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	53,073				CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	17,371
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CO16	Participants with disabilities	47,124
CO17	Other disadvantaged	4,077
CO18	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	250
CO19	From rural areas	46,109
CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	-

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Common Result Indicators:

Code	Indicator	Number
CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	1,868
CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	143
CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	609
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	589
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	2,005
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	534
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	3
CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	-
CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	356

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

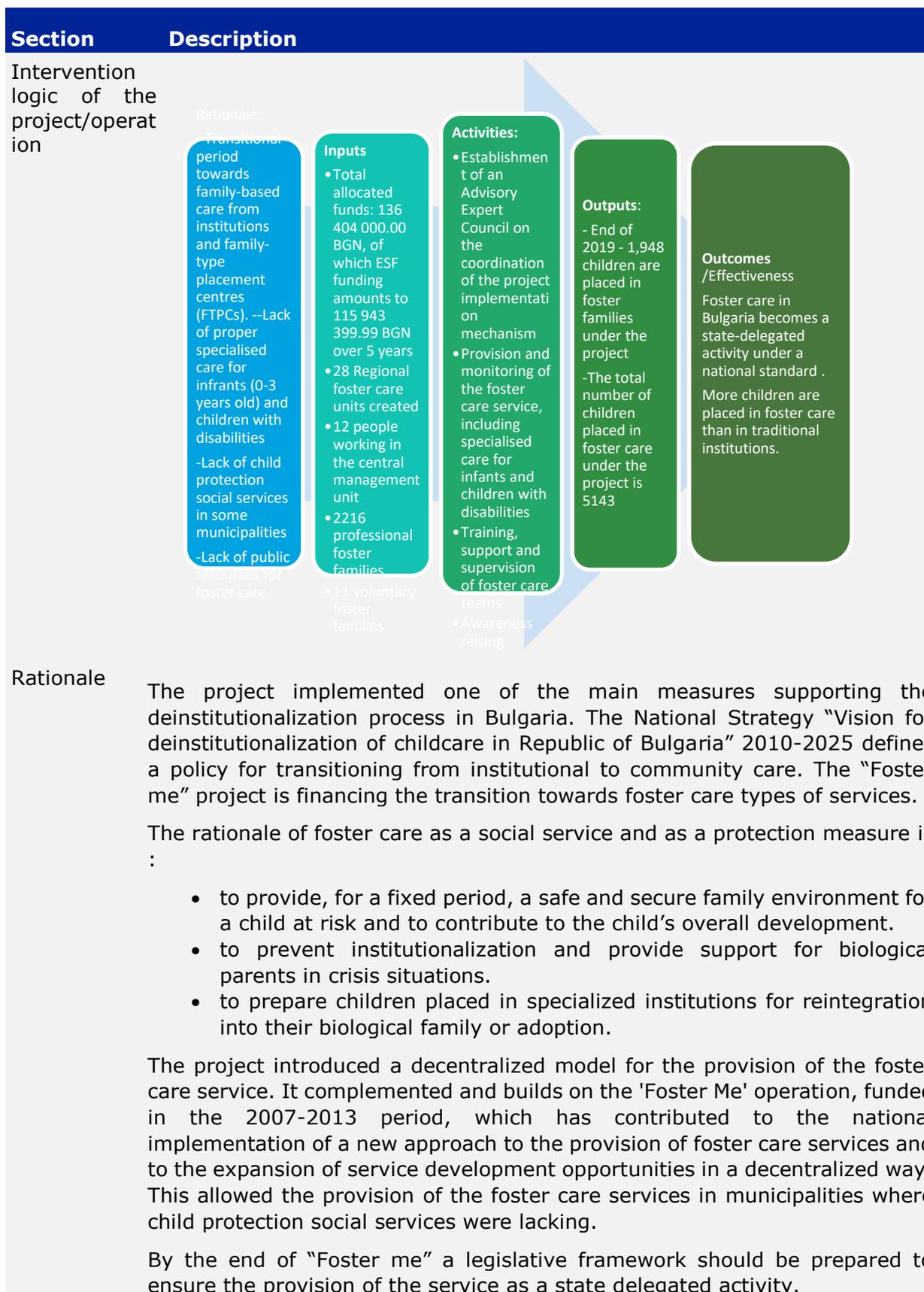
Assessment of the OP

**Effectiveness:** Looking at result indicators, OP Human Resources Development has to a certain extent achieved its targets. The achievement rate of targets set for specific result indicators was estimated at 68%. The achievement of targets of some specific result indicators could be largely attributed to the successful implementation of operations related to the deinstitutionalisation of child care. So far, the measures aiming at improving the employability of inactive and Roma people have been less effective in generating results as compared with similar interventions in other Member States. The success rate of the indicator "inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving" under Type 2 operations was 39% compared to an EU average of 2%.

Section	Description
Challenges and lessons learned	<p><b>Efficiency:</b> The implementation of projects by the Agency for Social Assistance and the Agency for Employment has allowed ESF-supported actions to get national coverage and achieve economies of scale. However, operations under IP9iv had a higher cost per participant than the EU average and in this regard could be considered less efficient. The costs per participant in operations under IP9iv were 1979 euro, which is 53% more than the EU average costs.</p> <p><b>Relevance and coherence:</b> The operations under OP Human Resources Development are in line with social inclusion objectives, set by EU2020 and national strategy for Roma integration.</p> <p><b>Added value:</b> Owing to the ESF support under OP Human Resources Development, the deinstitutionalization process of children is considerably advanced. In this programming period ESF supported the provision of foster care and the development of a national standard for this service, which will be subsequently adopted in the national childcare system.</p> <p>The analysis of achievement rates on programme-specific indicators suggests that targets set for the end of the programming period may have been set too low. In addition, the Managing Authority noted also that the achievement of some indicators was very dependent on the changing socio-economic context. For example, while in 2013 when the initial targets were set, unemployment was a major concern and in the subsequent years the rate dropped significantly. This, however, was not due to the OP's interventions, but due to the improving economic situation and high levels of immigration of inactive people. Targets for some operations, such as the "Foster me", were set low, because authorities were not expecting such an interest in the foster parent role.</p> <p>Over the last year, there have been targeted misinformation campaigns against social inclusion policies in the country, spreading misconceptions about foster care and other child protection services. This resulted in the postponement of the entering into force of social services legislation, implementing the models developed with ESF support in the national childcare systems. This undermines the impact and sustainability of the results achieved by the social services, piloted and delivered with ESF support.</p> <p>Societal stereotypes against groups in vulnerable position exist. These stereotypes have led to local communities protesting against municipalities' intention to provide social housing and services with ESF support. This has mostly affected measures targeting children with deviant behaviour, youths from Roma minorities and adults with disabilities.</p> <p>Excessive reporting requirements and a (perceived) lack of legal certainty regarding how spending rules will be applied are the main problems regarding the effective and efficient use of ESF funds. The Simplified Cost Option (SCO) and the related delegated acts are seen by stakeholders as a step in the right direction.</p>

### In-depth analysis of selected project: Foster me

Section	Description
Basic Facts Box	<p><b>OP:</b> Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2014-2020, IP 9iv: IP: Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest</p> <p><b>Project Name:</b> Foster Me 2015 (Приеми ме 2015)</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> The project aims to enhance and expand the scope of foster care and to consolidate its provision at the local level as an alternative form of raising children at risk in a family environment. The project also aimed at supporting the process of deinstitutionalization of children through a sustainable model of substitute family care for children accommodated in specialized institutions, children at risk, children with disabilities, unaccompanied children</p> <p><b>Beneficiary:</b> Agency for Social Assistance (Агенция за социално подпомагане) - Public body</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> The project is still ongoing. 18 March 2015 to 31 December 2020</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Municipalities on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria and Municipality regions;</p> <p><b>Target groups:</b> Target groups of the project were foster-care families, foster families and families of relatives; children at risk; children up to 3 years of age; children with disabilities; children, victims of violence and trafficking; community children at risk of abandonment and their families, including the families of their relatives; children at risk, seeking or receiving international protection (including unaccompanied refugees ); children, accommodated in specialized institutions; children, accommodated in foster families; children, accommodated in families of relatives. The procedure is innovative in terms of support and aimed at developing "specialized foster care" for children with disabilities; children, victims of violence or trafficking, as well as children, unaccompanied refugees.</p> <p><b>Participants:</b> 4882 children and young people receiving social and health services in the community after leaving institutions; 157 social inclusion service providers</p> <p><b>Total allocated funds:</b> 136,404,000.00 BGN</p> <p><b>Total allocated ESF funds:</b> 115,943,399.99 BGN</p>



Section	Description
Objectives	<p>The Foster me 2015 project is aimed at improving and extending the foster care service and consolidating the provision of the service at the local level as an alternative form of raising at-risk children in a family environment. This approach differs from the Family-type placement centre approach, in which up to 12 children are raised in group homes by specialised personnel.</p> <p>The main objectives of this project are to:</p> <p>Support the process of deinstitutionalization of children through a sustainable model of substitute family care for children accommodated in specialized institutions, children at risk, children with disabilities, unaccompanied migrant children as well as through the development of new models of work and services for children at risk and their parents;</p> <p>Enhance foster care development by supporting the provision of "specialized foster care" for infants, children victims of violence and trafficking, unaccompanied migrant children, children with disabilities. To this end further support is provided to families and children.</p> <p>Develop a monitoring of the quality of the foster care service</p> <p>The Agency for Social Assistance is the beneficiary of the project since the deinstitutionalization process is organised and managed by it. The implementation by the Agency for social assistance also guarantees the national coverage of the measures and consistency with other child protection policies. The establishment of an Advisory Expert Council on the coordination of the project implementation mechanism guarantees that other institutions involved in child protection policies are involved in the project.</p>
Relevance and coherence/ synergies	<p>This operation is in line with the National Strategy "Vision for the deinstitutionalization of childcare in the Republic of Bulgaria" and the Action Plan for its implementation, the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2020. The implementation of the measures are supposed to contribute to the achievement of the main objective of the National Strategy for the Child 2008-2018, namely ensuring the conditions for the effective exercise of the rights and improving the quality of life of the children as a condition for their free and full personality development.</p> <p>The objectives of the project address the needs of children, who were previously placed in institutions and new cases of identified children at risk. It is one of the measures to secure child protection services in family environment for them. It manages to address regional and municipal needs by establishment of 28 regional units and the participation of municipalities in the delivery in the delivery of the project.</p>
Outputs	<b>Target Groups:</b>

Section	Description																				
	<p>The target groups participating in the project/operation are infants and children at risk, children victims of violence and trafficking, unaccompanied migrant children, children with disabilities.</p> <p>The main target group are infants (0-3 years old) and children at risk, children - victims of trafficking and violence, unaccompanied migrant children.</p> <p><b>Output Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people receiving social and health services in the community after leaving the institution, target value: 3,300, value reached: 5,143</li> <li>• Children and young people placed in institutions covered by deinstitutionalization interventions, target value: 3,300, reached value: 5,143</li> <li>• Number of social inclusion service providers, target value: 150, value reached: 157</li> <li>• Number of social inclusion service providers extending their services, target: 90, value reached: 115</li> </ul> <p><b>Characteristics of participants:</b></p> <p>In the end of 2019, 2,216 professional foster families and 11 voluntary foster families participated in the project. While there is a large amount of foster families under the project, they are not proportionally distributed where there is need for foster care. While there are mechanisms for establishing need and opening new slots for candidates, foster families are free to determine what age group they would be fit for, and typically the prospect of caring after infants is the least attractive.</p> <p>The relative high number of professional foster families is partly linked to deficits in the recruitment criteria of foster families: there is no upper age limit and a significant number of foster parents are aged between 40 and 70-75, which creates a significant generational gap with children. There are currently no minimal educational requirements for foster parents, and secondly, there is a nation-wide struggle with transportation to and from school in remote villages, where some foster parents reside.</p> <p>The following table provides a breakdown of the children placed in foster families by reason for placement and age:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age/Reason for placement</th> <th>Victims of Violence</th> <th>Parental Neglect</th> <th>Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings</th> <th>Unaccompanied minors</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0 – 3</td> <td>10</td> <td>622</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3-6</td> <td>9</td> <td>446</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6-14</td> <td>40</td> <td>738</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age/Reason for placement	Victims of Violence	Parental Neglect	Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings	Unaccompanied minors	0 – 3	10	622	0	0	3-6	9	446	0	1	6-14	40	738	2	2
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Section		Description				
		14-18/20	19	199	0	0
		Source: Estimations made on the administrative data provided by ASA, by 2018				
		<b>Types of activities implemented:</b>				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a methodology for provision of foster care</li> <li>• Provision of foster care services to 5,143 children                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training, support and supervision of foster care teams</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				
Delivery method and partnerships		<p>Implementation of the Project:</p> <p>The main entities tasked with providing services are the social workers from the Foster care units (FCUs) and the foster parents (as majority of them are professional ones), which are remunerated for their efforts, they receive trainings, supervision, and are subject to checks and oversight.</p> <p>The Foster care units are formed at the regional level. They are formally subordinate to the municipality, but the Agency for Social Assistance (ASA) oversees the implementation of child protection policies through the Regional Directorates for Social Assistance (RDSA). These RDSAs are tasked with the coordination of the Foster care units (FCU) and synchronization of all child protection authorities at regional and local level.</p> <p>The project implementation is structured so that in every regional city (including city of Botevgrad) there is a Foster care unit under the Agency for Social Assistance. There is an advisory expert council set within the project, which has established that the standard workload would be 12 families per social worker. It is important to note that the number of children placed in a foster family do not affect the workload of the social workers hired under this project in Foster care units, as they provide direct services to the foster parents who in turn provide care towards the children. The project participants are organised in a tiered manner with children being the final beneficiary.</p> <p>This sort of organisation allows for the head of the Unit to have a coordinating role, rather than be a de facto social worker, and to deconcentrate the regional Foster care units and have members of the unit who are based in different cities (external workplaces).</p> <p>Under the "Foster Me" Project supervision is provided for both foster parents and foster care teams every six months. Additionally, the social workers from the Foster care units must provide support to parents for all issues which arise during the period in which the child is placed in the family.</p> <p>Outreach strategies:</p> <p>The recruitment process for foster parents is strictly regulated by the Ordinance on Conditions and Procedure for Application, Selection and Confirmation of Foster Families and Accommodation of Children in them. It lays down the application procedure and the set of minimal requirements for</p>				

Section	Description			
	<p>selection of candidates, as well as guidelines for assessment, training and monitoring of the selected foster parents.</p> <p>The recruitment must be in line with the specific needs in the different municipalities which are determined by the Municipal Program for Child Protection. The procedure starts with an application which must be accompanied by an ID and other medical, judicial and administrative documents. If this application is accepted by the Commission for Foster Care at the regional level, the candidates must undergo an evaluation process which includes multiple meetings. Indicators such as ability to provide good living conditions, parenting capacity and strong personal qualities, as well as an understanding of the nature of foster care as a temporary child protection measure.</p> <p>Based on the final report of this evaluation and on the decision of the Commission for Foster Care the Director of the Regional Directorate for Social Assistance writes the applicant/s into the Register of established foster parents. In 2017 and 2018, there have been only 7 children placed in voluntary foster families. The lack of voluntary foster families is also a result of a lack of dissemination campaign focused on recruitment of voluntary foster parents. Applications for foster families have gone significantly down in 2017 to 124, but in 2018 they seem to increase again.</p> <p>The availability of foster families is affected by the profiling by age groups, as well as the proactiveness of the municipality in discovering needs and opening up procedures for recruitment and information campaigns. Currently there are only 12 municipalities with high availability of foster families, 7 of those municipalities are considered small and 5 – medium (see Table below).</p>			
	Total	Large municipalities	Medium-sized municipalities	Small municipalities
High availability of foster families	12	-	5	7
Medium availability of foster families	174	15	94	65
Low availability of foster families	17	-	7	10
No children in foster care	61	-	15	46

Section	Description
	<p>Source: Estimations made on the administrative data provided by ASA</p> <p><b>Partners:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• While no partners are involved in the project, all municipalities in the country are actively involved in the implementation of the project (see above).</li><li>• The introduction of Foster care teams under the Foster care project has seemingly brought confusion between the actors at the local level. The municipality is the provider of the social service under the Project, and the Foster care teams are employed by the mayor of the principal municipality in the region, but they are not part of the municipal administration. Furthermore, respondents from two different Centres for Social Support stated that with the introduction of these teams their obligations regarding the social service Foster care have been limited.</li></ul> <p><b>Monitoring or evaluation mechanisms:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitoring and oversight within the Foster me 2015 project are performed on several levels: firstly, the members of the Foster care units oversee the actions of the foster families providing the social service of foster care to the children – final beneficiaries of the project. This is done via monthly visits and filling in questionnaires and checklists regarding the care they provide to the children placed there. These teams do not contact the children directly, but the Agency for Social Assistance’s social workers from their local Social Assistance Directorates monitor the children. Additionally, monitoring teams from the Child Protection Directorate at the Agency for Social Assistance HQ have an obligation to visit the Foster care units and monitor the quality of their work, and every 3 months the head of the Foster care units performs an effectiveness evaluation of the members of the team.</li><li>• In the regional centre there is an administrator of the project (usually the Head of Social or Health Department at the municipality) who administratively supports the teams, while the Head of the Foster care unit methodologically guides the members based on the instruments and procedures in the present legislation. There is no constant direct control over the Foster care units .</li><li>• The focus on assessing the quality of foster care remains on abiding to formal requirements and covering the basic needs of the child. Due to resource constraints, the system does not always allow for an in-depth follow-up of the psychological, developmental and educational progress of the child by Foster care units or Child Protection Directorates, despite the regulatory provision for care plans and case work. Furthermore, the coverage with alternative care services and the depth of supervision of their quality is highly variant according to regions and is substantially lower in remote and rural municipalities.</li></ul> <p>Funding and <b>Individual participants’ objectives:</b> efficiency</p>

Section	Description
	<p>Most of the individual participants in the project are professional foster parents, not voluntary. The professional foster parent role is remunerated , explaining why there are hundreds of professional foster families and a dropping number of voluntary foster families – the amount that is paid is at least 150% of the minimum wage standard for the country. With the government policy of raising the minimum wage, the remuneration for foster parents raises as well, and it is currently equivalent to or higher than that of trained professionals in the child protection field.</p> <p>However, foster parents do not have a permanent employment contract, they are only paid when there is a child placed in their care. Thus, while foster care is a profession, it offers no financial stability for those who practice it, unless they provide long-term care for a child. This structure created though the project could be a potential challenge to the primary purpose of foster care, as it seems to have become an alternative measure against unemployment and the biggest motivation of some foster parents could be the remuneration. This compromises the current model of foster care as it not only creates demand for children into the foster care service that may affect the proper assessment and determination of the best interest of the child, but it also might prove to be unsustainable once this model becomes funded by the state budget rather than the ESF.</p> <p><b>Nature and level of funds allocated:</b></p> <p>The total funds allocated to the project were 136,404,000 BGN, 85% of which came from the ESF (115,943,399.99 BGN). The money is allocated to the financial support of the Foster Care Units, the foster parents and the children included in the service. A small percentage of the funds have been allocated to the procurement of stationery and information materials for the purposes of the project . The funding was overall sufficient considering that the remunerations provided were significantly higher than the average in the social protection system.</p> <p><b>Significance of ESF funding:</b></p> <p>The child protection system in Bulgaria, of which this project is a part of, is one of the policy areas which greatly benefits from the ESF. Money streams from both the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund through three operational programmes: "Regions in growth", "Human Resources", "Science and education for smart growth".</p> <p>In the 2014-2020 programming period, the largest share of the support is specifically allocated to the foster care project (44%, annually 19,486,285) and another 12% is allocated to projects related to the development of services for early child development.</p> <p>The European Union funding has contributed to the introduction of innovating practices in the protection of children at risk and the improvement of capacity of the relevant institutions and social services providers in delivering support</p>

Section	Description
Effectiveness	<p>to them. At the same time, however, in some cases it has been used to substitute state funding.</p> <p>The ESF has allowed the development and provision of the foster care service to children at risk. Along with the family-type placement, they provided an alternative to the former institutionalized approach. The funding has allowed the development of the delivery method of the service and the establishment of a national standard for the provision of the service. Experts have evaluated the take up of the foster parent role as satisfactory.</p> <p>The objectives of the project in terms of developing and delivering the foster care service have been achieved. It should be noted, however, that in the case of foster care, the child's wellbeing is not necessarily guaranteed and insufficiently monitored, whilst the incentives for foster care seem to be contentious.</p> <p>The short-term outcome is that whenever necessary and appropriate, there is an opportunity to place children at risk in foster care rather than institutional care.</p> <p>The long-term outcomes should be evaluated on a case by case basis. Nevertheless, in terms of development of child protection policy, the ESF has provided an opportunity to develop foster care as a type of alternative care in the country and thus increase the quality of the child protection services. In other respects, regarding the not fully operational national policies on prevention of child-parent separation, it has led to children still being separated in the same proportions over the years but placed with foster families rather than in residential care . Unfortunately, the monitoring system that was put in place has not allowed proper assessment of the quality of the foster care as it has focused on compliance with formal requirements and not on the overall child development</p> <p>The main enabling factors have been the interest of people in becoming professional foster parents and the good financial provision of the service.</p> <p>Interviews suggested that one of the hindering factors affecting the effectiveness of the foster care have been the frictions in the coordination between Child Protection Departments and Foster Care Units.</p>
	<p><b>Story box</b></p> <p>"The establishment of a national standard for foster care is not written as a goal of the project, but this is inevitable. This is probably the last ESF funding of foster care in the country and at any cost within this project we must outline and secure the future of foster care, and its future depends on the preparation of a financial standard for its delivery. There is practically no alternative ensuring the proper development of a child other than foster care service. It is the best service without an alternative."<sup>690</sup></p>

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<sup>690</sup> Interview - ASA

Section	Description
Challenges and success factors	<p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main challenge is how to make the foster families professional. The current trainings might not be sufficient for that.</li> <li>• Another challenge in the implementation of the project has been the provision of transportation of the Foster care unit members. While the external workplaces help alleviate this problem in a way, there are still remote villages which are hard to reach, public transportation is sparse, if there is any, and the Units don't have their own cars. They have to rely on joint visits with CPDs, their personal vehicles, or other authorities or the municipality helping them out with travel and logistics, but the only responsibilities mayors in both the regional centre and smaller cities have to these units is providing office space.</li> <li>• Another challenge is associated with the fact that for some of the foster parents the biggest motivation for participation in the project could be earning money.</li> </ul> <p><b>Success factors:</b></p> <p>The success factors of the foster care as a measure depends on the specific circumstances of the case. Effective monitoring of the provision of the service is of importance for its success.</p>
EU Added value	<p>The foster care service will be provided as an alternative to institutional care after the end of the current programming period by becoming a state funded service. To that end, a national standard for the delivery of the service is currently being developed. The delivery method with the established Foster care units are likely to be kept. However, the ESF provided an opportunity to ensure foster parents a remuneration higher than the average in the sector, which the national standard might not provide. This might lead to a decreased interest in the professional foster parent role and affect the sustainability of the operation.</p> <p>The project has been covering the entire country from the very beginning of its implementation.</p>
Elements for transferability / good practices	<p>The intervention logic and the rationale were well suited to address the needs of a target group which was underserved by existing options for family-based care.</p> <p>As a project supporting the deinstitutionalization of childcare in Bulgaria, the "Foster me" operation is tailored to the specific socio-economic needs, including the specificities of the delivery mechanism. In this regard, it is not clear to what extent it is transferable to other Member States situations as it will depend on the existing foster care policies in the country.</p> <p>The operation was comprehensive to the extent that it provided funding also for the overall development of the mechanism for provision of the foster care service and the required supervision and work with foster families.</p>

Section	Description
	The project fails to address some of the challenges Foster care units had with reaching to families in remote areas. While overall there was an interest from people in becoming foster parents, there are still shortages of foster parents in some regions. In addition, the participation of the foster parents has been highly dependent on the provided remuneration and there are limited number of participating voluntary foster parents. In addition, the criteria for becoming a foster parent were low and the monitoring of the quality of the service limited, which might have affected its effectiveness.

#### **4 Cyprus – Employment, Human Resources and Social Cohesion Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014CY05M9OP001)**

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the Employment Human Resources and Social Cohesion Operational Programme in Cyprus (2014CY05M9OP001) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared drawing on desk research and five interviews with the Managing Authority and the Ministry of Education (beneficiary).

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP – 'Actions for school and social inclusion'. The selected project was classified as a type 3 operation by the evaluation study. Type 3 operations focus on basic school education (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socio-economic indicators of the context, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU-added value of the OP and selected project as well as insights into the challenges faced and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the programming period. Success rates were estimated as the number of results generated as a share of the relevant number of participations. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation of achievement rates and success rates. The case study also presents an estimated cost-per-participation. The methodological approach for the calculation is presented in Annex 5 of the study.

## OP Case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p><b>OP:</b> EMPLOYMENT, HUMAN RESOURCES AND SOCIAL COHESION 2014 – 2020 (2014CY05M9OP001)</p> <p><b>Regions covered by the OP:</b> more developed regions – CYPRUS</p> <p><b>Priority Axes:</b> PA1: Improving the Employment Perspectives of Human Resources (TO8), PA 2: Strengthening the employment of young people up to the age of 29 and facilitating their entry into the labour market (TO8). PA 3: Fighting Poverty and Social Exclusion (TO9). PA4: Development of Human Resources Skills and Improving Public Efficiency (TO10 &amp; TO11).</p> <p><b>TO9 IPs selected:</b> IP9i and IP9iii</p> <p><b>Type of OP:</b> Mono-fund (ESF)</p>
OP implementation context	<p>The share of the population at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) was 27.8% in 2013, reaching a peak of 28.9% in 2015. It declined to 21% in 2019, close to the EU2020 target of 19.3%. The decline has been attributed to drastic social policy measures taken by the government, some with the support of ESF. Women were more threatened by the effects of the crisis than men (risk of poverty rate: 26.4% to 24% respectively). The most affected age group was the 18-24 group, from 32.7% (2013) to 36.1% in 2015; and which was reduced to 26% in 2017.</p> <p>The sharp contraction of the Cypriot economy (2012-2015) had a significant impact on key labour market indicators. In particular, the direct effects were increasing unemployment and underemployment, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups such as young people and women.</p> <p><b>Managing Arrangements<sup>691</sup>:</b></p> <p>The Directorate General of European Programmes Coordination and Development acts as common Managing Authority for both OPs: "Competitiveness and Sustainable Development"; and "Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion" of the NSRF 2014-2020. Audit and certification of the operations expenses are being held by the National Audit Authority (internal Audit Service) and the National Certification Authority (General Treasury of the Republic of Cyprus).</p> <p>During the initial phase of programming, horizontal steering was given by the Coordination Committee on Planning and Strategic Monitoring. The Advisory Committee on Planning and Strategic Monitoring - consisting of government representative, social-partners and other stakeholders - was also consulted during the planning phase.</p>

<sup>691</sup> According to Cypriot Ministerial Decisions 76.6.6/12.4.2014 and 79.735/3.2.2016.

Section	Description
	<p>Finally, a Monitoring Committee is composed of social and economic partners. Examples include Ministries, intermediate bodies, local government representatives and NGOs. It is responsible across all OPs in the country, and has to approve amendments in OPs, Implementation Reports, Selection Criteria and Investment Priorities. It should be noted that partners are actively involved in the implementation of the OPs as Beneficiaries.<sup>692</sup></p>
<p>ESF Priorities and actions</p>	<p>ESF Priorities are proposed by the Ministries / Intermediate Bodies involved and the Managing Authority and are validated by the Monitoring Committee. The main priorities and actions of the OP are of:</p> <p>Type 1: Actions with an employment objective; the actions funded under IP9i are in line with the recommendation of the 2012 SCRs, as well as the NRP targets and the MoU's guidelines. The activities are intended to increase opportunities for activation, to integrate into employment and to improve the employment prospects of persons belonging to vulnerable social groups of the population.</p> <p>Type 3: Basic school education; the IP9iii funded actions to ensure specialised services and the development of structures and systems to support students from vulnerable groups who are at risk of discrimination and exclusion from social cohesion.</p> <p>Type 4: Access to essential services; actions funded in order to streamline the social welfare system and to ensure the effective use of public resources with an appropriate balance between welfare benefits and incentives for employment. In addition, social support of persons belonging to vulnerable social groups in particular areas and with certain socio-economic characteristics has been also funded.</p> <p>The priorities and actions within TO9 did not change between the planning and the implementation stages. However, the planned funds for TO9 increased inline with the transfer to Priority Axis 3.</p>
<p>Target groups</p>	<p>The main target group of the OP in IP9i is vulnerable social groups facing increased risk of poverty and social exclusion (e.g. people with disabilities, people aged 50-65 recipients of welfare benefits, single parents); in IP9iii the TG is primary and secondary school pupils belonging to vulnerable social groups (e.g. pupils with disabilities, with a migrant background, living below the poverty line or at risk of poverty and social exclusion etc).</p> <p>The target groups did not shift in implementation.</p>

<sup>692</sup> Source: AIR 2018, p.125

Section	Description																				
Operations	<p>There is no overlap between the target groups of TO8 and TO9 operations in the OP as TO9 is strongly focused on people facing social exclusion and risk of poverty.</p> <p>More than 1,129 operations<sup>693</sup> have been selected for TO9 (PA-3) of the OP, where most of them refer to funding schemes to vulnerable individuals for accessing employment.</p> <p>Type 1: actions with an employment objective, including actions related to the implementation of employment and social policies and aiming to activate, promote employment and improve employment prospects and the social inclusion of people at high risk of social exclusion and poverty. Targeted grant schemes for the employment of unemployed persons belonging to vulnerable groups of the population, the employment of unemployed people with disabilities and occupational rehabilitation of vulnerable groups based on provident benefits.</p> <p>Under IP9iii, the OP is funding activities of Type 3 (basic school education) and Type 4 (access to essential services). Actions are related to major Social Inclusion policies such as the Social Inclusion of all vulnerable students, systems to enhance services towards disabled people.</p>																				
Partnerships	<p>The Managing Authority worked in close partnership with local government and other stakeholders such as NGOs, Universities, and Ministry representatives. These stakeholders were consulted in the planning phase and also played an active role during the implementation phase, acting as Beneficiaries.</p>																				
Funding of the OP	<p>Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions)<sup>694</sup></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>IP</th> <th>Planned (a)</th> <th>Allocated (b)</th> <th>Spent</th> <th>Project Selection Rate (b/a)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>IP9i</td> <td>14,141,665</td> <td>9,663,413</td> <td>4,634,794</td> <td>68.45%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9iii</td> <td>49,411,765</td> <td>52,234,541</td> <td>19,087,475</td> <td>105.71%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total<sup>694</sup></td> <td>63,553,430</td> <td>61,914,757</td> <td>23,722,274</td> <td>97.42%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source:</i> SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Planned amounts refer to the whole 2014-2020 programming period while allocated and spent amounts refer to the period up to the end of the 2018 calendar year (31 December 2018).</p>	IP	Planned (a)	Allocated (b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)	IP9i	14,141,665	9,663,413	4,634,794	68.45%	IP9iii	49,411,765	52,234,541	19,087,475	105.71%	Total <sup>694</sup>	63,553,430	61,914,757	23,722,274	97.42%
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<sup>693</sup> According to the AIR 2018, p. 74.

<sup>694</sup> Source: AIR 2018, p. 78 table 6.

Section	Description																																																			
	<p>The OP is also supported by the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund.</p> <p>Several amendments were made to ensure the effectiveness of the Programme's Priority Axes. In October 2018 a transfer of 22.5 million euro from Priority Axis 1 to 3 was made.</p>																																																			
Outputs and results (2014/2018)	<p>In total<sup>695</sup>, the OP recorded 1333 participants (CO01) of which, 464 were women. 786 participations were from persons above 54 years of age (CO07). Moreover, 123 participations belong to the vulnerable group of people with disabilities (CO16).</p> <p>Common Output Indicators:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CO01</td> <td>Unemployed, including long-term unemployed</td> <td>1,333</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO02</td> <td>Long-term unemployed</td> <td>423</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO03</td> <td>Inactive</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO04</td> <td>Inactive, not in education or training</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO05</td> <td>Employed, including self-employed</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO07</td> <td>Above 54 years of age</td> <td>786</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO08</td> <td>Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training</td> <td>218</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO09</td> <td>With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)</td> <td>111</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO12</td> <td>Participants who live in jobless households</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO14</td> <td>Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO15</td> <td>Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO16</td> <td>Participants with disabilities</td> <td>123</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO17</td> <td>Other disadvantaged</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO18</td> <td>Homeless or affected by housing exclusion</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO19</td> <td>From rural areas</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO23</td> <td>Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)</td> <td>1,097</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The OP in IP9i has also one specific output indicator where the total target of 1300 vulnerable persons has been achieved (102.53%). Under IP9iii, the target of 110 benefited school units was fully met</p>	Code	Indicator	Number	CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	1,333	CO02	Long-term unemployed	423	CO03	Inactive	-	CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	-	CO05	Employed, including self-employed	-	CO07	Above 54 years of age	786	CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	218	CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	111	CO12	Participants who live in jobless households	-	CO14	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	1	CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	1	CO16	Participants with disabilities	123	CO17	Other disadvantaged	1	CO18	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	-	CO19	From rural areas	2	CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	1,097
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<sup>695</sup> Source: AIR 2018, p. 43.

Section	Description
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(100.9%). On contrary, the independent housing for disabled is still lagging behind the target significantly (currently at 20%).

Regarding Common Result Indicators, 121 immediate-term results (CR01-CR04) were achieved and 87 longer-term results (CR06-CR07) were achieved. There is no certification yet recorded (CR03).

Code	Indicator	Number
CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	-
CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	11
CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	-
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	110
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education / training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	55
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	87
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation, 6 months after leaving	-
CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	60
CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	9

The OP has also two specific result indicators for IP9iii: 15% of Cypriot students to benefit by school activities under the DRASE programme (currently at 13.9%); 15% of disabled people have been to be evaluated under the new system (currently at 11.4%).

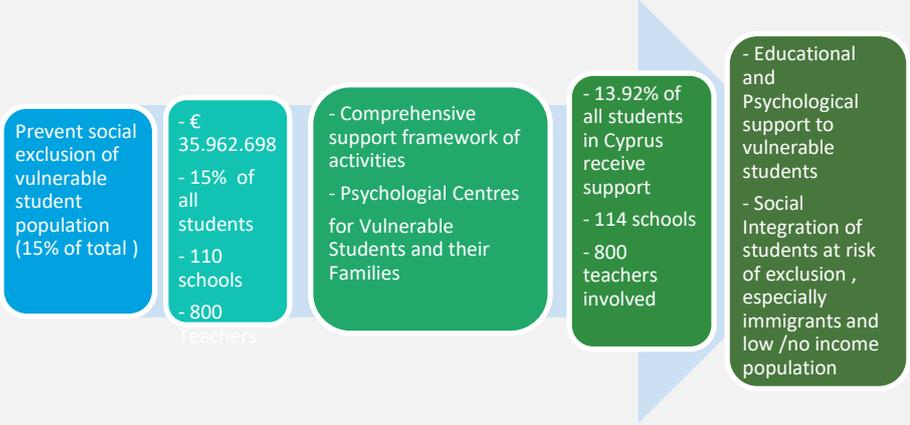
**Assessment of Effectiveness:** The success rate (the sum of recorded results over the the OP sum of recorded outputs) for Type 1 actions in IP9i was 8%. Under IP9iii, 13.9% of students were covered by DRASE, compared to the baseline of 8.3%<sup>696</sup> at the start of the implementation period. In 2018 significant progress was made, with all 11 indicators under PA3 meeting the target value for this year. The three flagship projects (DRASE, Disability Evaluation System, and the operation of the Central Social Benefit Service) all started unofficially in 2014, and were authorised in 2018. The project to provide incentives for the employment of Minimum Income Support recipients did not progress sufficiently, because there was not sufficient interest from employers.

<sup>696</sup> This percentage refers to participants in Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP), the predecessor of DRASE.

Section	Description
	<p><b>Efficiency:</b> The cost per participation for operations under IP9i was estimated to be 3,477 euro, which was over two times the EU average (IP9i = 1,488 euro). The benefits of the programme were not clearly measured.</p> <p><b>Relevance and coherence:</b> The objectives and operations identified for the target groups are relevant to the needs identified during the planning stage. There is a clear coherence between ESF support to social inclusion and the policies on Social Inclusion under the National Social Inclusion Strategy of 2014.</p> <p><b>Added value of ESF:</b> The added value is primarily in terms of the role effect where ESF funds were used to complement the implementation of national / regional policy, allowing the realisation of innovative programmes. This stands for the DRASE programme, which has a high cost and would not have occurred without ESF funding. However, the sustainability of the project beyond ESF support is not certain, as DRASE has a significant cost per student, the majority of which is financed at the EU level.</p> <p>Challenges and lessons learned The OP has demonstrated positive steps towards the implementation of significant social inclusion policies among other social and development policies.</p> <p>During the first years of its implementation, the PA-3 demonstrated significant delay in presenting results. The main reason was the delay in validating and commencing implementation of the projects involved. Although DRASE did start in 2015, its nature (happening over an entire school year) means that meaningful results can not be presented before</p> <p>The DRASE project built on the previous initiative ZEP to improve its targeting. Although a significant number of students from a lower socioeconomic status are still excluded from the programme, significant progress has been made.</p>

### **In-depth analysis of the project – Actions for school and social inclusion (DRA.SE)**

Section	Description
Basic Facts Box	<p>OP: Employment, Human Resources and Social Cohesion 2014-2020</p> <p>Project Name: Actions for school and social inclusion (DRA.SE) – Δράσεις Σχολικής και Κοινωνικής Ένταξης.</p> <p>Objective: Prevent the social exclusion of students at risk of poverty and exclusion.</p> <p>Target Group: Students at risk of poverty and social? exclusion</p> <p>Beneficiary: Ministry of Education and Culture</p>

Section	Description
Intervention logic of the project / operation	<p>Duration: 2015-Ongoing</p> <p>Partners: Local committees are established to help monitor the implementation alongside the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>Participants: 16,903 students</p> <p>Total allocated ESF Funds: 35,962,698 euros</p> 
Rationale	<p>The policy of supporting and strengthening vulnerable groups of the student population is a long-standing policy in Cyprus, as followed since 2003 by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth.</p> <p>The implementation of the policy was initially introduced through the ZEP Programme (piloted in academic year 2003-2004). In 2005, the external evaluation of the pilot implementation was completed, on the basis of which the operation of the ZEP was established in 2006, by decision of the Council of Ministers. From 2007 to 2015 ZEP was expanded and strengthened within the framework of the project "Programme against early school abandonment, school failure and delinquency in Educational Priority Zones". In this context, eight (8) Educational Priority Zones were established operationally during the 2014-2015 school year, comprising a total of 42 school units covering approximately 7,000 students or 10% of the student population of all educational levels, in which the Programme was applied.</p> <p>According to 2018 statistics on risk of poverty, the population affected by the income inequality increased significantly during the crisis years, have managed to return to pre-crisis levels in 2018. In particular, the Gini index increased from 29.5 in 2009 to 34.8 in 2014. Nevertheless, the Gini index recorded an impressive reduction in inequality between 2015 and 2017 (falling from 33.6 in 2015 to 29.1 in 2018), thus returning to its pre-crisis level. Furthermore, the disposable income of the richest 20% of the population was 4.6 times that of the poorest 20% in 2017 (vs. 5.1 in the EU), dropping to 4.3 in 2018, implying a reduction in inequality. However, in 2018, the annual real gross disposable household income (GDHI) per head remains significantly below the 2008 levels.</p>

Section	Description
	<p>Children continue to be disproportionately affected by a risk of poverty. The proportion of children below the age of 18 at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) remained unchanged throughout recent years, with presenting level of 25.5% in 2018, which was just above the EU average of 24%. However, there has been an increase in the AROPE for children below the age of 6. Support measures for in schools is an effective way to directly alleviate the negative impact of poverty on children, as they spend the majority of their time there.</p> <p>According to the data available at the Ministry of Education, currently (2019-2020) more than 17% of the total Cypriot students' population are coming from an immigrant family where both parents are immigrants. In the 2019-2020 school year, more than 15,5% of the total Cypriot students are in schools that the project is applied (16.903 students), out of which more than the 60% are considered vulnerable groups (either immigrants, ROMA, under the poverty line etc), with particularly the immigrants being 41% when both parents are immigrants and 58% one parent immigrant.</p> <p>The implementation of the project is considered necessary due to the deep impacts of the financial crisis in Cyprus, as it is an important tool to address the pressing problems and challenges that Cypriot educational system is facing. The project aims to provide access to enhanced educational support for students at risk of discrimination (socioeconomic problems, multiculturalism) in selected school units, as well as to promote equality in opportunities, improve employment prospects and social inclusion of people with disabilities and other groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Within this framework, the implementation of the project has the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Supporting the Cypriot population living below the poverty line or at risk of poverty and social exclusion.</li><li>Securing social welfare and supporting its economically weaker groups of the population most affected by the financial crisis.</li><li>Reducing early school leaving.</li><li>Improving learning outcomes.</li><li>Reducing school failure and delinquency.</li><li>Enhancing social cohesion by limiting the risk of social marginalization and exclusion.</li></ul> <p>The benefits that expected to derive directly from the implementation of the project are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Support to vulnerable groups of the student population who are particularly affected by the consequences of the financial crisis.</li><li>Direct support for students (and thus families) who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion.</li></ul>

Section	Description
	<p>Support students with low social skills to ensure their integration into the wider community.</p> <p>Prevention and tackling problems of delinquency, school failure and early school leaving.</p> <p>Psychological support for students as they move to different school environments (e.g. from primary school to high school).</p> <p>Support families with limited knowledge of Greek, in learning the language and improving their social skills so that they can integrate more smoothly into the labour market.</p> <p>Support students in high-risk to remain functionally illiterate and / or to graduate from school without the necessary skills, in order to be able participating in a modern knowledge-based society.</p> <p>Story box</p> <p>According to a recent web article, some of the project participants have stated their views about implying multiple benefits as follows:</p> <p><i>“Teaching music at DRASE was never a music job for me. I need to say that it is never a programme itself that does the difference. It is always the people: in our case these children that DRASE is targeting. DRASE gave me the opportunity to learn what it means when the children choose to stay for a music class rather than staying out in the streets”,</i> Nikoletta P. – Music Teacher.</p> <p><i>“I feel comfortable that my child is secure while I am working during the afternoon hours and is learning computer, dancing, theatrical studies, music and many more activities that I am not able to support.”</i> Suzan, Parent.</p> <p><i>“School has become a second home for me. I spent many hours constructively by learning things that I like and I have great time with my friends”</i> Constantine, Student.</p>
Objectives	<p>The objective of the project is to elaborate on social inclusion through active participation in activities provided by the project in a variety of educational fields in order to promote social inclusion and offer further psychological support to those in social and economic need. The profiles of beneficiaries include students (and their families) that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facing social exclusion due to socioeconomic reasons,</li> <li>• are in risk of poverty,</li> <li>• come from areas that present high level of unemployment and social deprivation,</li> <li>• single parent families,</li> <li>• multicultural and multilingual.</li> </ul> <p>Story box</p>

Section	Description
	<p><i>"It is a significant tool for social integration for students that come from migrant families, to be evolved to school activities easier and more effectively in shorter period"</i> Focus Group participant</p>
<p>Relevance and coherence / synergies</p>	<p>As stated in various steps of this evaluation, the overall strategic framework of the project is in close link with both the educational and social protection policy. The overall Governmental strategy for the latter is consisted of the following social welfare and protection axes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong and effective social state.</li> <li>• Safeguarding the wellbeing of citizens.</li> <li>• Prompt and balanced growth.</li> <li>• Targeted assistance to members of socially vulnerable groups of the population.</li> <li>• Improved employment rates, reduction of unemployment, especially among young persons, retention of existing and creation of new jobs.</li> </ul>
	<p>It must be noted that the overall strategy for social protection is planned in accordance with the provisions set out in the Memorandum of Understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionalities (MoU). One of its main aims is to minimise the consequences of the economic crisis on the most vulnerable groups of the population, among which is the population under 18 years of age.</p> <p>The <b>target group has been identified</b> at school level. The criteria for school participation in the programme have been set by a ministerial decision. This selection was based on social and economic data available at local and regional levels. From the data submitted by 264 Kindergartens, 281 Primary, 104 High schools and 7 Technical Schools, there has been a ranking of schools by grade and type of school (Kindergartens, Primary Schools, High Schools and Technical Schools) and by objects that have been set by the Council of Ministers for the selection of schools to participate in the "DRASE" programme.</p>
<p>Outputs</p>	<p>So far, 16,903 beneficiary students have participated in the activities of the project. In addition, 900 new jobs have been created to serve project implementation (teachers and supporting staff). As mentioned before, out of the students more than 60% belong to a vulnerable group, out of which 58% are with one of their parents being immigrant and 41% with both parents as immigrants. Moreover, many students come from families with low or no income.</p>
<p>Delivery method and partnerships</p>	<p>The overall responsibility for the implementation of the project lies with the <b>Project Manager</b>, who monitors the implementation of project and its overall success, in cooperation with the European Social Fund Management Unit of the Ministry of Finance. The PM is</p>

Section	Description
	<p>responsible for maintaining the planning and ensuring the smooth operation of the project tasks. Responsibilities refer to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The overall responsibility of project management.</li><li>• The elaboration of the detailed planning for the implementation of the project.</li><li>• Monitoring the progress and quality of the project, including the production of Progress Reports etc.</li><li>• Cost control to ensure that the project is executed within the approved budget.</li><li>• Manage the approval of all requests for changes to the project.</li><li>• Ensure approval of any deliverables produced by the project.</li><li>• The responsibility for the execution of the project.</li></ul> <p><b>An Implementation Team</b> has been set up to monitor / implement the Project, consisting of four seconded officers (4 central coordinators in the Ministry of Education and Culture, Sports and Youth) and of local school coordinators. Their main responsibility is to monitor the implementation of the action plans, their organization, etc. In particular, their focus is on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Initial project design.</li><li>• Planning and organizing actions.</li><li>• Monitoring of actions.</li><li>• Informing teachers about the content and scope of actions.</li><li>• Compliance with programmes.</li><li>• Ongoing support to the Project Manager's work.</li><li>• Suggestions to the Project Manager on general strategy issues.</li></ul> <p>At the same time, the project is managed by its European Funds Management Authority (MA).</p> <p>In particular the Ministry of Education has the following responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall supervision of the project (at higher management level).</li><li>• Guidance and support to the Project Implementation Team.</li><li>• Support and suggestions to the Project Manager.</li><li>• Preparation of tender documents, tender evaluation, etc.</li><li>• Cooperation with the Intermediary Body.</li><li>• Communication and cooperation with the Managing Authority.</li></ul> <p>Last but not least, ad hoc committees (Acceptance Committees, etc.) are occasionally established in order to monitor and assess deliverables of the legal commitments (resulting from contracts, etc.), engaging both DRASE (Implementation Team) and its executives and public officers from the Ministry of Education.</p>

Section	Description
Funding efficiency	<p>A dissemination strategy gave special attention at the local level to schools and local communities. Participants to the focus group noted that engagement of these local actors enhanced the impact of the strategy.</p> <p>According to the 14396/17 Delegated Act, the Managing Authority is using Simplified Cost Options in the implementation of the project. The Simplified Cost Options have significantly reduced the management cost in terms of administrative cost and time spent.</p> <p>With the initial planned budget being twice revised from € 14 million at the initial programming phase (2014) to approximately € 36 million in 2019. The level of funds, according to participants of a national focus group, were sufficient to cover all kind of direct or indirect costs (under the SCO scheme) but it is never sufficient to expand the project idea to all school units. However, ESF contribution has been stated as of catalytic importance at the moment of the public economic restrains due to the 2012-2015 crisis and its afterwards implied effects to the state budget for all policies, including Education.</p> <p>ESF funds allocated to the project covers, as direct cost, the salaries of the involved teachers as well as indirectly all relevant expenses of supporting procurements implemented for the project, including electronic teaching material, dissemination, management and evaluation cost.</p> <p>The established system of cooperation between the Managing Authority and the Ministry of Education is also efficient. The organizational arrangements have been set according to the provisions of the 79.735-17/11/2015 ministerial decision for the management system in Cyprus. According to the secondary monitoring and evaluation guidelines of the OP, the monitoring mechanism has applied the procedures for reporting and monitoring of the project / operation at monthly and annual basis.</p>
Effectiveness	<p>Stakeholders consider that the project was effective. The project has succeeded in both its monitoring / evaluation targets, as stated in the AIR 2018 where the final target has been already been achieved (114 schools to initially planned for 110). The proportion of students that participate is currently at 13,9%, compared to the target of 15%. The project has also had an impact on social inclusion and the development of soft skills (soft outcomes). Although these haven't been studied thoroughly in an impact evaluation, they are evident at a local level and in every school-unit, considering the activities of the project taking place and the feedback received from participants.</p> <p>The most effective measures relate to developing the self-confidence of pupils belonging to more marginalised groups of the society such as immigrants, non-native Greek speakers, ROMA and students with</p>

Section	Description
	<p>low educational capacity and capabilities. Language learning programmes have also been singled out as particularly effective.</p> <p>In general terms, the project has been embraced by both the educational system at the very local level (school units), as well as those participating in its activities. Further enrichment of those activities as well as expansion of the programme to more school units nationwide is being considered by both the related Ministry and the funding authorities, actually as a flagship project for the 2021-2027 programming period, as stated in the Focus Group exercise.</p>
<p>Challenges and success factors</p>	<p>According to the beneficiary Ministry, one major challenge is the expansion of the project nationwide to all school units of the educational system.</p> <p>Major success factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project embracement by school and target group, the grass root process of needs to be elaborated to actions / activities in the project.</li> <li>• The organisational structure of the project with the participation of local representatives and coordinators.</li> <li>• The sufficient ESF budget.</li> <li>• The effective collaboration between the beneficiary and the Managing Authority.</li> <li>• The effective dissemination during the year within the target groups.</li> <li>• The interesting curricula provided by the activities.</li> </ul>
<p>EU added value</p>	<p>In terms of EU added value it has been largely stated that the project, with its heritage as a continuation of an older project and of an implemented policy since long ago (2003), demonstrated project's maturity in promoting social inclusion more effectively than any other potential plan with the same target groups. Implemented under a coherent policy framework on social inclusion (2014) and a dynamic educational policy, the project demonstrated immediate application in the school units and immediate acceptance by the target groups. The soft-outcomes mentioned above (effectiveness section) would not have occurred without ESF-support.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education as the beneficiary institution believes that the activities under DRASE should become mainstreamed to all school units and levels of education. ESF funding remains the primary funding mechanism for the time being and is likely to support the project's further expansion in the new programming period.</p>
<p>Elements for transferability / good practices</p>	<p>Transferability of the project structural components should be considered widely, especially in regard to the comprehensiveness of the related activities. The soft outcomes of the project also provide a solid ground for further investigation on the project activities as well as their further expansion to other target groups.</p>

## **5 Spain - Social Inclusion and Social Economy Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014ES05SFOP012)**

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the Social Inclusion and Social Economy Operational Programme in Spain (2014ES05SFOP012) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared from desk research and three interviews with national stakeholders.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP, while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'Acceder programme for social and labour inclusion of Roma people in Spain'. The selected project was classified as a Type 1 operation by the evaluation study. Type 1 operations are employment-focused actions (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socioeconomic indicators, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of the OP and selected project, together with the challenges and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Success rates were estimated as the number of results generated as a share of the relevant number of participations. Annex 4 to the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation of achievement rates and success rates. The case study also presents estimates for the cost-per-participation. Annex 5 to the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation.

## OP Case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p><b>OP:</b> (2014ES05SFOP012) Social Inclusion and Social Economy 2014-2020 (Inclusión Social y Economía Social).</p> <p><b>Regions covered:</b> This national OP covers more developed, transition and less developed regions.</p> <p><b>Priority Axes (PA):</b> PA 1: (Thematic Objective 8 (TO8)) Employment; PA 2: (TO9) Social inclusion and combat poverty; PA 6 Social innovation; PA 7 Transnational cooperation; PA 8 Technical assistance.</p> <p><b>Investment Priorities (IPs):</b> IP9i, IP9ii, IP9iii and IP9v.</p> <p><b>Type of funding:</b> Monofund (European Social Fund (ESF)).</p>
OP implementation context	<p>The economic crisis had dramatic effects on the labour market, with the worst effects evident in 2013-2014:</p> <p>Unemployment rate (workers aged 20 – 64) reached 24.1% in 2014 (25.6% in 2013), far above the EU average of 10.6%;</p> <p>At-risk-of-poverty-and-exclusion (AROPE) rate reached 29.2% in 2014 (27.3% in 2013);</p> <p>Material and social deprivation rate reached 20.3% in 2014 (compared to EU average of 19.3%) and severe housing deprivation rate reached 1.7% in the same year, less than the EU average of 5%;</p> <p>Impact was most severe among young people, low qualified people and people with migrant, ethnic or cultural minority backgrounds.</p> <p>Since 2013-2014, the Spanish economy has experienced a progressive recovery, with solid effects on the labour market but only modest effects on poverty and social exclusion.</p> <p>Unemployment rate (workers aged 20 – 64) decreased 14.9% in 2018 (although remained more than double the EU average of 6.7%);</p> <p>AROPE rate decreased only slightly, falling to 26.6% in 2017 and to 26.1% in 2018;</p> <p>Material and social deprivation rate decreased more significantly, falling to 15.1% in 2018 and the severe housing deprivation rate to 1.5% (4.3% EU average).</p> <p>In the context of high public debt and budget constraints, the main anti-poverty and social inclusion policies at national level consisted of: income support, through unemployment benefit, minimum income schemes and non-contributory benefits; support for active labour market policies; and measures to improve access to education, housing and healthcare. A range of programmes directed to specific vulnerable groups (Roma, immigrants, victims of gender violence, people with disabilities, etc.) was delivered by experienced social entities .</p> <p>No significant changes to the main anti-poverty and social inclusion policies were evident in the period from 2014 to 2018. In March 2019, the 'National Strategy to Prevent and Fight Poverty and Social Exclusion 2019-2023' was approved, albeit with no budgetary</p>

Section	Description
ESF Priorities and actions	<p>allocation. Overall, the main trend was towards limited reform of existing regional minimum income schemes to engage recipients in activation measures and strengthen the coordination between social services and public employment services (PES).</p> <p>Managing Authority: the Spanish Managing Authority for the European Social Fund (Unidad Administradora del Fondo Social Europeo, UAFSE). The UAFSE is an entity devoted to the management of ESF in Spain, embedded in the Secretary of State for Employment, within the Ministry of Labour and Social Economy.</p> <p>The OP was implemented through a partnership of intermediate bodies (primarily public bodies) and experienced NGOs. The Intermediate bodies include the national PES, the Women’s Institute, a number of public agencies, and several private bodies. The beneficiaries were medium or large private NGOs, whose operations were selected by the UAFSE via two calls for proposals (one in 2015 and another in 2019).</p> <p>The ESF supported social inclusion actions in Spain through 21 OPs (19 regional and two national, POISES and POEFE). TO9 operations focused on improving employability and promoting employment, enhancing basic skills, access to basic education and services, social entrepreneurship and measures influencing attitudes and systems. The target groups were persons in vulnerable situations, including individuals suffering from poverty and social exclusion.</p> <p>The main priorities and actions of the OP were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type 1: actions with an employment objective;</li> <li>• Type 2: enhancing basic skills;</li> <li>• Type 3: basic school education, primarily support in basic education for Roma and very low skilled persons;</li> <li>• Type 4: access to essential services - NGOs support participants’ needs in an integral way. More specifically, the in-depth project described below provided housing services to Roma families;</li> <li>• Type 5: social entrepreneurship - support for the creation of social economy companies and support for the socio-labour integration of those at risk of social exclusion in social economy entities through subsidies and rebates to social security contributions;</li> <li>• Type 6: measures influencing attitudes and systems.</li> </ul> <p>Actions prioritised in the OP were primarily tailored plans for employment and social inclusion, adapted to the needs of people in vulnerable conditions. These were often delivered by large social NGOs with expertise of working with these groups.</p> <p>The planned priorities and actions did not change significantly during implementation.</p>
Target groups	<p>People in vulnerable conditions and those subject to some type of discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief,</p>

Section	Description
Operations	<p>sexual orientation or gender identity, age and/or disability. Focus on people with disabilities.</p> <p>People at risk of poverty and social exclusion; people with family responsibilities, especially single parent families; people with disabilities; migrants, asylum seekers, and beneficiaries of international protection; imprisoned persons; long-term unemployed people and unemployed people over 45; victims of gender violence and homeless people; Roma people.</p> <p>According to the evaluation of the OP (2017), all NGOs participating in the OP reported that their activities reached the final recipients. Yet, difficulties were noted in reaching recipients in less-developed regions, where there are fewer potential recipients.</p> <p>Total number of operations under TO9: 313.<sup>697</sup></p> <p>Activities under IP9i often provided customised activation itineraries adapted to the needs of the target group. These operations often involved large, experienced NGOs. Complementary measures on structures and systems were also included, such as actions aimed at providing effective personalised advice by PES or supporting coordination between PES and social services.</p> <p>Often actions under IP9ii, IP9iii and IP9v followed the active inclusion approach, focusing on particular groups, such as IP9ii on Roma population (see in-depth project below) and IP9iii on vulnerable women or people with disabilities. These included other measures, such as equality plans in companies. IP9v actions focused on particular methods for active inclusion in the social economy, special employment centres for persons with disabilities, thus targeting vulnerable people as well.</p> <p>Examples of specific projects: (1) Lanzaderas de Empleo (Employment Shuttles) - teams of unemployed people (of different ages, training profiles and career paths) that met to activate and optimise their job search with new tools; (2) Clara - personalised employment and support itinerary for women in vulnerable conditions; (3) Consolidation of employment in the social economy - job training opportunities provided to vulnerable people as part of a personalised process of learning socio-labour skills. The project also promoted the creation of social economy entities to offer jobs to the target group.</p>
Partnerships	<p>Partners included government bodies (PES, Women’s Institute) and large experienced social entities (NGOs, half of which had participated in the previous ESF period). Unlike the previous ESF period, mid-size NGOs were also involved in the partnership. Indeed, the aim of launching two calls for proposals was to increase the number of entities and allow smaller ones to take part in the implementation of the OP. About half of the direct beneficiaries were new, smaller NGOs, all of</p>

<sup>697</sup> As identified in the extraction from SFC2014.

Section	Description																														
Funding of the OP	<p>which were required to be very experienced and have a certain financial capacity. While the state PES supported employment through rebates in employers' social security contributions for hiring persons in vulnerable situations, the NGOs worked directly with participants. On average, three entities were involved in each operation.</p> <p>No relevant changes to the partnerships took place.</p> <p>Partners differed by IP according to their expertise and the target groups supported by the measures. For example, IP9iii focused on vulnerable women, partnering with the Women's Institute to organise gender equality actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions)</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>IP</th> <th>Planned (a)</th> <th>Allocated (b)</th> <th>Spent</th> <th>Project Selection Rate (b/a)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>IP9i</td> <td>€855,473,221</td> <td>€864,519,394</td> <td>€426,919,953</td> <td>101%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9ii</td> <td>€44,135,935</td> <td>€24,405,881</td> <td>€18,251,861</td> <td>55%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9iii</td> <td>€89,816,132</td> <td>€28,452,157</td> <td>€8,912,863</td> <td>32%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9v</td> <td>€23,059,310</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>€1,012,484,598</b></td> <td><b>€917,377,432</b></td> <td><b>€454,084,677</b></td> <td><b>91%</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source:</i> SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. <i>Note:</i> Planned amounts refer to the whole 2014-2020 programming period while allocated and spent amounts refer to the period up to the end of the 2018 calendar year (31 December 2018).</p> <p>National, regional and private (in case of NGOs) funds were used to support actions under the OP co-financing rate: A regions - 50%; B, C and D regions - 80%.</p> <p>Other EU funds (EURES, Erasmus+, Employment and social Innovation (EaSI), ERDF, Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), etc.) were not used to support actions under the OP.</p>	IP	Planned (a)	Allocated (b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)	IP9i	€855,473,221	€864,519,394	€426,919,953	101%	IP9ii	€44,135,935	€24,405,881	€18,251,861	55%	IP9iii	€89,816,132	€28,452,157	€8,912,863	32%	IP9v	€23,059,310	-	-	0%	<b>Total</b>	<b>€1,012,484,598</b>	<b>€917,377,432</b>	<b>€454,084,677</b>	<b>91%</b>
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Outputs results (2014/2018)	<p>No changes in the allocation of funds (2014-2018) for TO9.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total recorded number of participations: 526,826</li> </ul> <p>Common output indicators – the indicators reflected the priorities and target groups of the OP. Over 60% of participants were unemployed (with almost one-third long-term unemployed) and 24% were inactive (67% not in education or training). The focus of the OP on people in vulnerable conditions was reflected on the high share of participants with primary or lower secondary education (52%). More than half of participants had a disability (53%) and one in four were of foreign origin or belonged to a marginalised community, such as Roma. These figures imply that the milestones set for 2018 were widely surpassed in all types</p>																														

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of regions, particularly in the more developed regions (with an achievement rate of 5,192%) and transition regions (2,152%). This suggests that higher milestones should have been set for more developed and transition regions as participation in POISES has been much higher than initially foreseen (a high number of potential beneficiaries). In the less developed regions, milestones were also achieved but the 2023 targets were not (for example, for CO01 75.5% of the 2023 target was achieved).

- Common Output Indicators:

Code	Indicator	Number
CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	317,234
CO02	Long-term unemployed	98,837
CO03	Inactive	126,380
CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	84,919
CO05	Employed, including self-employed	82,248
CO07	Above 54 years of age	45,740
CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	37,325
CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	273,926
CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	126,407
CO16	Participants with disabilities	279,820
CO17	Other disadvantaged	108,794
CO18	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	14,175
CO19	From rural areas	52,657
CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	136

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Specific output indicators- A total of 527,437 specific outputs were recorded, the vast majority of which (97%) were participants at risk of social exclusion (SO01). The milestone for 2018 was widely surpassed (1,145% in more developed regions, 484% in transition regions and 344% in less developed regions), which, again, highlighted that milestones were set too low for 2018. More than 3,500 public or private entities were referred to sensitisation measures on gender, equality and equal opportunities (SOI10 and SOI11). Also, 20 entrepreneurial projects were recorded in the social economy working for the socio-

Section	Description																											
	<p>labour insertion of targeted groups (SOI07), as were 31 innovative pilot projects (SOI08).</p> <p>Common result indicators – the results concentrated on disadvantaged participants engaged in job search, education/training or employment upon leaving (CR05). This result did not persist, however, with CR09 reporting less than one-quarter of disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving. The comparatively low number of participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving (CR07, only 4,542) reflected poor immediate results. An explanation for this poor performance may be found in the dual nature of the Spanish labour market, which has a very high share of people (among the highest in the EU) hired with (short) fixed-term contracts. It was difficult to get a permanent job and people with more vulnerabilities tended to access only short fixed-term contracts and to find themselves unemployed again after the contract expired.</p> <p>Specific result indicators – A set of specific result indicators were recorded, adding 235,029 results, of which 96% were achieved by participants in vulnerable situations or at risk of social inclusion, who searched for a job, accessed education or training system, or obtained a qualification or job, including self-employment, upon leaving (SRI01). In addition, 5,015 participants with disabilities obtained a qualification or job, including self-employment, upon leaving (SRI42) and 2,184 participants improved their personal or labour situation after their participation in measures for equal treatment or gender equality (SRI10 and SRI11).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common Result Indicators:</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CR01</td> <td>Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving</td> <td>41,715</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR02</td> <td>Participants in education/training upon leaving</td> <td>28,605</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR03</td> <td>Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving</td> <td>65,522</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR04</td> <td>Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving</td> <td>147,101</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR05</td> <td>Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving</td> <td>200,430</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR06</td> <td>Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving</td> <td>58,609</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR07</td> <td>Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving</td> <td>4,542</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR08</td> <td>Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving</td> <td>5,694</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Code	Indicator	Number	CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	41,715	CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	28,605	CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	65,522	CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	147,101	CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	200,430	CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	58,609	CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	4,542	CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	5,694
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Section	Description
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CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	46,306
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Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Assessment of the OP

of **Effectiveness:** According to the evaluation of the OP (2019), positive results were achieved in improving social inclusion of persons with extreme vulnerabilities and older workers. The activities reached target groups and delivered results, as shown by indicators above. The achievement rate (the ratio of recorded values for specific output and specific result indicators and comparing the values against the targets set for the end of the programming period) was 68%, compared to 99% EU average. Delays occurred at the start of the programming period may explain this difference. The success rate (the recorded results as a share of the relevant recorded outputs) for Type 1 operations with an employment objective were generally low, reflecting the difficulties for the target group to get jobs. Indeed, the success of active inclusion policies was limited, given the general high unemployment. With a tight budget, the coverage rate and intensity of active inclusion programmes diminished if the number of beneficiaries increased. The success rates for Type 3 (Basic school education) and Type 4 (Access to essential services) operations were notably better. These figures were explained partly by the in-depth project (Type 3 and Type 4 operations with Roma people) that provided basic school education and an integrated employment pathway for Roma persons.

Code	Indicator	Success rate for OP
		<b>Type 1 operations</b>
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	33%
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	13%
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving	6%
		<b>Type 3 operations</b>
CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	5%
CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	50%
		<b>Type 4 operations</b>
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job search, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment,	81%

Section	Description
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	including self-employment, upon leaving	
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*Source:* SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

**Efficiency:** While the cost per participation of the operations under IP9i (865 euro in OP and 1,488 euro on average across the EU) and IP9iii (632 euro and 847 euro, respectively) was significantly below the EU average, the cost of operations in IP9ii was much higher (1,409 euro and 816 euro, respectively). The lower cost of operations in IP9i was due to the high number of participations in mainstream active inclusion measures. The higher cost of operations in IP9ii - focused on social and labour inclusion of Roma population - reflected the greater complexity of the situations faced and the higher intensity (resources) needed. Larger entities with larger projects were more efficient, as they had more resources and experience. Nevertheless, some smaller entities provided a valuable contribution by working with specific target groups. This may have involved higher difficulty, reducing the efficiency of results. Direct beneficiaries encountered difficulties in reaching the final recipients, particularly in less developed regions, where the number of potential recipients was limited. There may have been overlaps with the activities offered by several beneficiaries and directed at similar target groups in these regions that may have reduced efficiency.

**Relevance and coherence:** Actions were relevant for the socioeconomic context and the needs of targeted groups. They were coherent with social inclusion policies in Spain and with European policies, both in general (Europe 2020, European Social Pillar) and in Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs). Overlaps between TO9, TO8 and TO10 were infrequent, with TO9 mainly delivered by experienced NGOs that complemented the role of PES and other public services. Some beneficiaries of POISES were also beneficiaries of POEFE or the Youth Guarantee, increasing synergies. Despite these positives, coordination between beneficiaries was not always adequate and several uncoordinated actions might have been provided by different beneficiaries to the same person. Institutional fragmentation in Spain means that regional governments, state level institutions or other private entities often develop similar tools with similar goals. However, Spanish Law 38/2003 regulating subsidies guarantees that the same action cannot be funded twice.

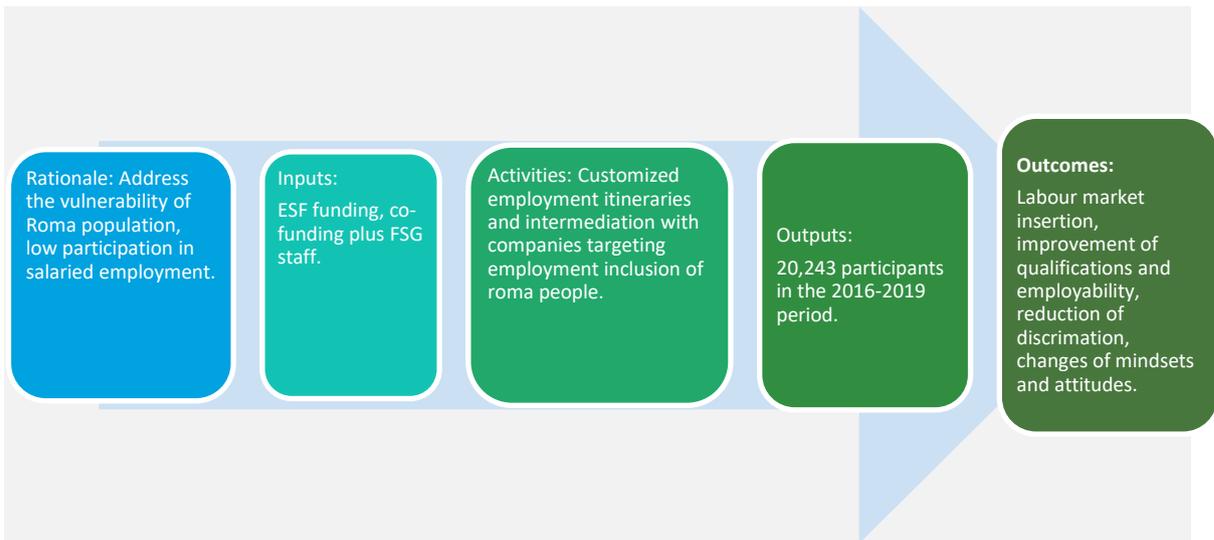
**Added value:** The OP had an added value in territories where there were no previous ESF interventions in social inclusion and the social economy. It acted as leverage to develop intervention models that would not have happened, or not with the same intensity. The ESF enabled social innovation actions, contributing to its mainstreaming at national or regional level (e.g. Lanzaderas project or the in-depth project). In the case of Lanzaderas, it was adopted or co-financed by some regional PES. Beyond the added value described by result indicators, actions produced valuable soft outcomes for participants (such as increased self-esteem or social networks) and for organisations

Section	Description
Challenges and lessons learned	<p>(enhanced administrative capacity developed to overcome high ESF administrative requirements) ..</p> <p>The application of a simplified costs methodology created an administrative overburden, while the related audit procedures were also considered excessive. The criteria were not transparent and their application was erratic, changing between audit processes. The actual application of the simplified costs methodology was unnecessarily complex. The IT tool for audit procedures also experienced problems. These issues created uncertainty and confusion for the UAFSE, intermediary bodies and beneficiaries.</p> <p>Simplified costs were not suitable for medium or small entities/actions. The model imposed an added burden and complication, with no advantages for small operations, which would have been easy to control or check otherwise. For these projects, it would have been more practical to continue to justify expenditure with invoices.</p> <p>The management burden that accompanies complex management of community funds was noticeable, with 90% of intermediary bodies and beneficiaries encountering difficulties in executing the OP. The main difficulties reported were the lack of information on the system of simplified costs and the management and understanding of indicators.</p> <p>Effectiveness could be improved with better management of information, including simpler flows of information from beneficiaries to the Managing Authority for analysis. Better designed specific output and result indicators to reflect the effects achieved (e.g. improved employability, improved competitiveness of entities of the social economy) could help to monitor these impacts and improve the reflection of the results achieved.</p> <p>Implementation was more difficult in transition and less developed regions. There were fewer potential participants belonging to the target groups in these regions, such as migrants or young persons, due to less labour market dynamism, and fewer NGOs to implement projects. Meanwhile, these regions were given proportionally more ESF resources. The AIR (2018) noted mismatch in the distribution of financing by types of regions with real intervention needs.</p> <p>Efficiency indicators were influenced by the target groups and the type of action implemented. Employment results among groups of persons in highly vulnerable conditions may take long time to materialise, and important employability achievements were not visible in the indicators. Some entities focused on awareness-raising (e.g. eliminating stereotypes about women, persons with disabilities or of Roma origin), which were not easily observable by labour market indicators, for example.</p> <p>One of the success factors of POISES was the partnership built, particularly with large and medium size experienced NGOs. NGOs were knowledgeable of the groups targeted, the difficulties those people face, and how best to address them. They were more flexible than public authorities, with better outreach to certain groups.</p>

Section	Description
	POISES intermediary bodies and beneficiaries could benefit from better coordination and more intense mutual learning. To enhance effectiveness, some tools could have been developed at national level to avoid duplication of work. Mutual learning is a powerful tool to induce change and this could be enhanced. This may require more leadership and coordination capacity at national level .

### In-depth analysis of selected project: **Acceder - Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG)**

Section	Description
Basic Facts Box	<p><b>OP:</b> Social inclusion and social economy 2014-2020 (POISES, 2014ES05SFOP012); IP9ii</p> <p><b>Project Name:</b> Acceder programme.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Customised employment pathways, including labour intermediation for social and labour market inclusion of Roma people in Spain.</p> <p><b>Beneficiary:</b> Roma Secretariat Foundation - <i>Fundación Secretariado Gitano</i> (FSG). NGO devoted to improving social and labour integration of Roma people in Spain.</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 2000 – ongoing.</p> <p><b>Partner organisations:</b> regional and local governments, local NGOs, private companies.</p> <p><b>Target group:</b> Roma population, with special attention to women and youth.</p> <p><b>Participants:</b> 20,243 in the 2016-2019 period (funded by POISES), an average of 5,061 participants per year (four years).</p> <p><b>Total allocated ESF funds:</b> 31.8 million euro.</p> <p><b>Total allocated funds:</b> Total funding for Acceder in the first call reached 24,405,882 euro, including 18 million euro of ESF support. The second call was endowed with 13.8 million euro, plus co-funding.</p>
Intervention logic of the project/operation	



#### Rationale

Acceder aims to improve the socioeconomic status of Roma people in Spanish society and to facilitate their socioeconomic integration by enhancing their employability through tailored employment and job training services. The project is complemented by labour intermediation and sensitisation activities.

Roma population face difficulties in employment insertion, due to their low education levels, but also due to discrimination and stereotypes. These stereotypes are prevalent among both Roma and non-Roma people.

Spain has a higher incidence of unemployment, temporary and part-time employment and self-employment among Roma people. The share of those collaborating in family economic activities is also much larger, deviating from the employment structure of the non-Roma population. Such activities are characterised by low profitability and poor economic formalisation. The prevalence of undeclared work entails a lack of social rights and employment protection, and precarious work arrangements. The share of salaried employment is very low.

However, the economic activity rate of the Roma population is quite high. They also have longer working lives, tending to enter the labour market at a younger age. This early entry comes at the expense of completing secondary education. Indeed, the Roma population has higher rates of early school leaving and failure in school, as well as lower levels of professional training. These constitute another impediment to access to the formal salaried labour market, particularly when low-skilled job opportunities in their traditional economic activities are in decline. This heightens the risk of social exclusion, with 85% of the Roma population is at risk of poverty.

These challenges are further accentuated in the case of Roma women, who have lower economic activity and employment rates. Those employed are often employed on a temporary part-time basis and face low prospects of employability due to their limited education, training and work experience. Roma women often experience workplace discrimination. Self-imposed, intra-community and family norms and gender roles as caregivers to other family members often act as barriers for Roma women seeking employment.

Objectives

The Roma population, together with those of Sub-Saharan or Maghreb origin, report a higher level of perceived discrimination in the workplace compared to other groups (self-reported by more than 50% of those surveyed).

The main objective of the programme was to increase the employability of Roma people by increasing their basic, professional and cross-cutting skills and adapting their skills to the demands of the labour market. More specifically, the programme aimed to improve labour market integration by increasing the rate of salaried workers among the Roma. This was relevant because Roma are traditionally involved in precarious self-employment activities (e.g. flea markets).

More broadly, the programme also aimed to tailor the general vocational training and employment services to the needs of unemployed Roma women and men, so that they have equal access to other citizens. It therefore aimed to change and adapt public active inclusion policies for the Roma population.

The project aimed to change the mindsets of Roma and of non-Roma population, including public administrations and the private sector, through improved knowledge and perceptions of the Roma population. It raised awareness of the prejudices and discriminatory practices against the Roma population and sought a progressive improvement of their social image.

The beneficiary NGO carried out other complementary programmes with similar objectives and with the general aim of improving social inclusion of Roma population in Spain. For example, the programme 'Promociona' focuses on formal education, complementing the Acceder programme.

Relevance and coherence/ synergies

Acceder addressed the complex cultural-socioeconomic situation of the Roma population, combining activities directed to participants (training, guidance), their communities (cultural change), enterprises (labour intermediation, knowledge and sensitisation) and broader society (massive awareness and knowledge activities).

Acceder addressed the many dimensions affecting the employability of a person for as long as necessary, particularly employment, personal, family, health, housing dimensions. This multi-dimensional and integral approach was highly relevant, as evidenced by the results obtained.

Operations involved networking between the PES, stakeholders, local NGOs, public regional and local authorities.

Acceder was aligned with the National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma people 2012-2020. It preceded the launch of the national strategy, which, in fact, drew on Acceder learning.

At regional level, Acceder had an impact on the content of the social inclusion strategies for Roma population in six autonomous communities.

**Story box**

*'The key factor in Acceder is its multi-dimensional and integrated approach, meaning the whole ecosystem: participants and their families, enterprises, public national, regional and local administrations, other NGOs and the society at large. It further means addressing the many dimensions affecting the employability of a person for as long as it is needed, particularly the employment, personal, familiar, health, housing dimensions. This had never been done before in such an integrated manner.'*

(FSG)

#### Outputs

The Acceder programme was funded by POISES and the Youth Employment OP. Participants funded by POISES were adults.

Acceder outputs of POISES OP 2016-2019:

- 20,243 participants, of whom 8,435 were men (42% of participants) and 11,808 were women (58%). After an initial employability assessment, participants engaged in integral individual employment pathways that consisted of guidance, motivation vocational training and support to employment;
- 5,072 participants obtained a qualification (25.1% of participants, of whom 56% were women). Qualifications were obtained through regular public or private education resources, ad hoc vocational training courses organised by FSG (e.g. optic fibre installers and Java Script development), through training agreements reached with regional and local authorities and partner companies;
- 4,288 participants found a job, including self-employment (21.2% of participants, of whom 55% were women). This reflected the intermediation work undertaken by 3,145 partner companies (2018) that hired participants, as well as the fact that the wages of participants accessing jobs are paid by Acceder. Support to the participant continued after their insertion in a job, including professional and personal aspects, and company satisfaction was monitored.
- Four awareness-raising campaigns were launched, targeting general audiences, public authorities and the media in general.

In 2018, Acceder was present in the 14 Spanish autonomous communities and 56 municipalities. For this, cooperation agreements were signed at regional and local level with public and private economic and policy actors committed to the labour insertion of Roma people. These agreements focused on improving access to public services (e.g. social or housing services), vocational training in specific sectors, or direct employment for participants.

#### Delivery method and partnerships

Steps in the Acceder project:

Outreach strategies: The programme initially ran recruitment campaigns in neighbourhoods to increase participation, but the demand was such that the problem became accommodating all interested Roma people in Acceder without jeopardising quality services. To expand its outreach to women, the programme needed to include a gender approach, recently reinforced by actions to support the work-life balance of participants.

**Welcome and start:** The employment pathways began with the registration of participants and information provision. At this stage, participants reported their expectations, needs and demands and they were informed about the objectives and characteristics of the programme. The next step was to design the personalised employment pathway through in-depth individual sessions. The counsellors had expert knowledge of Roma context and mindset. They were of both Roma and non-Roma origin and acted as role models for potential participants.

**Motivation of participants:** This brought users closer to the world of employment and training, highlighting positive aspects of employment, giving information on specific professional sectors and offering training in social skills, socio-labour habits or specific competences. Most of these actions were delivered in small, homogenous groups composed of participants of similar profiles, ages and availability. Increasingly, the gender perspective was included because Roma women needed more support than Roma men, both to participate and to deal with problems they experienced. The specialised profile of Roma and non-Roma mediators was key in this phase.

**Vocational training:** This training took a comprehensive approach that incorporated knowledge acquisition, technical and socio-labour skills. In the current programming period, the focus was placed on practical vocational training for employment, including internships in companies and training in digitalisation activities, with high demand from companies. The beneficiary organised occupational training courses.

**Guidance and support in job-seeking activities.** For participants with lower employability, these actions involved a process of skills learning, self-evaluation and awareness of labour market requirements.

**Labour insertion of participants into partner companies.** FSG provided recruitment services for companies, adding value by matching demand and supply. Indeed, in the current programming period, the focus was placed on salaried employment as a valid option for Roma people towards integration. Labour intermediaries of Roma origin contacted human resources departments of companies and identified vacancies. They then searched for candidates in Roma neighbourhoods in order to provide them with information about their labour market options, beyond the traditionally associated precarious jobs, or, in the case of women, remaining housewives.

**Long-term support for each participant, ensuring a smooth transition into and maintenance in the jobs.** Close contact was also sought with employers. The wages of the participants hired were covered by the programme.

**Partners involved:**

The beneficiary collaborated with the Accenture Foundation, which supports them in technological issues.

They also partnered with social and/or employment authorities of municipalities and regional governments and with other NGOs, including the Red Cross, the ONCE Foundation and Caritas, so as to extend outreach, improve services and allow efficient use of time and resources.

Funding and efficiency

Funding:

The ESF support granted to FSG for Acceder reached 18 million euro in the first call and an additional 13.8 million euro in the second call, adding 31.8 million euro in the current programming period (until October 2023).

The co-financing obtained from other sources must be added to this amount, which was provided by regional governments and local councils of the territories, as well as private sources. Total funding for Acceder in the first call reached 24,405,882 euro, including the 18 million euro of ESF support .

Efficiency

For the two main outcomes of Acceder (participants gaining a qualification and participants moving into employment), the cost-benefit ratio was calculated at between 2.5 and 2.0, depending on whether the two outcomes were assumed to be mutually exclusive or not. This indicates that Acceder offered at least 2 euro in benefits for every 1 euro spent, under the assumptions considered .

Simplified cost options were used, although it was difficult, particularly in the first two years, for both the Managing Authority and the beneficiary organisation.

Acceder would not have been implemented without ESF funding. The project started in 1997 with the funding of the European Initiative for Innovation, INTEGRA. The ESF contribution since 2000 within various OPs enabled its scale-up and further development by providing the FSG with scope for long-term planning. This continuous support over a long period has played a pivotal role in the success of the programme by facilitating knowledge (staff) retention .

The commitment and professionalism of FSG staff had a strong positive impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme: 40% of the staff working currently in Acceder were doing so for the past 20 years and accumulated valuable knowledge and experience, both in managing ESF and Roma-related projects.

Procedures for reporting and monitoring. The FSG developed its own specific tool to collect data from the participants in Acceder, which was regarded as highly efficient and user-friendly. It collected data from the participants in a comprehensive way (biographical data and information on their household, education, housing, etc.) in order to identify their problems and design their personalised employment pathways.

Effectiveness

Accumulated results:

In almost 20 years of intervention, a total of 114,006 people have participated in the Acceder programme, of whom 60,151 were women;

About 30,000 people obtained an employment contract, of whom 15,452 were women;

1,276 people received a degree in secondary education, of whom 703 were women . This improvement was attributed to a large extent to the interventions and projects directed to the Roma population.

The share of Roma who did not complete secondary education declined by 12 percentage points since 2005. This improvement was attributed to a large extent to the interventions and projects directed to the Roma .

Soft outcomes:

Acceder improved the autonomy of participants, increasing their willingness to look for a regular salaried job and retain it once employed. It also improved their self-esteem, soft skills for job interviews and their proactivity. Participants would go to FSG premises and actively ask for support in printing out CVs or advice on how to prepare for a job interview;

It had an important impact on gender roles, as more Roma women entered the labour market and became active;

Over 20 years, Acceder changed the mindsets of Roma and non-Roma populations, including public administration and the private sector, improving knowledge and perceptions of the Roma population. While 20 years ago it was unlikely that a Roma person would be working in a large company, many young Roma people now want to work in such jobs and employers are much more receptive.

The employment possibilities for Roma people changed, as did their attitudes towards formal and salaried employment. Labour market integration proved an effective tool to demolish stereotypes.

FSG built a network of contacts with small, large and medium enterprises, which improved the efficiency of the programme in the long-term, by facilitating intermediation tasks.

Challenges and success factors

Challenges

- The main challenge was administrative complexity, especially the uncertainty created by changing audit criteria;
- Acceder was less successful in improving the quality of self-employment by Roma people;
- Acceder of Roma women to formal salaried employment continue to face many obstacles and need ongoing intervention;
- ESF co-funding: FSG relies on regional and local public resources for social and/or employment departments for co-funding, but collaborative funding arrangements with enterprises are crucial.

Success factors

- A key success factor was the programme's comprehensive, holistic and multi-dimensional approach, which combined activities tailored to the profile of the participants, activities addressed to their communities (cultural change), to enterprises (labour intermediation, knowledge and sensitisation) and to society (massive awareness and knowledge activities). It addressed the many dimensions affecting the employability of a person for as long as necessary, particularly the employment, personal, familiar, health, housing dimensions. This kind of sustained integrated approach had never been done before.
- sustained intense ESF funding over a long period (23 years) was key to Acceder providing intense, high quality and effective support to participants.

- The commitment and professionalism of FSG staff was also a key success factor. 40% of staff had accumulated valuable knowledge and experience over 20 years. The fact that intermediaries with companies were also of Roma origin was an effective 'selling' tool to break down stereotypes.
- Awareness-raising activities underlined that Roma people are both rights holders and duty bearers as citizens and encouraged their active participation in society. They addressed self-imposed barriers to employment, along with the constraining impact of the family, community or culture.

### Story box

*'Participants now go to FSG premises because they trust it, a Roma NGO, after hearing success stories from other Roma persons who participated in the programme in the past. Particularly, younger Roma people are willing to work in salaried jobs in larger companies in stark contrast to the attitudes towards the formal salaried labour market 20 years ago.'*  
(FSG).

EU Added  
value

Acceder allowed for holistic personalised or tailored employment plans for members of the Roma population, which would otherwise not have happened.

Acceder served as a reference for policy design for the Roma population at national, regional and local level. It was also a reference for other NGOs working with vulnerable people.

The attitude and mindset change and combating of stereotypes and discriminatory practices among both the Roma and non-Roma populations illustrated the lasting impacts of Acceder.

Elements for  
transferability  
/ good  
practices

The project could be transferred to other Member States with high populations of Roma people at risk of poverty and exclusion. Some activities have already been transferred to other countries (Romania, Italy, Portugal and Macedonia), with the support of the EU Roma network and FSG (technical assistance).

In order to work, the comprehensive model would have to be transferred, including partnership with companies, training and guidance for participants. Sufficient funding would also be crucial to finance long-term intense and comprehensive projects, while support from public institutions would also be indispensable.

## 6 Spain - FSE 2014 C. De Madrid Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014ES05SFOP021)

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to Social Inclusion through the Operational Programme in Madrid, Spain (2014ES05SFOP021) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared from desk research and interviews with national stakeholders.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP, while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'Haz Solar project'. The selected project was classified as a Type 5 operation by the evaluation study. Type 5 operations are focused on social entrepreneurship (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socioeconomic indicators, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of the OP and selected project, together with the challenges and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Annex 4 to the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation. The case study also presents estimates for the cost-per-participation. Annex 5 to the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation.

### OP Case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p><b>OP:</b> European Social Fund (ESF) Regional Operational Programme of Madrid 2014-2020. (2014ES05SFOP021).</p> <p><b>Regions covered by the OP:</b> More developed.</p> <p><b>Priority Axes (PA):</b> PA 1: (Thematic Objective 8 (TO8)) Employment (11.51%); PA 2: (TO9) Social inclusion and combat poverty (54.18%); PA 3: (TO10) Education and training (25.02%); PA 8: Technical Assistance (1.8%); PA 9 Financial Instrument (7.49%).</p> <p>Investment Priorities (IPs): IP9i, IP9iii and IP9v.</p> <p>Type of OP: Monofund (ESF).</p>
OP implementation context	<p>The impact of the economic crisis was not as severe in the Madrid region as in the rest of Spain, which was reflected in better labour market and poverty indicators than the Spanish average, although they were worse than the European Union (EU) average:</p> <p>Unemployment rate (workers aged 20-64) was 18.3% in 2014 (19.3% in 2013), 5.8 percentage points (p.p.) below the national average of 24.1%, but 7.7 p.p. above the EU average of 10.6%;</p>

Section	Description
ESF Priorities and actions	<p>At-risk-of-poverty-and-social-exclusion (AROPE) rate reached 19.2% in 2014 (20.1% in 2013), 10 p.p. below the Spanish average but 5.2 p.p. above the EU average;</p> <p>Material and social deprivation rate reached 15.4% in 2014 (20.3% in Spain and 19.3% in the EU), while the severe material deprivation rate reached 4.8%, compared to 7.1% at national level. The share of households with low work intensity reached 9.6%, much lower than the Spanish average of 17.1%.</p> <p>As in the rest of Spain, the economy of the region of Madrid has undergone a progressive recovery since 2013-2014, which has had solid effects on the labour market but only modest effects on poverty and social exclusion rates.</p> <p>Unemployment rate (workers aged 20-64) decreased by 6.4 p.p. since 2014, falling to 11.9% in 2018;</p> <p>AROPE rate decreased by 0.2 p.p. between 2014 and 2018 to 19%, less than the Spanish average reduction, which lowered by 3.1 p.p.</p> <p>Material and social deprivation rate decreased to 13.8% in 2017 (1.6 p.p. less than in 2014) (14.7% in Spain (5.6 p.p. less) and 13.7% in the EU (5.6 p.p. less)) and the severe material deprivation rate remained almost stable at 4.7% (5.4% in Spain). The share of households with low work intensity reduced by 3.1 p.p. since 2014, falling to 6.5% in 2018, below the national average (10.7%).</p> <p>The main anti-poverty and social inclusion policies at national and regional level consisted of: income support, through unemployment benefits, minimum income schemes and non-contributory benefits; support for active labour market policies; and measures to improve access to education, housing and healthcare.</p> <p>There were no significant changes to the regional minimum income scheme from 2014 to 2018 in the region of Madrid. Overall, increased efforts were made to activate recipients and strengthen coordination between social services and public employment services.</p> <p>Managing Authority:</p> <p>The Managing Authority was the Administrative Unit for the European Social Fund (UAFSE), the entity devoted to the management of the ESF in Spain, embedded in the Ministry of Work, Migration and Social Security .</p> <p>The regional General Sub-directorate of European Funds and Regional Policy within the General Directorate of Budgeting was the ESF intermediate body.</p> <p>Actions prioritised in the OP primarily consisted of active inclusion measures, such as socio-labour integrated pathways, specific actions and programmes for occupational centres, promotion of the social economy, or special employment centres for people with disabilities. These were often delivered by social entities (NGOs) with expertise working with the target groups.</p>

Section	Description															
	<p>Type of Actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type 1: actions with an employment objective, such as socio-labour integrated pathways;</li> <li>• Type 4: access to services, in particular ensuring access to the regional minimum income scheme and its accompanying measures;</li> <li>• Type 5: social entrepreneurship, in the context of the promotion of the social economy and social insertion companies devoted to socio-labour insertion of vulnerable people (people with disabilities, with an immigrant origin, long-term unemployed, Roma);</li> <li>• Type 6: measures influencing attitudes and systems, in particular support to networks aimed to exchange among professionals of their knowledge, experience and tools. Networking was also intended to improve coordination among all actors and promote sustainable social innovation. Sensitisation activities for gender and non-discrimination also took place, such as staff training.</li> </ul>															
Target groups	The main target groups were participants at risk of social exclusion, persons in vulnerable conditions; people with disabilities; women; imprisoned women; migrants; Roma population.															
Operations	<p>Total number of operations under TO9: 45.</p> <p>Operations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IP9i: socio-labour integrated pathways, accompanying and support services to keep people in employment, and specific actions/programmes for occupational centres;</li> <li>- IP9iii: actions to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality among vulnerable groups and support measures for specific groups (homosexual, transsexual, homeless, persons with intellectual disabilities);</li> <li>- IP9v: actions focused on the social economy as a way for active inclusion targeting vulnerable target groups.</li> </ul>															
Partnerships	<p>Implementing partners included social entities (NGOs) and regional government bodies, in particular the General Directorate of Women at Regional Government (DG Mujer).</p> <p>The principle of multi-level partnership and governance was highlighted as a good practice;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partners differed by IP, according to the expertise of organisations involved, which aligned the objectives of the actions with the intended target population.</li> </ul>															
Funding of the OP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions)</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>IP</th> <th>Planned (a)</th> <th>Allocated (b)</th> <th>Spent</th> <th>Project Selection Rate (b/a)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>IP9i</td> <td>€305,134,636</td> <td>€171,598,324</td> <td>€39,593,131</td> <td>56%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9iii</td> <td>€47,608,300</td> <td>€32,243,087</td> <td>€7,083,753</td> <td>68%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	IP	Planned (a)	Allocated (b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)	IP9i	€305,134,636	€171,598,324	€39,593,131	56%	IP9iii	€47,608,300	€32,243,087	€7,083,753	68%
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IP9iii	€47,608,300	€32,243,087	€7,083,753	68%												

Section	Description				
	IP9v	€9,000,000	€11,336,791	€331,535	126%
	Total	€361,742,936	€215,178,202	€47,008,419	59%
	<p><i>Source:</i> SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. <i>Note:</i> Planned amounts refer to the whole 2014-2020 programming period while allocated and spent amounts refer to the period up to the end of the 2018 calendar year (31 December 2018).</p>				
	<p>Co-financing rate: 50%.</p> <p>No changes in the allocation of funds.</p> <p>Other EU funds (EURES, Erasmus+, Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), etc.) were not used to support actions under the OP.</p>				
Outputs results (2014/2018)	and	<p>Total recorded number of participations: 70,397</p> <p>Common output indicators - the majority of participants were recorded among unemployed people (62%), of whom 4 out of 10 were long-term unemployed, but a significant share were inactive persons (24%) and employed, including self-employed (14%). More than one-third of participants (36%) were recorded among persons with low education level (ISCED1 and ISCED2), with a further one-third (40%) among persons with vulnerabilities, such as migrants or minorities, 25% among people with disabilities, and 32% experiencing other disadvantages. The focus on social entrepreneurship was reflected in the creation of 56 social economy enterprises.</p> <p>The common output indicators achievement rate (ratio of cumulative totals for all common output indicators over all targets) was 25% by the end of 2018. While the number of migrants and participants with a foreign background and minorities (CO15) was much lower than expected, the total number of participants with disabilities (CO16) was 166% of the expected value by 2023. The estimated output specific achievement rate (the recorded values in relation to targets set for the end of the programming period) was 36% of the target set for 2023 for the number of participants at risk of social exclusion (SO1, SO10, SO11), but it surpassed the value for 2018 .</p> <p>Specific output indicators – the OP also recorded specific output indicators. 28,371 persons at risk of social exclusion participated in ESF activities, 100.3% of the target for 2018 (SO01). 1,172 persons from ethnic minorities and penitentiary centres (95% of the target, SO11) and an additional 4,080 persons participated in measures related to gender equality (SO10). The specific output indicators achievement rate was 36%, above the common output indicators achievement rate.</p>			

Section	Description
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- Common Output Indicators:

Code	Indicator	Number
CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	43,517
CO02	Long-term unemployed	18,900
CO03	Inactive	16,880
CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	1,031
CO05	Employed, including self-employed	10,000
CO07	Above 54 years of age	8,157
CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	2,591
CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	25,629
CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	28,544
CO16	Participants with disabilities	17,545
CO17	Other disadvantaged	22,322
CO18	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	1,699
CO19	From rural areas	70
CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	56

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Common result indicators – a total of 30,032 results were achieved, more in the short-term (57%, CR01-CR04), than in the longer-term (43%, CR05-CR09). The majority of immediate results were recorded as participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving (11,270, CR04). The difficulties in sustaining employment were reflected in the lower number of participants in employment six months after leaving (2,945 (CR06), only 26% of the 11,270). The number of disadvantaged participants engaged in job search, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving stood out (7,540, CR05), but the longer term result (1,952, CR09) is much lower, again reflecting the difficulties experienced by vulnerable participants to get stable employment in the Spanish labour market.

Specific result indicators – 22,442 specific results were achieved, almost 70% by participants at risk of social exclusion who were looking for job, engaged in education or training systems, got a qualification or employment, including self-employment, upon leaving (15,092, SRI01). An additional 22% of results were obtained by participants with

Section	Description
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disabilities (5,015, SRI42) and 2,184 were achieved by persons following their participation in measures supporting gender equality and non-discrimination (SRI10 and SRI11).

- Common Result Indicators:

Code	Indicator	Number
CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	1,021
CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	2,535
CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	2,461
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	817
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	7,540
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	2,945
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	-
CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	308
CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	1,952

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Assessment of the OP

**Effectiveness:** The specific results achievement rate (the ratio of the recorded values for specific result indicators over the targets set for the end of the programming period) was 237%. This is explained by the achievement of higher than expected results in IP9i, in particular the number of participants at risk of social exclusion who obtained a job or qualification (SRI01) or persons with disabilities (SRI42) who are looking for a job, who get access to a training or education, obtain a qualification or employment upon leaving. The values in 2018 were 1.9 and 1.25 times the target for 2023 respectively, suggesting that the targets were set too low when designing the OP. While some results in IP9iii - specifically the share of participants who improved their situation in the labour market through equality measures upon leaving (SRI10) - was also better than expected (1.6 times the target for 2023), the rate of attainment for other specific result indicators was low or very low. Likewise, the results of the actions directed to migrants, people of foreign origin or ethnic minorities lagged behind expectations, measured as the number of participants obtaining employment or qualification (SRI01 and SRI47). In some cases, in particular some activities carried out with migrants, it was not possible to collect the necessary monitoring information to assess the results, due to the high

Section	Description
	<p>geographical mobility of migrants. The actions to promote gender equality yielded better results (SRI10 - 43.87% of participants improved their labour market or personal situation) than the actions that promoted equal treatment in general (SRI11 - 33.62%), which was nevertheless also lower than expected. This is possibly because participation in the latter was low. In general, immediate results were better than longer term results, reflecting the difficulties for persons with disadvantages to access stable employment and the segmentation of the Spanish labour market.</p> <p><b>Efficiency:</b> The cost per participant of the operations under IP9i (1,180 euro in OP and 1,488 euro on EU average) and IP9iii (212 euro and 847 euro, respectively) was significantly below the EU average. This was due to the high level of participation recorded (CO16, CO17). The most efficient measures were the occupational and labour rehabilitation centres for people with disabilities, as well as the measures related to gender equality, the WISEs and the Transition Units for Labour Insertion (UTILs).</p> <p><b>Relevance and coherence:</b> Actions were relevant to the socioeconomic context. They were also coherent with social inclusion policies in Spain and with European policies, including Europe 2020, the European Social Pillar and the Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs). Complementarity existed between the regional ESF OP and the national ESF Strategy. Synergies existed between the OP and other EU programmes and policies, including the European Union Research and Innovation Programme 2014-2020 (Horizon 2020), SME Competitiveness Programme (COSME) and the Social Agenda or the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).</p> <p><b>Added value:</b> ESF gave budgetary stability to specific employment programmes targeting vulnerable people, as well as to equality and non-discrimination, and to social and labour inclusion. Rigorous ESF working methodologies influenced other non-ESF policies and programmes, as knowledge was transferred between staff. This very rigour conferred a certain prestige on beneficiaries able to cope with it, in spite of the considerable administrative burden. ESF leveraged technical and financial tools in other gender and non-discrimination related policies, as it contributed to awareness of non-ESF related policies and programmes. Finally, the ESF supported innovative approaches for WISEs, such as training and hiring participants in the renewable energy sector.</p>
Challenges and lessons learned	<p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <p>Delays in the approval of the OP and in the approval of criteria for selecting operations and simplified cost options (SCO). The beginning of this programming period was, in general, more expensive for all organisations involved in its management, due to the burden of its administrative procedures. This increased administrative burden was due to new requirements, particularly simplified costs, whose conditions changed several times. This was because the criteria used by the authority for audit (IGAE) did not align with that of the UAFSE. These</p>

Section	Description
	<p>changes caused confusion among beneficiaries that had to be addressed by limited staff.</p> <p>Difficulties also arose in the system for collecting result-oriented indicators, and the non-provision of an information transfer tool. In general, the organisations involved in managing the programme reported that the programming period was characterised by greater complexity in indicator compilation.</p>

### In-depth analysis of selected project: Haz Solar

Section	Description
Basic Facts Box	<p><b>OP:</b> ESF Regional Operational Programme of Madrid 2014-2020 (2014ES05SFOP021); IP 9v.</p> <p><b>Project:</b> Haz Solar project, within the UTIL-WISE programme.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Sheltered employment, training and accompanying measures for persons at risk of social exclusion as solar panels installers, an occupation with good employment prospects and good labour conditions.</p> <p><b>Target groups:</b> persons at risk of social exclusion in the Madrid region.</p> <p><b>Beneficiary organisation leading the implementation:</b> <i>El Zaguan</i><sup>698</sup>, part of the Manresa Foundation, and IMENA<sup>699</sup>, part of the San Martin de Porres Foundation<sup>700</sup>.</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 2019 - ongoing.</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> ECOOO, a non-for-profit small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) focused on renewable energy.</p> <p><b>Funds allocated:</b> Haz Solar representatives reported that investment in the project was 35,000 euro, covering labour costs for two vulnerable persons hired and trained and the related staff of the beneficiaries. Overall, the UTIL-WISE programme spent 4,051,499 euro in 2016-2019, out of a budget of 9,000,000 euro.</p>

<sup>698</sup> <http://elzaguan.org/>

<sup>699</sup> <https://www.adeipa.org/imena-s-l-u/>

<sup>700</sup> The project was selected for in-depth analysis out of five candidates presented by the intermediate body (region of Madrid). The granting of funds to beneficiaries under the calls within the UTILs-WISEs programme included the costs incurred by the beneficiary during the year prior to the call. As a consequence - as verified by the interviewee responsible for the calls in the Deputy DG for Labour Insertion (DG Public Employment Service) - the two entities can be considered beneficiaries, despite not being granted ESF funding yet.

Section	Description
Intervention logic of the project/operation	



Rationale	<p>Haz Solar project promoted active inclusion through sheltered employment while providing training on the installation of solar panels. The occupation targeted (installer of solar panels) had good employment prospects and higher added value compared to occupations in other sheltered employment schemes, which can be low skilled and entail poor labour conditions. Participants could aim for a quality job at the end of the programme, which was key to their full social inclusion and to avoid in-work poverty.</p> <p>Participants completed an initial course of 200-300 hours in the specific occupation (matched with the needs of the employer) before getting hired in the WISEs (El Zaguan and IMENA), while other vulnerabilities were addressed. Over three years, they were prepared to work in companies with good labour conditions.</p> <p>Following the Law for WISEs, participants left the programme with three years of labour market experience and a vocational certificate.</p> <p>As a pilot project, the two entities intended to learn from this first experience and then replicate the model in other environment-linked high demand occupations with good labour conditions for persons at risk of social exclusion.</p>
Objectives	<p>The Haz Solar pilot project aimed to test the labour insertion of people at risk of social exclusion in one specific environmental occupation with better labour conditions, so as to explore the conditions for later scaling-up. Specific objectives were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide initial short-term training to participants on the installation of solar panels, so that they could start working as soon as possible, continuing their training along with their work experience;</li> <li>Provide labour market experience by offering employment opportunities in an occupation with good prospects and labour conditions;</li> <li>Address the vulnerabilities the person might experience;</li> <li>Provide further training to participants to enable them to gain a vocational qualification and certification as solar panel installers.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the project aimed to contribute to the green economy.</p>

Relevance and coherence/synergies

Haz Solar addressed the needs of participants in vulnerable situations by providing them with a pathway towards labour market insertion and accompanying them along the way, addressing their vulnerabilities. Participants were reached by the two WISEs (El Zagan and IMENA) and the NGO 'CEAR', which works with refugees and asylum seekers. A key partner for this project was Ecooo, a non-profit company that specialised in solar panel installation. Haz Solar thus responded to the labour market demand for solar panel installers and to the needs of participants, in close collaboration with companies and other NGOs.

Haz Solar was coherent with the national and regional approaches to active inclusion, in that it promoted labour market insertion in sheltered employment of participants at risk of social exclusion. The regional authority noted that its focus on the quality of the employment was a key element to achieve full social inclusion and avoid participants ending up in in-work poverty.

The project was coherent with the national and regional policies for the greening of the economy.

Outputs

Haz Solar provided training (200-300 hours) plus social support to two organisations – one participant from each. As a pilot project, its learnings could be replicated and expanded to other green occupations.

An additional output was the learnings that could underpin later expansion. In particular, the technical knowledge acquired by the two social WISEs on solar panel installation, the market, and possibilities for jobs for persons at risk of social exclusion.

After training, the two Haz Solar participants – one from each organisation – were hired and began to work in the WISEs El Zagan and IMENA. At the time of reporting, they had completed six installations of solar panels in houses in Madrid.

The first solar panels were installed in November 2019, with approximately one per week thereafter

Delivery method and partnerships

Haz Solar activities were implemented through two social WISEs: El Zagan (part of the Manresa Foundation) and IMENA (part of the San Martin de Porres Foundation). These two NGOs are knowledgeable and experienced in supporting people at risk of social exclusion. They cooperated with the NGO 'CEAR' to recruit asylum seekers at risk of poverty or exclusion. Other NGOs funded part of the training.

Haz Solar methodology was based on teams of workers (one officer and two workers at risk of social exclusion). An asylum seeker who lived in a shelter for refugees managed by CEAR was one of the participants.

The two participants – one from each organisation - received initial short-term training of 200-300 hours to enable them to start work as soon as possible, then continuing to receive further training while working in the insertion company. After three years' experience, complying with the Law regulating WISEs, the participant will hold a vocational certificate, enabling them to access the open labour market in good conditions.

The project provided social support to participants, with one social worker addressing participants' other social problems, such as economic and debt management, banking, legal issues, housing or social inclusion. This support was provided in collaboration with local public social services.

A key partner for this project was Ecooo, a non-profit company specialising in solar panel installation, with whom Haz Solar signed a collaboration agreement. Ecooo provided the technical knowledge and skills needed for the project, as well as supporting training for participants, contacting providers of solar panels and needed materials. Ecooo's reputation in the market made it easier for Haz Solar to find customers for the trainees' solar panels.

Funding and efficiency

Funding

- Haz Solar operates under the wider programme for the promotion of social economy UTIL-WISEs. UTIL-WISEs was launched by the Madrid regional government, with a budget of 9,000,000 euro, with 50% ESF co-funding. Of this budget, 4,051,499 euro was spent on one specific strand of the programme devoted to WISEs between 2016-2019.
- The two WISEs have incurred costs totalling almost 25,000 euro that they will be able to fund with ESF under IP9v.2, since beneficiaries can fund the costs incurred during the year prior to the call.
- Customers of the solar panel installation service were encouraged to contract Haz Solar to receive a subsidy from the Madrid regional government, which covered up to 50% of installation costs. This subsidy was an indirect funding source for the project.

Effectiveness

The objectives of Haz Solar project were achieved, as the participants were employed as solar panel installers by the WISEs. Haz Solar installed solar panels in six houses.

More generally, up to 25 WISEs have been created through UTIL-WISEs programme in the region of Madrid. 69.4% of participants in WISEs programmes were employed after finishing their pathways. This achievement ratio is expected to be improved in Haz Solar, given its focus on occupations with good employment prospects. Participants have not yet finished their pathways, however.

Initiated as a pilot project, Haz Solar has the potential to grow. The two social WISEs have acquired the technical knowledge about solar panels installations that will allow them to set up new teams of workers to install more solar panels. They also gained market knowledge and could expand to other green occupations.

Beneficiaries expect to establish a new three-person installation team by mid-2020, with another by the end of 2020;

They intend to install solar panels on public buildings for local councils and NGOs to enhance the sustainability of the project;

Beneficiaries plan to build partnerships with private companies to facilitate the labour market transitions of participants after they complete their training;

Challenges and success factors	<p>They are considering the possibility of hiring a person with a commercial profile, together with other WISEs/NGOs;</p> <p>Other WISEs are now expected to expand to higher added value activities in the environment sector.</p> <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administrative rigidity of the ESF framework, as operated in the region. This rigidity was reflected in the timeframe of the calls for subsidies (one call per year), which did not match the activity calendar of the WISEs in the Madrid region or indeed a very dynamic environment market. Since the deadline for applying to the call for projects had already expired in early 2019, when Haz Solar started to be designed, the two WISEs decided to launch the pilot project rather than wait for the following year's call. As a pilot project, the potential changes arising during its implementation may not fit in the ESF framework. The retroactive nature of the call in funding costs incurred in the year prior to the call, implies a certain insecurity .</li><li>• Issues of legal employment: One of the participants, an asylum seeker, was initially not entitled to work in Spain, which postponed the beginning of the operations while the lengthy bureaucratic process was finalised.</li></ul>
	<p>Success factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cooperation between social entities was essential for the implementation of the pilot project, Haz Solar. Two WISEs joined to create Haz Solar, while partners helped to recruit vulnerable participants and guide the social support provided (CEAR), and helped to provide technical knowledge in the area of solar panel installation (Ecoo). Other NGOs funded part of the training. Networking was key to effectiveness and efficiency.</li><li>• The focus on activities with good employment prospects and higher added value is key to avoiding in-work poverty and achieving full social inclusion.</li></ul>
	<p>“Networking is key for effectiveness and efficiency, particularly for small social entities, when it comes to design and implement projects involving social innovation. Through networking, we shared knowledge, experience, resources, costs and risks, which has enabled us to design and implement the pilot project Haz Solar. We would otherwise not have been able to do it”.</p> <p>(Beneficiary)</p>
EU Added value	<p>The ESF enabled UTIL-WISEs programme, which would not have otherwise received support. UTIL-WISEs funded 43 WISEs to hire and train vulnerable people.</p> <p>In the case of Haz Solar, the forthcoming ESF support will be key to consolidate and scale up the pilot project in the near future. While Haz Solar was successful in designing and starting up an innovative project with three participants with non-ESF funding, it has considerable potential to promote labour market and social insertion for vulnerable people in other green</p>

activity-linked occupations. ESF support will be central if this expansion is to happen.

Regarding sustainability, the skills, the job experience and the qualifications acquired by participants focused on meeting the demands of the labour market and emerging industries. Good quality jobs avoid in-work poverty and lead to sustainable full social inclusion.

Elements for transferability / good practices

Haz Solar focused on the needs of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion and on the demands of the labour market in an emerging high added value sector that enables better labour conditions. A number of WISEs are interested in replicating the model in other regions in Spain.

The project created synergies between social and environmental policies, expanding its coherence with the existing policy framework. Indeed, it points to clear potential synergies with the ERDF.

## 7 Spain - PO FSE 2014 C.A. Andalusia Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014ES05SFOP022)

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the Operational Programme in Andalusia, Spain (2014ES05SFOP022) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through the end of 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared drawing on desk research and interviews with national stakeholders.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'ERACIS'. The selected project was classified as a type 4 operation by the evaluation study. Type 4 operations focus on access to services (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socio-economic indicators of the context, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU-added value of the OP and selected project as well as challenges and lessons learned. Section 1 presents an overview of the OP, while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'Acceder programme for social and labour inclusion of Roma people in Spain'. The selected project was classified as a Type 1 operation by the evaluation study. Type 1 operations are employment-focused actions (see Annex 2 for more information). Short fiches of projects that were considered for the case study are presented in the Annex.

### OP Case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<b>OP:</b> (2014ES05SFOP022) Regional ESF OP C.A. Andalusia 2014-2020 <b>Regions covered by the OP:</b> Transition regions.

Section	Description
OP implementation context	<p><b>Priority Axes:</b> Axis 1C (TO8) Employment; Axis 2C (TO9) Social inclusion and combat poverty; Axis 3C: (TO10) Education and training; Axis 8C: Technical Assistance;</p> <p><b>IPs:</b> IP9i</p> <p>The economic crisis affected the labour market and poverty in Andalusia more than in the rest of Spain, the preparation of the OP coinciding with the worst unemployment data registered:</p> <p>The unemployment rate (workers aged 20 – 64) reached 34.4% in 2014 (35.7% in 2013), the highest regional rate in Spain, ten percentage points above the national average of 25.6%.</p> <p>In line with these figures, the at risk of poverty and exclusion (AROPE) rate reached 42.3% in 2014 (38.3% in 2013), the second highest regional rate in Spain and 13 p.p. above national average of 29.2%. The share of households with severe material deprivation was 7% in 2013 (slightly above the national average of 6.2%) and the share of households with low employment intensity was 25.3% (10.4 p.p. above the national average).</p> <p>Since then, the Andalusian economy has recovered, with sound effects on the labour market and modest effects on poverty and social exclusion rates: the unemployment rate diminished during the OP implementation period to 22.6% in 2018 (still 8 p.p. above national average); the at risk of poverty and exclusion rate decreased only slightly to 38.2% in 2018 (12 p.p. above the national average), the share of households with severe material deprivation even increased to 8% by 2018 (5.4% national average) and the share of households with low employment intensity diminished to 18.1% (still, almost 7 p.p. above the national average).</p> <p>In this context, in December 2017, RDL 3/2017 was passed, adopting a new Andalusian Minimum Income for Social Inclusion, which meant a significant change with respect to the previous system, in that it focuses on better guaranteeing adequate income and on conditioning it to employment activation.</p> <p><b>Managing Authority:</b></p> <p>The Managing Authority is formally the Administrative Unit for the European Social Fund (UAFSE), a national entity devoted to the management of ESF in Spain, embedded in the Ministry of Work, Migrations and Social Security.</p> <p>The regional Ministry of Economy, Knowledge, Companies and Universities, in particular the General Directorate of European Funds, is an Intermediate Body, which acts as a managing authority at the level of the region</p>
ESF Priorities and actions	<p>The OP addresses TO8, TO9 and TO10, thus sustainable employment, active inclusion and education/upskilling and long-life learning.</p>

Section	Description
	<p>TO9 is focused on support to social and labour integration of persons at disadvantage through individual employment pathways and employment incentives. Initially it was also focused on the development of the social economy to enhance employment of persons at risk of social exclusion (Special Employment Centres for persons with disabilities and Insertion Companies), but this was later excluded, since overlap with other measures was detected.</p> <p>Specifically, TO9 focuses on the elaboration and implementation of the Regional Strategy for Social Cohesion and Inclusion (ERACIS, in-depth project) in a number of highly deprived areas. The leading actors of the implementation of ERACIS are the local departments of primary social services. Within a very innovative approach, social services are responsible for the delivery of customized employment pathways in these areas.</p> <p>Actions prioritised in the OP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Type 1: Actions with an employment objective: customized activation itineraries and direct employment creation for persons in disadvantage between 6 and 12 months;</li> <li>- Type 4: Access to essential services: development of local social intervention plans in a number of geographic areas lagging behind, including mediation between families and the education community to prevent early school dropout.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<p>The main target groups of the measures included in TO9 are people experiencing or at risk of social exclusion, particularly long-term unemployed, long-term unemployed above the age of 45, people with disabilities, vulnerable women, migrants, drug addicts, young ex-offenders in a number of geographic areas lagging behind.</p>
Operations	<p>Total number of operations under TO9: 4.<sup>701</sup></p> <p>Actions provide customized activation itineraries adapted to the needs of each target group, together with local social intervention measures to facilitate the access to public services and tackle marginalization of highly deprived areas. Specifically, direct employment creation in general interest activities for persons at disadvantage in the labour market by local councils is supported through employment incentives.</p>
Partnerships	<p>Partners include a high number of regional government bodies, local councils, provincial authorities (diputaciones) and social entities, organised through multilevel governance based on transparency and participation. The role of local councils and NGOs in the in-depth project has particular relevance, involving partnerships among different departments of regional government, local councils and NGOs.</p>
Funding of the OP	<p>Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions)</p>

<sup>701</sup> As identified in the extraction from SFC2014.

Section		Description																														
	IP	Planned(a)	Allocated(b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)																											
	IP9i	€315,002,247	€219,830,918	€21,175	70%																											
	Total	€315,002,247	€219,830,918	€21,175	70%																											
	<p>Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. Note: Planned amounts refer to the whole 2014-2020 programming period while allocated and spent amounts refer to the period up to the end of the 2018 calendar year (31 December 2018).</p> <p>Co-financing rate: 80%</p> <p>Changes to the allocation of funds (2014-2018): additional 12,679,087 EUR for TO9 (total additional 106,567,076).</p> <p>Other EU funds (EURES, Erasmus+, EaSI, ERDF, FEAD, AMIF, EMFF, EGF, etc.) were not used to support actions under the OP. Yet, the holistic approach of TO9 makes that complementarity with other funds is sought.</p>																															
Outputs results (2014/2018)	and	<p>Total recorded number of participations in TO9: 609</p> <p>Common Output Indicators – In line with the main priorities and actions, participations were recorded among unemployed. The 607 participations have benefited mostly from employment incentives for long term unemployed over 45 years and to a much lesser extent from measures aimed at social and labour insertion of migrants (25 participations) and from measures of accompaniment to participants with disabilities (28 participations). A specific output indicator was recorded, counting the number of participations of persons in situation or at risk of social exclusion, which attained 76 participations, recorded mostly in activities for young minor persons and drug abusers. The achievement rates are very low, 7.5% for CO01 and less than 0.5% in the rest of indicators.</p>																														
	<p>Common Output Indicators:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CO01</td> <td>Unemployed, including long-term unemployed</td> <td>607</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO02</td> <td>Long-term unemployed</td> <td>468</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO03</td> <td>Inactive</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO04</td> <td>Inactive, not in education or training</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO05</td> <td>Employed, including self-employed</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO07</td> <td>Above 54 years of age</td> <td>162</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO08</td> <td>Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training</td> <td>162</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO09</td> <td>With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)</td> <td>351</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Code	Indicator	Number	CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	607	CO02	Long-term unemployed	468	CO03	Inactive	-	CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	-	CO05	Employed, including self-employed	1	CO07	Above 54 years of age	162	CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	162	CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	351
Code	Indicator	Number																														
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CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	162																														
CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	351																														

Section	Description	
CO12	Participants who live in jobless households	
CO14	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	
CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	
CO16	Participants with disabilities	
CO17	Other disadvantaged	25
CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	28

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Common Result Indicators by Prevalence – The main immediate result is the access to an employment, including self-employment (CR04), by participants achieved by almost 8 out of 10 participants (CR04/CO01). (CO08). The specific result indicator SR01 shows that only two out of ten participations of persons in situation or at risk of social exclusion, resulted in engagement in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving (SR01/SO01).

- Common Result Indicators:

Code	Indicator	Number
CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	-
CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	161
CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	84
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	468
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	107
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	433
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	-
CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	119
CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	89
CO18	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	20

Section	Description
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CO19	From rural areas	219
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Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Assessment of the OP

**Effectiveness:** Productivity and financial execution indicators of the OP show a medium-low degree of completion, in particular as regards TO9, at the end of 2018. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that the main operation included in TO9, the in-depth project ERACI, was programmed to have participants only in 2019. The success rate (the recorded results as a share of the relevant recorded outputs) for Type 1 operations was high (77%), more than twice than the value expected (31%). This is mostly due to the nature of some of the activities developed, i.e. employment incentives through subsidised wages, and to the focus on disadvantaged participants. This also due to the fact that the number of contracts signed is very low and that they very selective and, hence, they have high success. However, the success rate of participants in situation or at risk of social exclusion is very low (19.7%), less than half the value expected (49.3%).

Code	Indicator	Success rate for OP
		<b>Type 1 operations</b>
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	77%
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	71%
		<b>Type 4 operations</b>
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	18%

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

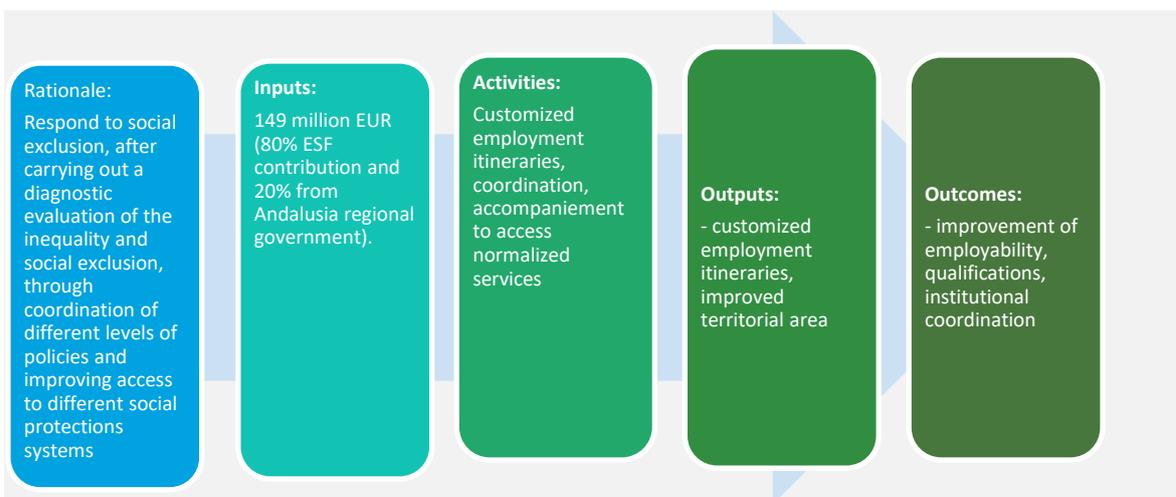
**Efficiency:** The Evaluation Report (2019) included a survey of fund centres (institutions that manage ESF funds). The survey found that 60% of selected operations are in the expected pace, as regards the committed expenditure, however, this is only 18% of selected operations in TO9. This is mainly because the main operation of the OP (the in-depth project ERACIS) is still early in its implementation, so efficiency is not possible to assess yet (see more details below).

**Relevance and coherence:** Actions were and are still relevant for the socio-economic context and the needs identified in Andalusia. However,

Section	Description
Challenges and lessons learned	<p>employment incentives for persons aged over 45 years were not utilised as expected and is a reason why they were modified and linked to Local Employment Initiatives in 2018 where a line of action for this group was opened. Actions are coherent with social inclusion policies in Spain and with European policies, both in general terms (Europe 2020, European Social Pillar) and in terms of country specific recommendations (CSRs).</p> <p><b>Added value:</b> ESF TO9 has greater impact on the employability of groups of persons in situation or at risk of social inclusion, who are further away from the labour market (persons over 45 years, long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, drug abusers) . Moreover, ESF TO9 is promoting a new way to understand integral intervention in areas at high risk and has enabled the creation of new coordination mechanisms in social policies to respond to the complex challenges of poverty in less developed areas.</p> <p>Challenges :</p> <p>Delay in the implementation of the previous 2007-2013 framework postponed the planned start of TO9 actions for 2018, due to excessive need for co-financing (taking account of public deficit targets) and for preparatory tasks.</p> <p>Difficulties in processing indicators to approve or modify operations.</p> <p>Difficulties in determining the eligibility of costs and defining and approve the application of the simplified cost options methodology.</p> <p>Lack of experienced staff and resources for ESF management at intermediary bodies.</p> <p>In particular, the in-depth project ERACIS involved considerable preparatory work to set up a framework for institutional coordination.</p>

## In-depth analysis of selected project: Regional strategy of Andalusia for the integration and social inclusion in deprived areas (ERACIS)

Section	Description
<p>Basic Facts Box</p>	<p><b>OP:</b> (2014ES05SFOP022) Regional OP C.A. Andalusia 2014-2020 (FSE C.A. Andalusia).; 9i</p> <p><b>Project Name:</b> Regional strategy of Andalusia for the integration and social inclusion in deprived áreas (ERACIS) - <i>Estrategia regional de Andalucía para la cohesión e inclusión social en zonas desfavorecidas</i></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Improve the integration of people in situations or at risk of social exclusion through the activation of integrated and personalized integration itineraries, with a comprehensive and community-based approach that facilitates access to social protection systems for people living in disadvantaged areas. These plans coordinate social policies provided by different public administrations and strengthen the support provided by social services and social entities</p> <p><b>Target groups:</b> persons in vulnerable conditions living in less developed areas.</p> <p><b>Beneficiary organisation:</b> Local councils and provincial governments (<i>diputaciones</i>) for the implementation in villages with less than 20,000 inhabitants. Also, NGOs working in these areas.</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 2017- ongoing</p> <p><b>Partner organisations:</b> The ERACIS is a regional strategy led by the regional ministry for Equality, Social Policies and Conciliation. It partners with several departments of the regional and local government, including regional PES, housing, healthcare and education departments; and with NGOs.</p> <p><b>Participants:</b> the project focuses on 99 especially vulnerable areas with a population of 914,103 inhabitants, distributed across 61 municipalities.</p> <p><b>Total allocated funding:</b> Around 149 million EUR (80% ESF contribution and 20% Andalusia regional government).</p>
<p>Intervention logic of the project/operation</p>	



### Rationale

The rationale of ERACIS is to intensify and coordinate existing services for social inclusion delivered by regional government, local councils and NGOs and to steer the launch of local strategies designed on a participatory basis in a number of particularly deprived areas in terms of social needs (including social, health, education, employment needs) and also in terms of urban deterioration and poor transport infrastructures and urban equipment. These areas are also characterised by limited and low-quality public services.

ERACIS tackles the complexity of social exclusion in these areas not only as an individual's issue but also as a collective one, acknowledging the influence of the deprivation of the areas on the vulnerability of the individuals: the areas need to be improved for the situation of its inhabitants to be improved.

The project strengthens the capacity of social services and NGOs to deliver employment itineraries and support to vulnerable people to access to normalized public services, such as public employment, health or education services. ERACIS aims to improving access of persons in vulnerable conditions to resources that guarantee decent living conditions, to creating environments that contribute to health, to improving the school life and education quality, to facilitating full integration into society, personal autonomy and the provision of channels for community participation.

ERACIS utilizes ESF funds to insert staff members into social service institutions that support people at risk of poverty and exclusion.

### Objectives

The general objective is the social and labour inclusion of the inhabitants of areas in highly vulnerable conditions of Andalusia. For this, it aims to:

Establish an institutional coordination mechanism with different regional and local administrations, along with NGOs, that work for social inclusion of the area (not only of the individuals), developing and implementing local plans adapted to the socioeconomic situation in each area;

Provide assistance to participants to gain access to social protection systems: education, health, social services, housing and employment. This is to be done under the leadership of welfare departments in a holistic and comprehensive approach

	<p>Provide customized employment pathways for participants.</p>
Relevance and coherence/synergies	<p>The project responds to situations of severe poverty, social exclusion and its concentration in highly vulnerable areas, which require more intense, coordinated and adequate support. The project identified 187 vulnerable areas in Andalusia, with a population of 1,409,215 persons and focuses on responding to the needs of 99 especially vulnerable areas with a population of 914,103 inhabitants, distributed across 61 municipalities.</p> <p>ERACIS relies on participatory mechanisms and aims to strengthen the cooperation of regional and local policies and services relevant for social inclusion, including active labour market policies, housing, education and security policies. The strategy is thus in line with the regional strategies on social inclusion and it is fully aligned with the EU's emphasis on improved coordination, especially between employment and social services, as a key to effective delivery of active inclusion policies.</p>
Outputs	<p>The strategy has been partially implemented. The degree of implementation varies across Andalusia, as it relies on local councils.</p> <p>A call of subsidies for local councils of the 99 target areas has been issued by the regional government of Andalusia. 48 plans have been designed and approved, some of them covering various zones (neighbourhoods), particularly in large cities such as Sevilla; around 921 social services workers have been hired by local councils (data updated to 2019-2020).</p> <p>A call of subsidies to hire support and accompaniment services by social entities (NGOs) has been published by the regional government of Andalusia, expected to be resolved in 2020.</p> <p>Social services have begun the provision of customised employment pathways and 1,400 pathways are in operation (one pathway per participant). It is expected that the strategy will achieve 27,000 participants by its completion.</p>
Delivery method and partnerships	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– While in Spain regional and local authorities are responsible for delivering social services, in ERACIS, the social services are responsible for the delivery of customized employment pathways in these areas. For this, social services have defined, within ERACIS, the profile of the potential recipients of these new employment services, which do not include the elderly, the children nor other dependents. In the area of Polígono Sur in Sevilla, the target group of the personalized employment pathways of ERACIS corresponds to 30% of the population.</li><li>– Social services have increased their staff through ERACIS funding, to deliver new employment services and shorten waiting lists of applicants. This new staff contributes also to improve the capacity to support the community.</li><li>– Social services take also the lead in the coordination across service departments with key competences in the field social inclusion, such as ALMP, housing, healthcare or education.</li></ul>

The coordination of the ERACIS relies on several coordination bodies.

- At the regional level, efforts exist to establish a social inclusion network that bridges the gap between municipalities, the regional government, social partners, private entities and NGOs.
- At the local level, the municipalities set up commissions (*comisiones de impulso comunitario*) with the participation of municipalities and private entities for the purposes of evaluating and monitoring the strategy. A common set of guidelines and working principles are being developed and applied to all of the commissions in different municipalities. These commissions would have different bodies working on different dimensions of the strategy as to job training, social inclusion and labour market insertion, housing, habitat improvement and coexistence (see story box below) or security.
- NGOs and private entities are other key partners involved in ERACIS. NGOs contribute greatly to the multidisciplinary approach that the ERACIS aims to nurture. NGOs participated in the design of the local plans in their respective areas.

Outreach activities are carried out in several ways.

- social service departments are responsible for outreach and for recruiting participants. NGOs with a good rapport amongst target groups play a significant complementary role in this process.
- In addition, outreach activities involve cooperation with schools, where families, as potential participants, are identified and referred to social services offices.<sup>702</sup>
- In rural areas, regular meetings are held to disseminate new activities, including public advertisement, the use of social media, local newspapers and local council webpages.<sup>703</sup>

Regarding monitoring, the regional government of Andalusia holds meetings with local entities to monitor the implementation of the strategy and to identify its strengths and weaknesses.<sup>704</sup>

- Furthermore, it is planned to establish a registry of participants which will be overseen by the social services department. The central IT system that is used for the ERACIS strategy compiles the data requested by the ESF.<sup>705</sup>
- In this regard, the two regulatory bases published on May 2018 and December of 2018 state that local entities must provide data on participants to the regional government of Andalusia and beneficiary

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<sup>702</sup> Interview with representative of Polígono Sur in Sevilla.

<sup>703</sup> Interview with representative of Villanueva del Arzobispo.

<sup>704</sup> Interview with representative of the municipality of Villanueva del Arzobispo

<sup>705</sup> Interview with representative of the municipality of Sevilla.

organisations must collect data on the actions delivered to each participant and enter it into the IT tool provided by the regional government.

*The local commission for habitat improvement and coexistence in Polígono Sur in Sevilla aims to promote a responsible use of public space, in face of a very deficient situation, since the local council had abandoned the public space. "When a streetlight was broken it was not repaired, there were no traffic lights, many locals did not comply with civic rules and nothing happened. So, our aim was to motivate the local council to act and to locals to respect public spaces. We have developed civic courses developed by NGOs aimed at education in the streets and in parks to improve respect for local spaces and cohabitation between ethnic groups." (Polígono Sur).*

#### Funding and efficiency

##### Funding

- ERACIS funding amounts to 149 million EUR (80% ESF contribution and 20% from Andalusia regional government).
- In 2018, two calls for the design and execution of local action plans were approved.
- The first call for subsidies was published in May 2018 and focused on funding the design and implementation of local plans, which mainly entailed the employment of social workers, social educators, psychologists and specialised personal in tutoring and mediation by local councils.
- The two regulatory bases , published in December 2018, focused on activities carried out by NGOs in the implementation and development of Local Plans of municipalities. The aim of these subsidies is to work with people living in vulnerable areas so that can access different public social protection services, especially education, employment, housing and health.
- Role of ESF funding for the project implementation.
- The contribution of the ESF funding to ERACIS is significant and projects funded by the ESF tend to have long-term impact.
- Yet, more resources are needed for investment in urban mobility, parks, public spaces and facilities to achieve the intended transformative outcomes. Thus, it would be very effective to combine ESF funds with ERDF funds.

##### Efficiency

- It is not possible to assess the efficiency of ERACIS, since its implementation is still at an early stage and it has not produced significant outcomes on participants yet. The novelty of ERACIS' multi-disciplinary approach in Andalusia makes it even more difficult to assess its efficiency, as it is not possible to compare it with similar projects.

#### Effectiveness

- The design of the ERACIS was accomplished in 2018, including the diagnosis and identification of 187 areas with high vulnerability.

- Similar to efficiency discussion, it is not possible to assess the effectiveness of ERACIS as there have not been outcomes on participants yet.

Outcomes expected:

- It is estimated that the 48% of women participants and the 50% of men participants will get a job.
- Improvement of the performance of regional and local authorities through shift in the way social services work towards an active inclusion perspective and consideration of employment as a goal of social work.

Challenges and success factors

Challenges

- The implementation of the strategy requires considerable time, which is difficult given the rigid ESF deadlines.
- It has been challenging to launch all the components of the strategy simultaneously and to standardize the new intervention model. Preparatory tasks have not involved sufficient support to regional, local, provincial stakeholders, which could hinder the success of the strategy implementation in the future.
- It is quite a challenge to transform the social services' staff towards a focus on active social inclusion and on employability, which was hitherto not their emphasis. Social workers do not have the knowledge and skills of PES.
- Establishing effective coordination mechanisms between the regional public employment service and local social services departments is difficult.
- Labour contracts with social workers hired within ERACIS are temporary (three years maximum), which contributes to a loss of institutional expertise.
- ERACIS requires an information and coordination system supported by an adequate IT tool, while ERACIS does not have resources planned for this and the existing IT tool is not adequate. Moreover, NGOs do not have access to it, which involves an administrative burden for social services teams. Besides, social services, regional PES and the municipalities would have their own IT systems. This fragmentation undermines coordination and efficiency.
- ERACIS is more challenging to implement in urban areas than in rural areas, as the organization of the comprehensive, multidimension and multi-stakeholder intervention involves more agents in an urban context.

Success factors

- The project combines social and structural approaches (the focus on less developed areas and on community work) with an individual one (customized itineraries). The project has therefore the potential to develop synergies among different social inclusion policies.

- The inhabitants of the target areas, the municipalities and the education and public housing departments are committed with the implementation of the strategy.
- New employees tasked with the implementation of the project often have professional experience in different sectors, not only in social services, which enhances the multidisciplinary nature of the strategy.

EU Added value ERACIS would not have been launched without ESF funding; without it, the launching and progress towards a comprehensive reform of the social policies in less developed areas of Andalusia would not have taken place.

Elements forThe ERACIS strategy addressed the needs of regions, communities and transferabilityindividuals in a mutually reinforcing manner. This holistic approach can be / goodtransferred to less developed areas in other regions and Member States. practices

## **8 Hungary – Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014HU05M20P001)**

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the Human Resources Development Operational Programme in Hungary (2014HU05M20P001) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through the end of 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared drawing on desk research and interviews with national stakeholders.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'Supporting social inclusion co-operation'. The selected project was classified as a type 6 operation by the evaluation study. Type 6 operations are actions influencing attitudes and systems (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socio-economic indicators of the context, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU-added value of the OP and selected project as well as challenges and lessons learned.

Success rates were estimated as the number of results generated as a share of the relevant number of participations. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation. The case study also presents estimates for the cost-per-participation. Annex 5 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation.



Section	Description																														
	<p>Furthermore, some of these programmes are designed to alleviate the lack of access to (social, healthcare) services in these settlements. Finally, there are some activities planned for helping the education of youth from Roma backgrounds (at the tertiary level).</p> <p>Key organisations involved in the implementation and delivery of OP are the Directorate-General for Social Inclusion, along with the local (municipal) governments, while they also include NGOs (with many of these being the charity organisations of various Christian churches).</p> <p>The priorities did not change between the planning and implementation of the programme.</p>																														
Target groups	<p>The OP's target groups include: people at risk of poverty and exclusion, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, people living in less developed areas and low-income households.</p> <p>Approximately 40% of the participants have low education, and a significant proportion are ethnic minorities. Moreover, 70% of participants are from rural areas.</p>																														
Operations	The OP included 2,250 operations under TO9.																														
Partnerships	<p>The consultation of the operational program brought together governmental organizations, civil society as well as businesses. The partnerships cover central and regional actors with an interest in the development of social, economic and environmental structures. Thus key stakeholders are local authorities, governmental and professional organizations, NGOs (in particular those focusing on environmental issues, equal opportunities, social, economic development), chambers of commerce and economic operators, universities and research institutes, churches. However, in many cases, local (independent) actors feel that they cannot have a substantive input into how the OP was developed and implemented.</p>																														
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<sup>706</sup> Annual implementation report - last extraction 12/07/2019

Section	Description																																													
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	The share of participations from rural areas (81%) was high. Migrants, individuals with foreign background or members of minorities including marginalised communities such as the Roma account for 13% of participants. Roma are presumed to be the dominant group within this category. The share of participations of persons with disabilities (16%) was also substantial. The share of female participants (39%) was below the target of at least 50% <sup>707</sup> ( <i>not shown in the table above</i> ).																																													
	With 16,106 recorded participations so far, the 2023 target of 12,000 for CO04 was already nearly achieved. The OP specified three specific output indicators: the number of projects (excluding projects targeted at Roma), the number of economically active participants and the number of inactive participants not in education or training with																																													

<sup>707</sup> Operational programme - last extraction 01/07/2019, p.318

Section	Description
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education up to ISCED 1-2 or less. The 2023 targets for these indicators were respectively achieved to 436%, 58% and 92%.

A total of 9,908 immediate results (CR01-CR04) and 4,976 long-term results (CR06+CR07) were achieved. Two specific result indicators, the share of completed participations among economically inactive, not in education or training and the share of projects which completed the entire development cycle were defined. The 2023 target of 35% for the first indicator is currently overachieved (72.82%). The target for the second indicator is 50%, but none of the projects so far has completed the full cycle (0%).

- Common Result Indicators:

Code	Indicator	Number
CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	255
CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	580
CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	4,544
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	4,529
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	4,725
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	2,498
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	2,478
CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	513
CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	1,134

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Assessment of the OP

**Effectiveness:** The actions under the OP are complex and involve a long-term implementation period. Two-thirds of the implementation process has been completed, but the effectiveness of the activities has not yet been measured. The success rates for the OP are so far below the EU average. (Pls note that common results indicators are only reported for less than half of participants.)

Projects which try to address the social exclusion of Roma by providing them with complementary services throughout their childhood and youth have been deemed effective by both experts in the Ministry and independent researchers.

Section	Description
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A few of the projects which were tested for a longer period of time (more budget cycles) and were effective have successfully been upscaled and now operate at the national level.

Code	Indicator	Success rate for OP
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving (type 1 operation)	14%
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving (type 4 operation)	1%
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving (type 1 operation)	7%
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving (type 1 operation)	11%

**Efficiency:** At this stage, cost-effectiveness has not yet been measured. The cost per participation for operations under IP9i was estimated at €1,908. This amount is higher than the estimated EU average of €1,488. Similarly, the cost per participation for operations under IP9ii was estimated at €1,236, compared to the EU estimate of €816.

**Relevance and coherence:** One of the most prioritized target groups under the OP are children living in poverty. Children’s residences and afterschool activities are examples of programmes that are effective in reaching this target group. The ESF complements the existing national strategies and contributes to the achievement of domestic goals.

**Added value:** ESF is clearly increasing investment into social inclusion. Much of what is being done in terms of social inclusion (besides basic social work etc.) is financed from ESF. The provision of support to people at risk of poverty and exclusion depends greatly on ESF funding.

Challenges and lessons learned

- Delayed implementation of ERDF financed investments and the burdensome funding application process
- Insufficient numbers of trained social workers

Section	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The lack of local co-operations</li> </ul>

### In-depth analysis of selected project: Supporting social inclusion co-operation (Felzárkózási együttműködések támogatása)

Section	Description
Basic Facts Box	<p><b>OP:</b> Human Resources Development OP, Competitive Central Hungary OP (and partially Territorial OP); IP9ii</p> <p><b>Project Name:</b> Supporting social inclusion co-operation (Felzárkózási együttműködések támogatása).</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> The project provides professional and methodological support to the territorial social inclusion programs.</p> <p><b>Beneficiary organisation:</b> Directorate-General for Social Inclusion (TEF - Szociális és Gyermekvédelmi Főigazgatóság Társadalmi Esélyteremtési Főigazgatóság).</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, Hungarian Association on Addictions</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 01 November 2016 - 31 October 2020 (on-going project)</p> <p><b>Target groups:</b> People at risk of social exclusion, particularly Roma people</p> <p><b>Participants:</b> 123 settlements were supported, 697 social workers were trained; 100 social inclusion trainees were supported; 146 Roma women participated in focus groups.</p> <p><b>Funds allocated:</b> 2.2 billion HUF (77% ESF contribution)</p>
Intervention logic of the project/operation	



## Rationale

In the 2014-2020 programming period, programs aimed at people living in segregated areas (hereinafter settlement programs) are supported by three operational programs (which differ by region/settlement size):

- Territorial OP (TOP) in urban settlements and their outskirts in convergence regions
- Competitive Central Hungary OP (VEKOP) in urban and rural settlements in Central Hungary (competitiveness region)
- Human Resources Development OP (EFOP) in rural settlements in convergence regions.

In the previous programming period, projects for segregated areas existed, that illustrated the importance of social work and sensitisation initiatives. The previous programming period also illustrated the need to train more social workers.

Intensive supportive social work is needed to help the social integration of Roma living in segregated settlements, the large majority of these settlement being in rural areas. In these settlements, there is often a lack of access to effective (basic) social and health services, and the intensive social work is to enable vulnerable persons better access to these, by assisting to organise occasional local services (such as health check-ups) and by advising clients on accessing these services.

Sensitisation for local stakeholders is needed to start social dialogue, or in other words, for local inhabitants (including local governments) to accept the desegregation projects. Furthermore, sensitisation is also needed to prevent conflicts both within the supported communities and between the vulnerable and the majority populations.

This project provides professional support for these territorial programs (especially settlement programmes) at the national level. The project was created to ensure the uniform quality of interventions aimed at segregated settlements around the country. This is needed since individuals working in

Objectives	<p>the social integration projects might not have the capability to work in segregated settlements. Since the programmes this project supports reached over 100 segregated settlements, they required the involvement of a large number of social integration personnel who did not have specific training/experience in working in segregated settlements.</p> <p>Finally, conducting research on recent mental health related developments in segregated settlements can provide a better understanding of the issues faced by social integration personnel.</p> <p>The project aims to contribute to the social inclusion of vulnerable communities in segregated housing, by supporting their educational, social, economic, labor market, integration. This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• providing services (in the form of training, mentoring etc.) to social integration personnel that implement the projects in segregated areas.</li><li>• uniform implementation of the various local and regional programs and mutual learning and exchange of experience between the programs ("networking");</li><li>• encouraging the formation of local social inclusion networks by having regular meeting between local stakeholders</li><li>• strengthening the active role of Roma women, professional encouragement of their communities in establishing NGOs</li><li>• The overarching aim of this project is to make local stakeholders and social integration personnel capable of running a large-scale (compared to the previous programming period) social integration project.</li><li>• Given that effective integration can only happen if there is (effective) local dialogue between service providers, one of the objectives of the OP was to facilitate the establishment of local (informal) networks. These networks can in the longer run contribute to better use of local (and ESF) resources which will contribute to sustainability.</li><li>• Recruiting persons who come from segregated settlements (the local Roma experts), and who understand vulnerable persons was intended to contribute to a smoother communication as well as to having personnel communicate the needs of the ultimate beneficiaries.</li><li>• The project includes surveys on addiction in the settlements as there has been a dramatic increase of the use of cheap drugs in some Roma-populated segregated communities, as well as research on 'wild settlements'.</li></ul>
Relevance and coherence/ synergies	<p>The project aligns with the National Strategy on Social Inclusion (2014) and its action plan (2015-2017).</p> <p>The project supports the flagship projects for social inclusion of vulnerable persons (Roma) living in segregated settlements.</p> <p>The segregated settlements were identified based on data from the Central Statistical Office (from 2013), and thus all municipalities which had at least</p>

one segregated settlement could in principle participate in the complex local projects. The Complex Settlement Programme includes social and community development, education, health, training and employment elements to help alleviate disadvantages, and also improves the housing conditions of those living in segregated areas

**Story box**

*When we were in the planning phase of the complex programmes, we could not yet build on other social inclusion projects, but now that the 'Sure Start' early development programme and the after school support programme for children (the 'Tanoda' programme) has been strengthened, we can build on complementarities. This will support the forming of local networks which will ultimately raise effectiveness. (Social Inclusion Department, Ministry of Interior)*

Outputs

100 social inclusion trainees were recruited from higher education institutions (from BA to PhD students). They were trained in three rounds of workshops at the end of 2017, beginning of 2018.

50 local Roma experts from the segregated areas were trained to facilitate communication between the implementing municipalities and the people living in segregated areas.

Focus groups with Roma women about their role in the community: in December 2017, 8 workshops took place in 17 municipalities with 80 participants (Roma women); in March 2018 3 workshops took place in 18 municipalities with 66 participants (vulnerable Roma women). Focus group interviews were also conducted with 22 Roma experts and trainees in three municipalities (Barcs, Miskolc, Budapest). It is worth noting that the number of focus groups conducted is low relative to the number of settlements supported (as well as relative to the size of the Roma population in Hungary).

The Charity Service of the Order of Malta organized a training (30 hours) for social workers working in urban areas. Overall, 239 participants also successfully completed the training.

In total, 697 social integration personnel benefited from the project, though training/mentoring.

The Hungarian Association on Addictions carried out a research project on the use of substances in segregated settlements and disseminated the results in regional workshops.

The Directorate-General for Social Inclusion collected information on the living conditions of persons living in segregated settlements and linked it to data on local conditions from existing databases.

The Directorate-General for Social Inclusion collects 250 'good practices' based on local experiences.

Delivery method and partnerships

The State Secretariat for Social Inclusion of the Ministry of Human Capacities is responsible for the project and planning.

The selected project was implemented through various partnerships:

- Training and sensitisation was carried out by the Directorate for Social Inclusion (TEF) and the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta (HCSOM).
- Research activities were delivered through a partnership between the Hungarian Association on Addictions and the Directorate for Social Inclusion.

Directorate General for Social Opportunity (under the Directorate-General for Social Affairs and Child Protection) was involved from the planning phase of the project to its implementation.

- The DG for Social Opportunity contacted the municipalities which have segregated areas and which were potential beneficiaries of the settlement programme.
- Once the 123 municipalities were chosen, there was training held for those trainers who would later train the social workers.
- Territorial coordinators were appointed in all the regions to coordinate the activities, networking of the beneficiaries (municipalities).
- Expert forums are regularly held on regional level where the beneficiaries can discuss any current issues.
- Furthermore, also other supportive experts were trained: local Roma experts, as well as university students as social inclusion trainees.
- The DG for Social Opportunity and the Hungarian Charity Order of Malta was involved in drafting the training material for the social workers, and these two organisations jointly organised the training.
- Finally, several research projects were carried out by the Hungarian Association on Addictions.
- The project and its activities are disseminated via a magazine published twice a year by the DG for Social Opportunity.

Partners:

- Local municipalities; local NGOs; social services; health services; churches and charities.
- Regional coordinators regularly collect information for monitoring purposes.

Funding and efficiency

The funding devoted to the project was not fully sufficient, as with higher funding (and by offering higher pay), a larger number of social inclusion personnel could have been recruited.

The project would not have been implemented without ESF funding on such a large scale, smaller pilots would likely have been conducted.

Effectiveness

Relevant professional support (and training) for a large number of social inclusion experts has been ensured.

A couple of highly relevant research project have been conducted.

The project encouraged the creation of local networks of stakeholders who support the social integration of persons living in segregated settlements.

Significant improvements in the social integration of vulnerable people cannot be achieved in the short-term, but relevant first steps have been taken.

While these projects provide some basic services (occasional counselling, health check-ups etc.), they cannot compensate for the severe lack of basic services in remote segregated settlements.

The DG for Social Inclusion conducted studies on the living conditions of persons in segregated settlements which will form the basis of an evaluation which is planned for the end of the project.

#### **Story box**

*My colleagues were happy with the training provided, and they found it particularly beneficial that they had one day on-site in a segregated settlement with the HCSOM. Apparently, there is going to be a follow-up to the training this Spring [this was planned for 2020, but cancelled due to COVID19], which is much needed. With regular local meetings, the social inclusion personnel are getting up to speed. I just wish we got more regular and more substantive support from the regional co-ordinators, they do not seem to have time for much more than collecting information on indicators.  
(Beneficiary)  
)*

#### Challenges and success factors

##### Challenges

- Broadly speaking, the policies of the Hungarian government do not specifically address the Roma population's vulnerable position (including very low levels of monetary social assistance), hence, the programme can only lead to the social inclusion of a small minority (albeit those in the most deprived conditions) of the vulnerable Roma population.
- Lack of basic services in remote rural areas, which is partly due to a failure by the government to heavily invest into educational/health/social services in deprived municipalities.
- Defining the criteria and scope of 'segregated settlements'. In some circumstances, non-segregated areas of some municipalities are equally vulnerable.
- Beneficiaries often lack the capacity to deal with all the administrative tasks related to such large-scale projects. This leads to severe delays in the implementation of the project.
- Clearly, much depends on the attitude of local governments (of majority local populations) towards social inclusion. On the one hand, the sensitisation did not seem sufficient to fundamentally alter this. On the other hand, it seems that selection into the programme in some cases was more dependent on political loyalties rather than commitment to social inclusion.
- Since infrastructural developments in the settlements (building of social housing) and complex social work are to be complementary to each-other,

the delay in the implementation of the infrastructural part limited the effectiveness of the social part.

- The project requires many social integration personnel (social workers). This challenge was addressed by lessening the educational requirements of personnel; increasing the maximum client to social worker ratio. However, these changes have led to social workers feeling overburdened and limiting their capacity to support vulnerable people in a sufficient and personalized way.
- The fact that the new organisation co-ordinating the implementation of the project was formally established as a separate entity only on the 1st of August 2019 lead to some delays. Despite the fact that core staff was basically the same as when they were working within the Hungarian Directorate-General for Social Affairs and Child Protection, they lack support staff.

#### Lessons learned

- Research findings need to be disseminated in a more practice-oriented way to truly lead to changes in everyday social work.
- If social integration personnel is to include persons with no formal training in social work, they need more regular feedback and support (especially for those working in more remote areas).
- The training material for social inclusion personnel needs to be modularised, with different blocks for those working in towns/cities; and one for those working in more remote/rural environments.
- The programme clearly demonstrated for Hungarian authorities the benefit from an integrated approach to social integration of vulnerable persons in segregated settlements. New national projects build on this knowledge, albeit without large infrastructural investments (not using ESF, which in some cases is seen a 'burden' due to administration requirements).
- In a broader perspective, the project also highlights that enabling vulnerable persons in segregated areas to social inclusion needs a more ambitious and concerted effort. This needs to include large-scale human capacity building (in order to have more social workers and other service providers) and more substantial investment into infrastructure.

#### Success factors

- Well-thought and thorough design, building on previous experiences (which stem from the similar project in segregated areas from the previous programming period).
- Training programme for social inclusion experts was certified, thus social workers use their training credits to take part, and as a result, high take-up of training.

EU  
value

Added

This project is of moderate importance in terms of social integration of persons living in segregated settlements, and would not have been possible in the absence of ESF.

This project enabled social integration personnel (social workers etc.) to work in segregated communities and to raise their awareness around issues experienced by Roma persons.

This type of project was an inspiration for national social integration projects, which started in 2019. In some ways, they are a continuation of the ESF funded projects.

Elements for  
transferability  
/ good  
practices

The delivery of interventions for people living in segregated settlements, including additional training, sensitisation and research, as well as continuous support to personnel are estimable. Furthermore, the recruitment of persons from vulnerable groups to advise the work of social workers is innovative.

This approach is clearly relevant to other countries (other vulnerable groups) where segregation is a major issue.

The above good practices notwithstanding, the project (and the programmes it aims to support) were only moderately successful. Nevertheless, the project (and its pitfalls) deserve attention.

## **9 Italy – Social Inclusion National Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014IT05SFOP001)**

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the National Operational Programme in Italy (2014IT05FOP001). The Operational Programme (OP) covers the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through the end of 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared drawing on desk research and five interviews with national stakeholders.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'Services to tackle extreme social exclusion amongst adults'. The selected project was classified as a type 4 operation by the evaluation study. Type 4 operations focus on access to services (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socio-economic indicators of the context, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU-added value of the OP and selected project as well as challenges and lessons learnt.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach.

### **OP Case study**

Section	Description
Name of OP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>OP:</b> Social Inclusion National Operational Programme ESF 2014-2020 (2014IT05SFOP001)</li> <li>• <b>Regions covered by the OP:</b> more developed (Emilia-Romagna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardy, Marche, Piedmont, South Tyrol, Trentino, Tuscany, Umbria, Valle d'Aosta, Veneto), transition (Abruzzo, Molise, Sardinia), less developed (Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Apulia, Sicily)</li> <li>• <b>Priority Axes:</b> Axis I: (TO9) Support to people in poverty and extremely marginalised - More developed regions; Axis II: (TO9) Support to people in poverty and extremely marginalised - Least developed regions and transition regions; Axis III: Models and systems for social intervention; Axis IV: Administrative Capacity (TO11); Axis V: Technical Assistance (TO12)</li> <li>• <b>IPs covering TO9:</b> Axis I and II: IP9i and IP9ii; Axis III: IP9i, IP9ii, IP9iv</li> <li>• <b>Type of OP:</b> Mono fund (ESF)</li> </ul>
OP implementation context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2014, 28.3% of the total population in Italy was at risk of poverty or social exclusion, this proportion slightly decreased to 27.3% in 2018.</li> <li>• The highest rates of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion are in the South and Islands.</li> <li>• In 2014, 11.6% of the Italian population was in a condition of severe material deprivation, this went slightly down to 8.5% in 2018.</li> <li>• In 2016 Italy introduced the antipoverty measure SIA (<i>Sostegno per l'Inclusione Attiva</i> - Support to Active Inclusion)<sup>708</sup>, in 2018 SIA was replaced by the REI (<i>Reddito di Inclusione</i> - 'Inclusion Income'), and in 2019 the Italian government introduced the RdC (<i>Reddito di Cittadinanza</i>, the 'Citizenship Income')<sup>709</sup> which replaced the previous REI.</li> <li>• <b>Managing Authority:</b> The Managing Authority is the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Directorate-General for Combating Poverty and Social Planning. Activities under TO9 are implemented through territorial networks of public administrations and other stakeholders (<i>Ambiti Territoriali</i>), Intermediate Bodies (which include DG Immigration, National Anti-Racial Discrimination Office (<i>Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali</i> - UNAR), other stakeholders such as family centres, anti-violence centres, social enterprises, third sector, non-profit companies, universities.</li> </ul>
ESF and actions	<p>PrioritiesThe main priorities and actions of TO9 operations under this OP were:</p>

<sup>708</sup> <https://www.inps.it/nuovoportaleinps/default.aspx?itemdir=50248>

<sup>709</sup> Law Decree No. 4/2019  
<https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/01/28/19G00008/sg>

Section	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type 1: Actions with an employment objective: support to the implementation of the national antipoverty strategy;</li> <li>• Type 3: basic school education (mainly support to Roma people);</li> <li>• Type 4: Access to services: support to people in condition of housing exclusion; support to the implementation of the national antipoverty strategy; and</li> <li>• Type 6: Actions influencing attitudes and systems: set up working groups and task forces to support beneficiaries; roll out of an online national systems for the management, monitoring and audit of the activities implemented, setting the partnership with the World Bank to provide technical assistance to national and local administrations, implement of information services to disseminate information on the national antipoverty measure.</li> </ul> <p>Between the planning and the implementation stage more funds were received and allocated to address the migration crisis.</p>
Target groups	<p>The OP under TO9 targeted primarily long term unemployed, recipients of minimum income schemes, Roma or other minorities, other groups (e.g. ex-offender, suffering from housing exclusion, substance abusers), migrants.</p> <p>There is not overlap between TO8 and TO9 as TO9 covers people in situations of social exclusion who are supported by and recruited through social services.<sup>710</sup></p>
Operations	<p>Total number of operations under TO9: 763</p> <p>Operations under this OP included actions to support access to services of people in conditions of extreme vulnerability and household exclusion, including people in extreme poverty, with addictions and people with disabilities.</p>
Partnerships	<p>Activities under TO9 are implemented through several partnerships and collaborations between social services, care services and social enterprises.</p> <p>Partnerships in place include for example beneficiary municipalities (such as Bologna and Naples). To implement the projects, municipalities worked together with local consortia of NGOs, social cooperatives and enterprises e.g. L'Arcolaio Consortium (encompassing five cooperatives: Piazza Grande, Arca di Noe', La Piccola Carovana, Società Dolce, Open Group ) and Indaco Consortium (encompassing seven cooperatives: Società Dolce, Open Group, Iris, Il Martin Pescatore, Arcobaleno, Asscoop, Piazza Grande). See below in section 2 for more detail.</p>
Funding of the OP	<p><b>Financial indicators by IP</b> (sum of EU and National contributions)</p>

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<sup>710</sup> Interview with Managing Authority

Section		Description			
IP	Planned (a)	Allocated (b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)	
<b>IP9i</b>	1,121,873,071	578,795,575	79,633,608	52%	
<b>IP9ii</b>	56,563,657	40,802,245	216,177	72%	
<b>IP9iv</b>	7,097,845	1,299,005	974,564	18%	
<b>Total</b>	1,185,534,573	620,896,824	80,824,349	52%	

*Source:* SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. *Note:* Planned amounts refer to the whole 2014-2020 programming period while allocated and spent amounts refer to the period up to the end of the 2018 calendar year (31 December 2018).

Co-financing rate: 50% for operations in more developed regions, almost 60% in transition regions and almost 80% in less developed regions.

Changes to OP: The revision to the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020 has increased, in 2017, the overall Italian budget to support actions for reception and assistance of migrants, additional resources of 56,000,000 have been allocated to the NOP (National Operational Programme) Social Inclusion.

Other EU funds (EURES, Erasmus+, EaSI, ERDF, FEAD, AMIF, EMFF, EGF, etc.) are used to support actions under the OP.

Use of national funds: The NOP supports the implementation of the national anti-poverty strategy through the use of ESF funds, the national Poverty Fund (*Fondo Povertà*) introduced in 2016 and the 2019 Citizenship Income fund introduced by the Citizenship Income (*Reddito di Cittadinanza*).

Outputs and Total recorded participations for TO9: 460,094

results (2014/2018)

Common output indicators: The largest number of participations were recorded for participants who lived in jobless households; people with low educational level; and unemployed, including long term unemployed.

The OP also recorded specific output indicators. The estimated achievement rate (the recorded values in relation to targets set for the end of the programming period) was 15%. This related particularly to the average value (between less developed, transition and more developed regions) of programme specific output indicators such as 'third country migrants involved in socio-labour inclusion paths' (Persone di paese terzi coinvolte in percorsi di inserimento socio lavorativo o raggiunti da azioni programmate'), 'guidelines, prototypes and models' (Linee guida, prototipi e modelli).

Code	Indicator	Number
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Section	Description		
	CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	260,901
	CO02	Long-term unemployed	-
	CO03	Inactive	199,193
	CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	-
	CO05	Employed, including self-employed	-
	CO07	Above 54 years of age	90,188
	CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	-
	CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	328,643
	CO12	Participants who live in jobless households	460,094
	CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	-
	CO16	Participants with disabilities	-
	CO17	Other disadvantaged	44,790
	CO18	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	-
	CO19	From rural areas	-
	CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	-

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Common results were not recorded.

Assessment of **Effectiveness**: an evaluation of the effectiveness of the operations has not been carried out yet. The intermediate objectives set in the performance framework were achieved for the more developed regions but not for the less developed.<sup>711</sup> The OP supported the implementation of the antipoverty strategy at national level and improved the level and the

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[http://poninclusionelavoro.gov.it/programma/Documents/Valutazione\\_PF\\_PON\\_Inclusionefinale\\_v1%202.pdf](http://poninclusionelavoro.gov.it/programma/Documents/Valutazione_PF_PON_Inclusionefinale_v1%202.pdf)

Section	Description
	<p>quality of access to services for people in condition of extreme vulnerability and housing exclusion following the 'housing first model'. The analysis of the in-depth project showed that the actions implemented were successful under several aspects. For example, the outreach activities with mobile units and mailbox open to citizens were particularly successful in identifying and reaching those most in need in the city. People assisted improved their basic self-care skills, confidence and self-esteem. The health of participants improved and access to emergency services from people in housing exclusion decreased.</p> <p><b>Efficiency:</b> There is no information available to measuring the cost-effectiveness of the measures.<sup>712</sup> From the analysis of the in-depth project it emerged that there has not been an assessment of the cost-efficiency of the project, all interviewees consulted reported that there were no inefficiencies in the implementation of the activities. The funding was sufficient to carry out the interventions, however the use of FEAD funding was not flexible enough to adapt to the needs of the project.</p> <p><b>Relevance and coherence:</b> The OP and its operations was relevant and coherent with the national antipoverty strategy, the Italian National Reform Plan (PNR) and the EU 2020 strategy. The OP was flexible and allowed making changes to adapt to the inflow of migrants and changes to the national antipoverty strategy</p> <p><b>Added value:</b> The TO9 supported the implementation of the national anti-poverty strategy by providing comprehensive and tailored services that could have not been provided otherwise such as going beyond emergency support services for people in homelessness or support to LGBT groups facing housing exclusion. Therefore, it boosted national measures and allowed the implementation of innovative services.</p>
Challenges and lessons learnt	<p>The main reasons for delays in the implementation of the OP relate to the novelty of the programme, strictly linked to new policy strategies and approaches to anti-poverty measures. This has required a long learning process for beneficiaries.</p> <p>The Ministry of Labour and Social Policies also underwent a long process of negotiations and coordination of different actors and administrations at multiple levels.<sup>713</sup></p> <p>The multiple changes in the national antipoverty strategies and relevant legislations had a significant negative impact on the implementation of actions in Priority Axes 1 and 2. One example is the thresholds to define the potential target groups. A specific issue related to this was the increase in the number of people considered 'at risk of poverty', due to the changes in rules and thresholds between SIA and REI.</p>

<sup>712</sup> In the cost-benefit-analysis this OP was a outlier

<sup>713</sup> AIR 2019 page 78, interview with Managing Authority

Section	Description
	<p>Delays were also linked to the difficulties of territorial districts (<i>Ambiti Territoriali</i>) to set up local networks, financial issues (bankruptcy) in many municipalities, lack of personnel in local authorities, lack of expertise of beneficiaries in designing, implementing and managing European projects (with the additional complexity of TO9 integrated measures).<sup>714</sup></p> <p>To support beneficiaries in the different phases of the implementation of the programme, the Managing Authority has established three Regional Task Forces of Technical Assistance and a Helpdesk dedicated to support beneficiaries in relation to the use of the centralised IT system (<i>SIGMA Inclusion</i>).</p> <p>As a lesson learnt, for the next programming period, when the beneficiaries of the programme are public bodies with little experience of ESF programmes as beneficiaries (such as in this case social services of municipalities compared with employment services with more experience in the use of ESF for employment or training related projects), there is a need to invest more resources in the administrative capacity and technical skills of these beneficiaries. To this end, it is important to plan and implement ad-hoc technical support and training for local authorities and beneficiaries in general in the early stages of the programme.<sup>715</sup></p>

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<sup>714</sup> Interview with Managing Authority

<sup>715</sup> Interview with Managing Authority

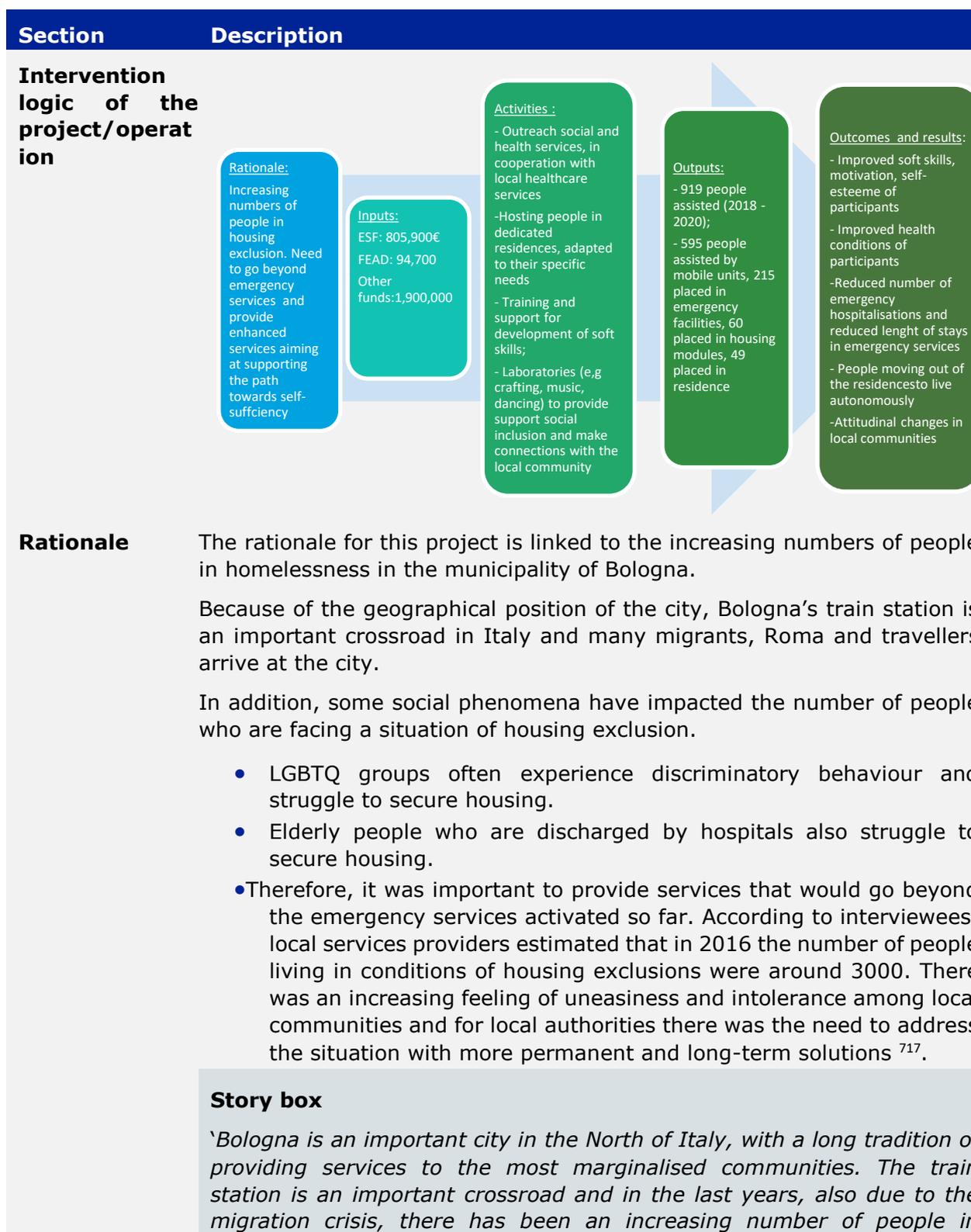
### **In-depth analysis of selected project - Services to tackle extreme social exclusion amongst adults (*Servizio Contrasto alla Grave Emarginazione Adulta*)**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Basic Facts Box</b>	<p><b>Operational programme:</b> National Operational Programme Inclusion 2014-2020 (2014IT05SFOP001)</p> <p><b>Project name:</b> Notice 4/2016, Services to tackle extreme social exclusion amongst adults (<i>Servizio Contrasto alla Grave Emarginazione Adulta, Avviso 4/2016</i>);</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> enhancement of the services targeting homeless people, to support their path toward (re)integration into society</p> <p><b>Beneficiary:</b> Municipality of Bologna through the ASP Bologna (Azienda Pubblica Servizi alla Persona - 'Public Company providing Services to People')<sup>716</sup>;</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 2018-2020, the activities are still ongoing;</p> <p><b>Partner organisations:</b> <i>Piazza Grande</i> Cooperative, <i>L'Arco</i> Consortium, <i>Indaco</i> Consortium.</p> <p><b>Target groups:</b> Homeless people. This group included people with addictions, recent migrants, people with mental health issues.</p> <p><b>Participants:</b> A total of 919, from May 2018 and June 2020</p> <p><b>Funds allocated:</b> Total funds: 2,800,600: 805,900€ (ESF), 94,700 (FEAD), 1,900,000 (national/local/regional funds)</p>

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<sup>716</sup> ASP (*Azienda Pubblica Servizi alla Persona* - 'Public Company providing Services to People') Bologna is a public body, owned by the Bologna Municipality (owning 97% of its shares); it is responsible for the planning and provision of social and healthcare services in the Bologna area; <http://www.aspbologna.it/>;

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<sup>717</sup> Interview with Bologna Municipality

Section	Description
	<p><i>marginalised situations arriving in Bologna and staying in the city. These people need all type of services and are facing a wide range of issues, from healthcare issues, to housing, to re-integration in the society more in general</i><sup>718</sup>.</p>
<p><b>Objectives</b></p>	<p>The activities aimed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing services provided to the most marginalised: people in homelessness which include also people with mental health issues, people with addition problems; migrants, Roma, minors, LGBT facing housing exclusion because of discrimination;</li> <li>• Providing integrated services that go beyond the emergency services and able to support the path towards an independent living;</li> <li>• Support social inclusion processes in the community and fight prejudices towards people in homelessness.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Story box</b></p> <p><i>'We wanted to address the needs of those who for several reasons do not access the conventional shelters available to the people in homelessness and who are particularly vulnerable, like people elderly over 65, young adults who have just turned 18 years old, LGBTQ, irregular migrants, homeless couples, Roma. For example, homeless couples do not want to go in communal shelters because they do not want to be separated, or old homeless are attached to the social bonds they create in their corners'</i><sup>719</sup>.</p>
<p><b>Relevance and coherence/syn-ergies</b></p>	<p>The activities were in line with the priorities of NOP Social Inclusion of 'Reducing extreme marginality and inclusion interventions for people in homelessness, <i>Roma Sinti and Camminanti</i> populations', with the national guidelines to fight extreme marginalisation and the national strategy of supporting people in homelessness with service models aligned with to the 'housing first' approach.<sup>720</sup></p> <p>The activities were relevant with the needs of the city (i.e. increasing numbers of people in housing exclusion) and to the multiple needs of the target population. The multiple needs of people experiencing housing exclusion include emergency needs (health, psychological etc) addressed by the by mobile units (<i>Unità di Strada</i>), long-term health issues (including mental issues), basic needs such as clothing and sanitation, need for a</p>

<sup>718</sup> Interview with ASP Bologna

<sup>719</sup> Interview with Piazza Grande Social Cooperative

<sup>720</sup> Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, *Guidelines to fight against marginalisation amongst adults in Italy*, 2015, <http://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/poverta-ed-esclusione-sociale/Documents/Linee-di-indirizzo-per-il-contrasto-alla-grave-emarginazione-adulta.pdf> ;

Section	Description
	<p>shelter (temporarily and/or for long-term), lack of self-care skills, lack of basic communication and interpersonal skills.</p> <p>The target group was identified by ASP Bologna (beneficiary) staff, the personnel of the mobile units, other services such as healthcare providers reporting the discharge of people in housing exclusion from a healthcare facility, citizens reporting the presence of people in need in the street (through a dedicated email box create by ASP Bologna).</p> <p>Five participants living in the Scalo Residence who provided written feedback, considered the activities relevant to their needs.<sup>721</sup></p>
<b>Outputs</b>	<p>The activities implemented were the following:<sup>722</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhancement of outreach social and health services through improved mobile units (<i>Unita' di Strada</i>). The mobile units provide support particularly to people in homelessness with issues of addition and other physical and/mental diseases. The mobile units included fixed services and mobile services with operators (walking or cycling in the streets);</li></ul> <p>Temporary and long-term housing services in different centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>La Locomotiva</i> - Housing modules with 2 beds and a private bathroom. These facilities are similar to private homes and are dedicated primarily to people in homelessness situation and the 'irreducible' (<i>irriducibili</i>). These are individuals who are reluctant to leave the street or to accept support, mainly Roma people and/or people who have been homeless for a long period.</li><li>• <i>Rostom</i> Reception Centre - Temporary housing services intended for the reception of homeless people and in need of care, for example people who have been discharged from hospitals and/or have ill mental health. The Centre provides health care support 24 hours a day and works in close collaboration with local healthcare services.</li><li>• <i>Scalo Residence</i> - Small facilities (for approximately 20 people) based on the 'Housing Led' model and targeted particularly to people in housing exclusion and in condition of vulnerability because of extreme marginalisation and social exclusion. This group includes elderly (65+), young adults who recently turned 18 years old (and cannot access services for minors), LGBTQ facing housing exclusion because of discrimination, or people recently released from prison.</li></ul> <p>Day-to-day support for the development of personal and soft skills such as self-care, personal hygiene, interpersonal and communication skills, etc.</p>

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<sup>721</sup> Participants were interviewed by staff in the Scalo Residence and written responses were provided to the research team

<sup>722</sup> Interview with ASP Bologna. Interview with Piazza Grande Social Cooperative;

Section	Description
	<p>Training and counselling services to support the development of competencies for labour market integration (e.g. preparation of a CV, job reach etc);</p> <p>Community Labs with social activities (such as language workshops, crafting, dancing classes etc.) The aim of these laboratories was twofold: to support the development of social skills of the target group to allow the local community to connect with the people in homelessness, thus fighting prejudices;</p> <p>Psychological support to young adults suffering with severe mental health issues; specific support to LGBTQ individuals (such as support for gender transitioning).</p> <p>In total, 919 people were assisted between 2018 and 2020: 595 people assisted by mobile units, 215 placed in emergency facilities, 60 placed in housing modules, 49 placed in residence facilities. In addition to this, 5,000 people in housing exclusion accessed the services of mobile units.<sup>723</sup></p>
<p><b>Delivery method and partnerships</b></p>	<p>The beneficiary organisation was the Municipality of Bologna and the organisation ASP Bologna.<sup>724</sup></p> <p>A number of organisations were involved in the implementation of the project including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L'Arcolaio Consortium<sup>725</sup> (encompassing five cooperatives: Piazza Grande, Arca di Noe', La Piccola Carovana, Società Dolce, Open Group ) and Indaco Consortium (encompassing seven cooperatives: Società Dolce, Open Group, Iris, Il Martin Pescatore, Arcobaleno, Asscoop, Piazza Grande).<sup>726</sup></li> </ul> <p>The Municipality of Bologna managed the project through ASP Bologna, which is specialised in the delivery of services to the most vulnerable.</p> <p>All organisations involved had experience in working with vulnerable groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example, L'Arcolaio Consortium, encompasses non-profit organisations with experience in the welfare, social labour inclusion,</li> </ul>

<sup>723</sup> Data provided by ASP Bologna

<sup>724</sup> ASP Bologna website: <http://www.aspbologna.it/contrasto-alla-grave-emarginazione-adulta/guida-agli-uffici/servizio-contrasto-alla-grave-emarginazione-adulta>;

<sup>725</sup> <https://consorzioarcolaio.it/>; <https://www.socialchallenges.eu/en-GB/city/25/Organisations/3622>;

<sup>726</sup> <https://www.consorzioundaco.it/>

Section	Description
	<p>reception and social mediation and also manages the Community Labs active in Bologna. <sup>727</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Indaco Consortium includes organisations specialised in services (day care services and residential services) to people with mental issues, housing services, services for social inclusion, health prevention services, services for families in marginalised conditions, migrants and asylum seekers, services for victims of tracking and violence. <sup>728</sup></li> <li>• The Scalo Residence also collaborated with the Approdi Association to provide psychological support to young adults (in particular traumatised migrants) hosted in the residence. <sup>729</sup></li> </ul> <p>Multiple outreach and recruitment channels were implemented. <sup>730</sup> These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recruitment of homelessness through the mobile units, social services and health services</li> <li>• a dedicated email box (created by ASP) where citizens could report the presence of homelessness and people in need in the streets;</li> <li>• recruitment of citizens (non in homelessness) living in proximity of Residence Scalo were recruited to participate to the Community Labs in the residence through local dissemination activities (e.g. leaflets, word of mouth).</li> </ul> <div style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 10px; margin-top: 20px;"> <p><b>Story box</b></p> <p><i>'We opened a dedicated email box for citizens to report the presence of people in need in the streets. The response from citizens has been outstanding and through this mailbox we also received many offers for help and support from regular citizens. We had to organise meetings to respond to the numerous requests to volunteer received through the mailbox.'</i> (Beneficiary)</p> </div>
<b>Funding and efficiency</b>	Total funds: 2,800,600: 805,900 euro (ESF), 94,700 euro (FEAD), 1,900,000 euro (national/local/regional funds) (2018-2020) <sup>731</sup>

<sup>727</sup> Interview with ASP Bologna

<sup>728</sup> <https://www.consorzioundaco.it/servizi/>

<sup>729</sup> Interview with Piazza Grande Social Cooperative

<sup>730</sup> Interview with Bologna Municipality

<sup>731</sup> Information provided by the ASP Bologna

Section	Description
	<p>FEAD was used to buy goods for people such as sleeping bags, blankets, clothes, fabrics to make clothes, toiletries, personal objects, food (including food for personalised diets for people with health issues or Muslims)</p> <p>There has not been an assessment of the cost-efficiency of the project, all interviewees consulted reported that there were no inefficiencies in the implementation of the activities. <i>L'Arcolaio</i> Consortium created a centralised financial management system, which improved effectiveness and efficiency amongst the cooperatives.</p> <p>The funding was reported as sufficient to carry out the interventions, however issues were encountered in the use of FEAD funding, which was considered not flexible enough to adapt to the needs of the project.</p> <p>For example, in the project there was the need to buy bus tickets and this was not possible with FEAD support.<sup>732</sup></p> <p>The evaluation of the NOP Metropolitan cities reports that the provision of services under 'Housing first' actions were highly cost effective.</p> <p>For instance, in the city of Bologna the cost of one person participating in the programme (including support to housing and accompanying services) for one year was 8,500 euro, against the cost of 8,000 euro per year to keep one homeless person in a dormitory.<sup>733</sup></p> <div style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Story box</b></p> <p><i>"FEAD was used to buy food and clothes. Food for personalised diets for people with diseases (e.g. diabetes) or special dietary requirements for religious reasons (e.g. Muslim people), first-hand clothes fitting people's taste. FEAD allowed to buy quality food in the facilities where people have access to the kitchen. People, assisted by the staff, went shopping and bought fabrics to make clothes for themselves and the others. People went to the supermarket to buy food. They did 'normal' things."</i> (Beneficiary)</p> </div>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<p>An evaluation of the project has not been carried out so far</p> <p>The outreach activities (i.e. the mobile units, social services and health services, mailbox open to citizens) were particularly effective in identifying and reaching people in extreme marginalised conditions and in need of either urgent or more long-term support. The mailbox was also particularly effective in engaging the citizens and involve them in the project.<sup>734</sup></p>

<sup>732</sup> Interview with ASP Bologna

<sup>733</sup> Modelli organizzativi di Housing First per il contrasto al disagio abitativo. Il modello delle Agenzie per la casa, NOP Citta' Metropolitane 2014-2020 (Analysis of measures to support housing access funded by the OP Metropolitan Cities in Italy)

<sup>734</sup> Interview with ASP Bologna

Section	Description
	<p>The beneficiary organisation, as well as the partners, stated that the activities implemented reached the target group, and were effective in addressing the identified needs.</p> <p>The people assisted improved their basic self-care skills, as well as their confidence and self-esteem levels; their communication and negotiation skills also improved.</p> <p>Interviewees reported that the ability to purchase personalised goods through FEAD support made a substantial difference for participants. The provision of new clothing (rather than second-hand clothes) and fabric to make the clothes gave a sense of dignity and pride to participants.</p> <p>In terms of long-term outcomes and impact, the number of people in homelessness has decreased in recent years. The local service providers also noted a decrease in the number of emergency requests in local hospitals from people living in homelessness, and shorter length of stay when admitted (compared to 2016). This shows an average improvement in the health of the target group.</p> <p>The services were particularly effective in convincing 'resolute' (<i>irriducibili</i>) groups to move into residencies. For example, couples living in the streets refuse to move to communal dormitories to avoid separation, but accepted moving to small modules. Also, a number of people in the Scalo Residence moved out and started living independently (data on numbers were not provided)<sup>735</sup>.</p> <p>The mailbox received an unexpected number of responses and request from citizens, volunteering to support the local service providers. Seminars and workshop were organised with citizens asking for additional information. This showed a high interest and engagement from locals.</p> <p>Two of the main success factors in the delivery of the project were the long-term experience of the partners in delivering services to marginalised groups, and the co-design approach.</p> <p>The project and activities were co-designed by ASP Bologna in cooperation with the other partners<sup>736</sup>. Regular meetings were held between ASP Bologna and the partners (on a monthly basis) and additional meetings were organised between the partners themselves (for internal coordination, carried out by Piazza Grande).</p> <p>These meetings, and other regular exchanges, provided the opportunity to discuss the issues emerging form the service delivery, and to adjust the activities as needed during the implementation. The creation of <i>L'Arcolabio</i> Consortium is part of this tailored designed approach.</p>
	<p><b>Story box</b></p>

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<sup>735</sup> Interview with ASP Bologna

<sup>736</sup> Interview with ASP Bologna, Interview Piazza Grande

Section	Description
	<p><i>'We had regular meetings with ASP Bologna; in addition to the coordination meetings taking place regularly between us and the other partners. The meetings have been very useful to identify the issues and find common solutions, this was always a fast process. The services carried out were regularly adapted on the basis of the discussions that we had at these meetings'</i> (Partner).</p>
<p><b>Challenges and success factors</b></p>	<p>Some challenges were identified in providing more tailored support. For example, single rooms to LGBTQ individuals could not be provided, even in the residence Scalo. Also, limited support could be provided to irregular migrants: this subgroup was assisted in the ROSTOM Centre, which is an emergency facility addressing urgent needs (stays in this residence is allowed for approximately six months). It was not possible to provide longer term support, to irregular migrants.<sup>737</sup></p> <p>In term of funding, a major challenge encountered was the fact that while funding was available, many necessary goods were ineligible under FEAD rules, including furniture for the residences, bus tickets and bus subscriptions. The interviewees pointed out that increasing the flexibility of FEAD resources and going beyond the concept of 'buying goods responding to personal basic needs of individuals' would be beneficial for the smooth implementation of the activities.<sup>738</sup></p> <p>Factors enabling the successful implementation of the project include the expertise and experience of the Beneficiary and partners in delivering services at local level; and the co-design approach.</p>
<p><b>EU Added value</b></p>	<p>EU Funding made the support activities provided by the Scalo Residence possible. Similarly, part of the Rostom Centre services were funded by EU funds. These services would have not been provided in absence of EU resources.</p> <p>No evidence was found on the sustainability of the activities after ESF funding, but the partners consulted were confident that, in absence of ESF funding, the activities would continue.</p> <p>While the organisations involved in the implementation have been working together for a number of years, <i>L'ArcoLabio</i> Consortium was created ex-novo for these specific interventions. The interventions also improved the cooperation with other actors operating on the ground, like the healthcare services provider and local security forces<sup>739</sup>.</p>

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<sup>737</sup> Interview Piazza Grande Social Cooperative

<sup>738</sup> Interview with Bologna Municipality

<sup>739</sup> Interview with Piazza Grande Social Cooperative; Interview with ASP Bologna

Section	Description
<p><b>Elements for transferability /good practices</b></p>	<p>Some activities that have been implemented by local actors would have been implemented without ESF funding. However, ESF funding was of paramount importance to deliver and improve their services.</p> <p>An example was the Scalo Residence, which was entirely funded by EU resources (ESF – NOP Social Inclusion and NOP Metro - and FEAD)<sup>740</sup>.</p> <p>The collaboration of several organisations operating on the ground, and the network created (consortiums) and the outreach methods allowed for a widespread coverage of the territory and for reaching the people in need.</p> <p>The co-design approach and ongoing adaptation can be considered innovative, as it allows for adaptation of the activities to the issues and needs emerging from the ground<sup>741</sup>.</p> <p>The co-operation with healthcare services enabled the provision of support to the target group in a tailored way, adapting to specific needs.</p> <p>The aim of the interventions was to empower the target group, in order to help people reintegrate into society and to move closer to the labour market and live independently. This innovative approach goes beyond the provision of emergency services to people in homelessness and addressing only immediate issues<sup>742</sup>.</p>
	<p><b>Story box</b></p> <p><i>'In Scalo I expected to find security, support, help, to feel home, and to be able to host friends for lunch. And my needs were satisfied'</i> (Participant living in Scalo Residence).</p>

## 10 Italy - Friuli Venezia Giulia FSE Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014IT05SFOP004)

This case study reviews the implementation of TO9 through the Friuli Venezia Giulia FSE Operational Programme in Italy (2014IT05FOP004). The Operational Programme (OP) cover the 2014-2020 programming period during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through the end of 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared drawing on desk research and five interviews with national stakeholders.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP – 'Peer support techniques in social inclusion and

<sup>740</sup> Interview with Piazza Grande Social Cooperative

<sup>741</sup> Interview with ASP Bologna

<sup>742</sup> Interview with Bologna Municipality

employment'. The selected project was classified as a type 4 operation by the evaluation study. Type 4 operations focus on access to services (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socio-economic indicators of the context, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU-added value of the OP and selected project as well as challenges and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach. The case study also presents an estimated cost-per-participation. The methodological approach for the calculation is presented in Annex 5 of the study.

### OP case study

Section	Description
Name of OPOP:	(2014IT05SFOP004) Friuli Venezia Giulia FSE 2014-2020
	<b>Regions covered by the OP:</b> More developed region (Friuli Venezia Giulia)
	<b>Priority Axes:</b> Axis I: (TO8) Employment; Axis II: (TO9) Social inclusion and combat poverty; Axis III: (TO10) Education and training; Axis IV: (TO11) Administrative capacity.
	<b>IPs covering TO9:</b> IP9i and IP9iv
	<b>Type of OP:</b> Mono fund (ESF)
OP implementation context	In 2013 the proportion of families in relative poverty in the region was 6%, which was lower than the national average. The OP mentions a worsening situation in relation to poverty in the region detected by the increase of requests for support from social services. Poverty in the region is increasingly affecting households whose members are experiencing periods of transitions between unemployment and precarious work. <sup>743</sup>
	The 2008 economic crises and the Italian public debt crisis in 2011 hit the regional economy and led to a contraction of internal demand for consumption and the number of active companies in the region. Consequently, this led to an increase in unemployment, in particular among young people, women and low-skilled workers. The long period over which the crises extended meant that it is more difficult to (re)enter the labour market thus leading to increased levels of long-term unemployment.
	<b>Managing Authority:</b>
	The Managing Authority is the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia.

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<sup>743</sup> OP Friuli Venezia Giulia version 2.0 pg. 11

Section	Description
	<p>To ensure flexibility and adapt the activities to regional changes, the Managing Authority uses a Periodic Planning Document (<i>'Documento di pianificazione periodica'</i>) where activities are planned annually over a one to three year period. The Periodic Planning Document is discussed and drafted together with social partners to identify local socio-economic needs and the relevant changes.</p>
<p>ESF Priorities and actions</p>	<p>The main priorities and actions of TO9 operations under this OP were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type 1: Actions with an employment objective;</li> <li>• Type 4: Access to services: implementation of services vouchers to enhance the provision and the quality of early childhood services;</li> <li>• Type 5: Social entrepreneurship. Specifically, these actions were tailored, integrated training and supporting activities to people in vulnerable situations (assisted by social services, educational services etc), offenders or ex-offenders, people with disabilities; and</li> <li>• Type 6: Actions influencing attitudes and systems: actions and training activities to social services personnel, so providing support to the other actions implemented under TO9. Training of family assistance/carers and the creation of an accreditation register for care service providers for elderly and non-self-sufficient persons.</li> </ul>
	<p>The priorities and actions did not change between the planned and the implementation stages. The relevance of both, priorities and actions, is promoted by an annual planning system where social partners are involved.<sup>744</sup></p>
<p>Target groups</p>	<p>The OP primarily targeted people with disabilities. It also targeted other groups (e.g. ex-offender, suffering from housing exclusion, substance abusers), low skilled people.</p> <p>The intended target groups at planning stage were also reached at the implementation stage. The target groups did not shift in implementation.</p> <p>There is no overlap between the target groups for TO8 and TO9 operations in the region. TO8 covers young people and unemployed through measures which are coordinated by the Public Employment Services (PES), universities, training delivery services and employers. The target groups under TO9 are people supported by social services, health services or both.<sup>745</sup></p>
	<p>OperationsTotal number of operations under TO9: 525</p>

<sup>744</sup> Interview with Managing Authority

<sup>745</sup> Interview with Managing Authority

**Section Description**

Operations under IP9i, for example, included integrated actions to support the labour market integration of people in vulnerable conditions (i.e. people with disabilities, ex-offenders). These operations often involved organisations operating in the third sector.

Examples of specific projects: (1) the 'Peer support techniques in social inclusion and employment' to provide peer support and training in peer support techniques to people who have experienced or are experiencing mental health issues; (2) Training courses to promote the provision of socially responsible actions. This included seminars/courses aimed at employees/directors of profit and non-profit enterprises, consultants, technicians, graduates, etc. with the purpose of presenting the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and of introducing similar actions in companies; (3) Training in 'digital graphic production' to people with physical disabilities developmental disorders (e.g. autism and relational disorders).

Partnership Activities under TO9 are implemented through several partnerships and collaborations between social services, care services and social enterprises.

Partnerships in place include, for example, the partnership with ENAIP (Ente Nazionale ACLI istruzione professionale), University of Trieste, social cooperatives to implement the project 'Peer support techniques in social inclusion'. Partnerships to implement the project 'Training courses to promote the provision of socially responsible actions' included the social enterprises, I.R.E.S. (Institute of economic and social research of Friuli Venezia Giulia), universities, employers' associations, businesses, cultural associations, and other accredited training institutions.

Funding of Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions) of the OP

IP	Planned (a)	Allocated (b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)
IP9i	€ 39,805,605	€ 12,804,459	€ 10,061,062	32%
IP9iv	€ 13,268,535	€ 5,100,000	€ 288,825	38%
Total	€ 53,074,140	€ 17,904,459	€ 10,349,887	34%

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Note: Planned amounts refer to the whole 2014-2020 programming period while allocated and spent amounts refer to the period up to the end of the 2018 calendar year (31 December 2018).

Other EU funds (EURES, Erasmus+, EaSI, ERDF, FEAD, AMIF, EMFF, EGF, etc.) were not used to support actions under the OP. This is because funds are managed by different departments. Nevertheless, the

Section	Description																																	
	<p>Managing Authority tries to coordinate activities under different funds at planning and implementation stage to ensure synergies and avoid overlaps.</p> <p>Regional and national funds are used to support actions under the OP.<sup>746</sup> The co-financing rate is 50%.</p>																																	
Outputs and results (2014/2018)	<p>Total number of participations: 5,657</p> <p>Common output indicators – The largest number of participations were recorded for the unemployed, including long-term unemployed; low educational level; and other disadvantaged groups; migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (this group include a large number of migrants involved in the training of family assistance carers-<i>badanti</i>).</p> <p>The OP also recorded specific output indicators. The estimated achievement rate (the recorded values in relation to targets set for the end of the programming period) was 13%. This achievement rate related to the specific indicator SO1 'Children covered childcare services - Bambini accolti dai servizi per l'infanzia'.The impact of this administrative re-organisation on the overall implementation of TO9 operations was reported by the Managing Authority in the interview as well as in the AIR.<sup>747</sup> Therefore, it is likely that the achievement rate in relation to this indicator was also slowed down by the administrative reorganisation which shifted the responsibilities of these policies from the social policies department to the family policies department.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CO01</td> <td>Unemployed, including long-term unemployed</td> <td>3,713</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO02</td> <td>Long-term unemployed</td> <td>460</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO03</td> <td>Inactive</td> <td>1,840</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO04</td> <td>Inactive, not in education or training</td> <td>1,784</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO05</td> <td>Employed, including self-employed</td> <td>104</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO07</td> <td>Above 54 years of age</td> <td>515</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO08</td> <td>Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training</td> <td>332</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO09</td> <td>With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)</td> <td>2,969</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Code	Indicator	Number	CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	3,713	CO02	Long-term unemployed	460	CO03	Inactive	1,840	CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	1,784	CO05	Employed, including self-employed	104	CO07	Above 54 years of age	515	CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	332	CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	2,969						
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<sup>746</sup> Interview with Managing Authority

<sup>747</sup> Annual Implementation Report, 2019 page 92

Section	Description	
CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	2,671
CO16	Participants with disabilities	1,497
CO17	Other disadvantaged	2,827
CO18	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	16
CO19	From rural areas	1,134
CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	-

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Common result indicators – In total, 4,621 immediate results (CR01-CR04) and 364 longer-term results (CR06-CR07) were recorded.<sup>748</sup> Most of the recorded results (3,627) were observed in terms of gaining a qualification (CR03). The number of participations in employment including self-employment increased in the longer-term as compared with the immediate term (CR06 = 360 versus CR04 = 165).

- The OP also had specific result indicators. As the targets for these indicators were set as a ratio without a reference, the achievement rate could not be estimated.

Code	Indicator	Number
CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	50
CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	779
CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	3,627
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	165
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	1,037
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	360

<sup>748</sup> Other indicators excluded due to double counting in values recorded in the SFC2014.

Section	Description		
	CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	4
	CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	38
	CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	348

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

**Assessment Effectiveness:** The thematic evaluation from the Managing Authority of the OP is ongoing. TO9 has supported the implementation of the antipoverty strategy in Italy. Specifically, in Friuli Venezia Giulia, ESF TO9 support translated into operations supporting the labour market integration of people in vulnerable conditions (e.g. people with disabilities, ex-offenders, people in extreme poverty recipient of minimum income, migrant carers). The success rate (the recorded results as a share of the relevant recorded outputs) for Type 1 operations were low. For example, for Common Result indicator 4 it was 3%. The analysis of the in-depth project suggests several possible explanations - the type of target groups that could be 'harder to place' than in other OPs, the complexity of the projects and the fact that the indicators are not a match well the type of projects. For example, in the 'Peer support techniques' projects not all participants were placed in the labour market due to the fact that the profile of the Peer supporter is not recognised in Italian system, although a number of other significant results were identified (for example increased self-esteem, improved interpersonal skills, better knowledge of the mental health condition, better knowledge of the mental health system in the region etc)

Code	Indicator	Success rate for OP (type 1 operations)
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	3%
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	6%
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	4%

The in-depth project 'Peer support techniques in social inclusion and employment' helped participants in several ways including increasing self-esteem and interpersonal skills, gaining awareness and knowledge

Section	Description
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of their mental health conditions, managing their own emotions and ultimately (in some cases finding a job).

**Efficiency:** The cost per participation for operations under IP9i was estimated to be 1,779 euro, which was higher than the EU average (IP9i=1,488 euro).<sup>749</sup> The Managing Authority and the Beneficiary involved in the in-depth project reported that the resources allocated and the timing of the implementation of the measures in line with what was planned. However, complex operations with people in vulnerable situations, such as the 'Peer support techniques' project and training to people with disabilities were more difficult to implement than activities with 'more employable clients' and therefore likely to be less efficient. From cost-benefit analysis of the in-depth project 'Peer support techniques in social inclusion and employment' emerged that with seven participants finding employment as a peer support worker at the 25th percentile level of income in Italy (11,121 euro annually in 2018 <sup>750</sup>) and remaining in employment, the total benefits would be 77,847 euro in the first year. This translates into a benefit cost ratio of two after one year and four after two years. This assuming that the individuals would not have found employment in the absence of the intervention.

**Relevance and coherence:** The objectives and operations implemented were relevant to the needs of the target groups identified and reached. There was a clear coherence between the TO9 operations and the policy framework and regional, national and European level. There was no overlap between TO9, TO8 and TO10 as TO9 targeted people in vulnerable situation in care of social services.

**Added value:** The ESF and specifically TO9 was paramount to accelerate the implementation of the antipoverty strategy and to mainstream it across the regions. The TO9 strategy made a difference in pushing the design and implementation of innovative activities. With the ESF funds the Managing Authority also reinforced the local network of social services, employment services and orientation services by hiring new personnel. ESF has been critical in reinforcing the delivery of social services. There is the risk that the delivery of social services in the region will not be sustained without the support of ESF TO9.

Challenges Multiple changes to the national legal framework on the antipoverty and lessonsmeasures ('Support for active inclusion' - SIA, 'Inclusion income' - REI, learned

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<sup>749</sup> The cost per participation for operations under IP9iv) were not estimated. See Annex 5 for more information.

<sup>750</sup> EU-SILC: Distribution of income by quantiles - EU-SILC and ECHP surveys (ilc\_di01).

Section	Description
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then the 'Citizen income') led to delays in the implementation of the activities.

The main challenge encountered relate to the complexity of the overall monitoring system in relation to the technical process of inputting the data in the information system, the high number and use of indicators, the complexity of the closure accounts procedures at the end of the year. A simplification of the monitoring system would be desirable for the next programming period.<sup>751</sup>This could include for example a reduction of the number of indicators

Another issue encountered referred to the complex procedures of the definition of the unit standard costs (USC) and its approval for the Standard Cost Option (SCO). The Managing Authority has used the standard cost model since the previous programming period. However, the definition of the unit costs has been a complex process due to the need to define the unit costs at national level first (taking into account costs and procedures at national level) and then the definition of the unit costs at regional level (taking into account regional costs and procedures. In addition, the checks and approval procedure from the auditing authority on the unit costs defined was deemed in general a burdensome and sometimes very stringent procedure (with little flexibility) that added burden to the overall process.

The internal reorganisation of departments and reallocation of responsibilities from the department of social policies to the department of families caused some delays in the implementation of measures related to childcare provisions.

The co-design approach to the overall project 'Peer support techniques' and to the traineeship was identified as challenging but successful by the beneficiary. This model could be applied to other projects to ensure that each element of the project is tailored to the specific needs of each participant.

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<sup>751</sup> Interview with Managing Authority

## In-depth analysis of selected project – Peer support techniques in social inclusion and employment

Section	Description
Basic Facts Box	<p><b>Operational programme:</b> Operational Regional Programme (POR) Friuli Venezia Giulia FSE (2014IT05SFOP004)</p> <p><b>Project name:</b> Peer support techniques in social inclusion and employment (Tecniche di peer support nell'inclusione socio lavorativa)</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> provision of peer support and training in peer support techniques to people who have experienced or are experiencing mental health issues. The project intends to support the labour market integration of participants as peer supporters.</p> <p><b>Beneficiary:</b> ENAIP (Ente Nazionale ACLI istruzione professionale) – National professional training organisation)<sup>752</sup>. Created by: Associazione Cristiane Lavoratori – Cristian association of workers).<sup>753</sup></p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 6-months – completed in 2019 (The project started in 2019, its design and approach to co-design with participants, social services and training organisation, build on a previous pilot project implemented in 2015)</p> <p><b>Partner organisations:</b> social services, mental health services, social cooperatives. The project was co-designed in cooperation with the University of Trieste (Department of mental health), with the social cooperative of type B 'Cooperativa Lavoratori Uniti Franco Basaglia'<sup>754</sup>, social cooperative of type A 'Duemilauno azienda sociale', social cooperative of type A/B 'Germano', the NGO Gruppo per il protagonismo 'Articolo 32'.</p> <p><b>Target groups:</b> adults over 18 years old suffering from mental illnesses and supported by social services/mental health services</p> <p><b>Participants:</b> 14</p> <p><b>Total allocated funds:</b> 38,835.00 EUR</p> <p><b>Total allocated ESF funds:</b> 19,417.50. EUR</p>

<sup>752</sup>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20120307044353/http://www.enaip.it/enaip/index.jsp?idPagina=2>

<sup>753</sup> <https://www.acli.it/cosa-sono-le-acli/>

<sup>754</sup> Social cooperatives of type A deal with the management of social health services, training and continuing education services. Social cooperatives of type B deal with the management of activities aimed at employing people in vulnerable conditions in the sectors of industry, trade, services and agriculture.

Section	Description
<p>Intervention logic of the project/operation</p>	
<p>Rationale</p>	<p>There is a historical collaboration between the Department of Mental Health of the University Hospital of Trieste and the beneficiary ENAIP. Historically, Trieste was one of the first regions to deinstitutionalise people suffering from mental health issues and close the old psychiatric asylums. Therefore, approach to mental health issues in the region is at the forefront of new approaches and experiments.</p> <p>The Department of mental health and ENAIP often collaborate in designing and implementing innovative and experimental projects involving participants in the design process and taking into account their different characteristics.</p> <p>The target group were people over 18 suffering from mental health issues, in contact with the mental health department.</p>
	<p><b>Story box</b></p> <p><i>'There is a historical collaboration with the Department of mental health and we often find ourselves thinking about innovative, 'unique' and different paths that start from the in-depth and direct knowledge of patients, their needs and their characteristics' (Beneficiary)</i></p>
<p>Objectives</p>	<p>The project aimed to: i) support people who have experienced or are experiencing mental distress through peer support techniques and, ii)</p>

Section	Description
	<p>train participants in peer support techniques, iii) promote a cultural shift in the approaches to treat mental illnesses and the relationship between patients and mental services. Eventually the project intended to support the labour market integration of participants as peer supporters</p> <p>With the formal implementation of this project the beneficiaries and partners intended also to give "scientific" value through training to peer practices that were informally carried out in some mental health centres in the region.</p> <p><b>Story box</b></p> <p><i>"We wanted to recognise the achievements of people who recovered and mature the idea that their own path could be useful for others. We wanted to do this through training, which also included comparison with experiences that already exist on the national territory, giving professional dignity to peer supporters. There is a dual purpose: on one hand give greater prominence to people and their experiences of illness, as a vehicle to help others in similar conditions; on the other hand, to inform and further advance the services, in the sense of contributing to the modification of services, methodological approaches and promote a cultural shift in mental health services, which are already advanced in the region"</i> (Beneficiary)</p>
<p>Relevance and coherence/synergies</p>	<p>The relevance of the objectives and activities to the needs of participants was guaranteed by the innovative approach to recruitment, outreach and co-design of the course. The mental health units approached patients with a good history of recovery and discussed their potential interest in an experimental course and their availability in co-designing the course.</p> <p>The course also addressed the socio-economic needs of the area as people with mental health issues experience social exclusion, exclusion from the labour market and poverty. The recovery, activation and integration of people with mental health issues was in line with the strategy of the Managing Authority to support the social inclusion of people conditions of vulnerability.</p>
<p>Outputs</p>	<p>Target groups were people with mental issues, aged over 18 and in contact with mental health services.</p> <p>In total 14 people participated to the course. (information about age, gender, level of education was not provided).</p> <p>The course involved 180 hours of training and 90 hours of traineeships. The course and the traineeships were completed with coaching and counselling (including peer-coaching and peer-counselling) delivered as group activity by experts and participants.</p> <p>Participants also received 2 EUR per hour as reimbursement</p>

Section	Description
	<p>The training was divided in 7 modules: history of deinstitutionalisation of mental health services; legal rights of people with mental health issues and participations; mental health services and related jobs available in the area; mental health, recovery and empowerment; the role of peer supporters; rights and duties of citizens and equal opportunities; health and safety in jobs related to mental health.</p> <p>The traineeship was a crucial part of the course. The organisations that were to complete the traineeship were identified at design stage as part of the partnership strategy. While the content of the traineeship was designed in cooperation with each participant and the tutors assigned to participants in each organisation. For each traineeship and ad-hoc module was designed identifying: the objectives, activities, working methods, how to alternate study and practical work. Bi-weekly meetings with the implementing organisation were set up and at least two visits at the workplace to monitor the development of the traineeship.</p> <p>The course ended with a final assessment to verify the skills and competences acquired.</p>
<p>Delivery method and partnerships</p>	<p>The project built on a pilot project that was implemented in 2015. One of the main features of the project relate to the element of co-design which involved participants, social services, mental health services, training provider and companies in the third sectors (cooperatives supporting the traineeships).</p> <p>As a first step, the mental health services presented the idea of the project to some patients to explore possible interest. Subsequently the project was designed together with the patients that expressed interested on the basis of their needs and availability.</p> <p>The complexity and emotional involvement of the project requires the identification of a group of participants beforehand to ensure commitment and tailor the course to the specific needs of participants.</p> <p>At designing phase, it was decided to limit the number of participants to 14/16 people due to the emotional intensity of the course. A large part of the course is dedicated to self-reflection on and sharing of personal experience with the mental illness. This requires a large degree of attention and support from teachers as well as participants.</p> <p>The partners and organisations involved included: ENAIP (the beneficiary), the mental health services of the University Hospital, other health services (e.g. general doctors, dentists), cooperatives and companies operating in the third sector, the municipality of Trieste, the Region and different NGOs operating in the cultural sector and sport, family members of participants were also involved. The idea behind the partnership and the network built for this project was to guarantee a wide spectrum of services to participants as well as give visibility to the project.</p>

Section	Description
	<p>The network involved in the project was not entirely formalised. The formal partnership involved ENAIP (the beneficiary), the mental health services and cooperatives sponsoring the traineeship. Other members of the network were informally involved, these included for example the families of participants. The method of coordination included formal and informal meetings, emails, telephones, activation of services in case of emergencies.</p> <p><b>Story box</b></p> <p><i>"We involve a wide network of organisations because it is assumed that for a recovery path to be effective the person must have to live (work), a place where to live (home), be supported from a holistic well-being perspective, not only mental health services, but also general practitioners, dentist, cultural associations, sports. Hence the involvement of a range of institutional and non-institutional local actors". (Beneficiary)</i></p>
<p>Funding and efficiency</p>	<p>Total funds: 38,835 euros</p> <p>At proposal stage the project was designed on the basis of the resources available, therefore the activities were proportionate to the funds and the project was managed efficiently.</p> <p>More funds would be needed for example to provide a higher reimbursement to participants, finance support to job searching activities after the course, finance the intense tutoring activity required by these types of projects.</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>The project mostly achieved its objectives in relation to soft skills and support provided to participants, to some extent the labour market integration of participants (although this is also related to the availability of jobs in the area and the recognition of the peer support as professional profile) and the attitudinal changes towards the role of peer support in the area of mental health.</p> <p>The long-term outcomes in relation to effectiveness are based on the result of the first pilot project. Out of 14 participants, 7 are employed as peer supporters in social cooperatives and work mainly in mental health centres.</p> <p>All participants completed the course.</p> <p>Participants to the course collaborate with the University of Trieste and other associations working with people with mental health issues to organise and participate to conferences and courses (in Friuli Venezia Giulia and other regions) to organise conferences and debates to disseminate their experience and knowledge in relation to the role of the peer supporters.</p> <p>The course provided participants with theoretical and practical transversal competences. First, it provided participants with</p>

Section	Description
	<p>competences to relate with other people in general and people with mental issues. These competences included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ability to listen, to communicate and interact with empathy with a variety of people and in different contexts;</li><li>• ability to work in group, to start projects and follow them through until completion by identifying objectives and by being able to prioritise;</li><li>• manage conflicts by identifying the causes and the dynamics, identify and implement equate behaviours to solve the conflicts;</li><li>• manage their own emotions, detect their level of stress, implement coping strategies in stressful situations;</li><li>• identify opportunities for social interaction and build social networks;</li><li>• activation and job search strategies in the local area (e.g. complete a CV, contact job-centres etc)</li></ul> <p>In relation to soft-skills the course improved the awareness of participants vis-à-vis their mental health, motivate them to overcome their difficulties and reconnect with the world of work.</p> <p>The success of the course in relation to participants is also demonstrated by the fact that participants have, outside the course and independently, started informal meetings where they continue exchanging their experience and they bring new people that did not participate to the course.</p> <p>One of the objectives of the course was also to trigger cultural change towards the role of peer supporters in treating mental health issues. This was reported by participants who were in employment and the beneficiary body as partly achieved although the process of cultural change requires time to manifest. The beneficiary body and participants in employment reported that there was a shift in workplaces from operators (e.g. doctors, nurses) toward peer supporters. There was a better understanding of their role and how peer supporters can help patients in their recovery path.</p> <p>The course improved the capacity of social services and mental health services to provide more tailored and innovative services to patients with mental health issues, as well as the ability of services to design more complex projects and implement new partnerships in this area.</p> <p>The course also raised interest in these methodologies, for example at the university a PhD thesis was based on the role of peer supporters in recovering from mental illness. Universities and several organisations working in the sector, both in the region and outside the region, organised conferences, meetings and sessions with participants in relation to their experience in the course and the role of peer supporters.</p>
	<p><b>Elements that could improve effectiveness:</b></p>

Section	Description
	<p>The official recognition of the peer supporter in the Italian labour market would improve the effectiveness of the course, opening the opportunities to a recognised job path after the course. Also, the activation of traineeships linked already to job opportunities would improve the effectiveness of the course.</p> <p><b>Story box</b></p> <p><i>“This course has changed my life, I felt almost reborn after it. At the beginning I was a bit sceptical about the course as I thought it was going to be demanding with so many hours of course and traineeship. It was demanding as it is difficult to relate to your own suffering and other people’s pain, but now I’m really satisfied. It opened my mind. I knew the world of mental services only as a patient and now I know it as an operator. The course showed me that I could recover and help others with my experience, it gave me confidence the skills and confidence to overcome my own pain. Mostly in the traineeship, I learned a lot and it showed me that with my experience of pain I could help others.” (Participant 1)</i></p> <p><i>“This course did not help me in finding a job because the peer supporter is not recognised in Italy, but it helped me in so many ways. First of all, the skills that I learned helped me in the job I’m working now. I learned to listen to people that are in pain with empathy but also with the right distance so that I’m not harmed by people’s pain. Thanks to this course I realised that I was not alone, that other people were going through the same struggles and there was no shame in sharing our pain. It gave me awareness of my illness, but I also learned that there are solutions and strategies to deal with mental issues. I now feel more normal, I don’t feel different from the others anymore” (Participant 2).</i></p>
<p>Challenges and success factors</p>	<p><b>Success factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The co-design approach to the overall course and to the traineeship was reported as success factor from both the beneficiary body and participants. The co-design approach allowed to design and implement a course that was entirely tailored to the needs of participants which provided input and suggestions.</li> <li>• The traineeship, which was entirely designed in cooperation with participants was reported by participants as one of the most successful elements. This practical experience allowed participants to gain knowledge on the job, implement the theoretical knowledge acquired during the course, to work in teams, to establish social relations and gain confidence on their ability to work.</li> <li>• The commitment and availability of the tutors throughout the course was reported by participants as one of the main elements which helped participants to overcome the personal challenges participants faced during the course (e.g. intense and emotional</li> </ul>

Section	Description
	<p>moments, moments of discouragements, communication issues during the traineeship etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The multiple partnership, the involvement of different organisations and people (social and mental health services, general health services, NGOs, cooperatives, families of participants etc.) was considered as a successful element by the beneficiary body.</li> <li>• The beneficiary body identified, the motivation of participants and the high professional level of operators (e.g. university professors, doctors etc.) who delivered the different modules were considered as critical success factors for the effective implementation of the course.</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenges and hindering factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The element which hinder the effectiveness of this course, in relation to fully achieve the expected results, is primarily to the fact the peer supporter is not recognised as a professional profile in Italy.</li> <li>• The reduced level of financial resources to the regional health system and social services, as well as to the third sector, reduces the likelihood of peer supporters to find an occupation after the course.</li> <li>• Beneficiary body and participants, reported that at the beginning there was a cultural resistance towards the role of peer supporters, which is now slowly fading as operators in the mental health sector recognise the added value and the role peer supporters play in helping people with mental health issues to overcome their problem.</li> <li>• The beneficiary body identified the lack of financial resources to support the job integration of participants after the course as a challenge and a factor that hampers the effectiveness and of the course and its long-term sustainability.</li> </ul> <p><b>Story box</b></p> <p><i>“It would be necessary to guarantee some financial resources after the course to support the activation and labour market integration of participants.” (Beneficiary)</i></p> <p><i>“Something that I didn’t like was that after the course nobody helped us in looking for a job. The course just ended. For the future would be nice to have support also after the course to help people finding a job.” (Participant 2)</i></p>
EU value	<p>Added ESF funding helped to change the philosophy and the methodological approach to training services. The request to design approaches which are more tailored to the target groups triggered new the implementation of new methods to design and partnerships, for example involving participants in the design of the courses and partners such as NGOs and the cooperatives. It forced training delivery organisations to re-think the training offer as a more tailored and</p>

Section	Description
<p>Elements for transferability /good practices</p>	<p>unique support rather than a 'standardised list of courses and modules';</p> <p>The possibility to implement experimental approaches is where the ESF makes the difference. ESF funds allow for experimenting innovative projects, without the ESF the target group would have been supported by more standard and not tailored training courses. <i>"With national and regional resources would not be possible to design training courses where challenges such as the mental illness become a resource and a solution to a problem"</i> (Beneficiary)</p> <p>Mental health services from other provinces and cooperatives operating in this area have expressed interest in implementing similar courses. There is therefore a market for these projects, however the availability of funds depends on the ESF support.</p> <p>The interest expressed by mental health services outside the province, cooperatives, universities and NGOs in implementing similar courses outside the province as well as organising conferences and meetings on the topic of the peer support, demonstrate that this experience has several elements that can be transferred in other contexts and areas. This for example, includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the rational and intervention logic. i.e. the idea that a challenge such as a mental health issues can become a resource and part of the solutions</li> <li>the co-design element where participants participate to the design of the training and definition of its objectives</li> <li>the wide range of partners and/or other organisations and people (including the families of participants) involved in formal as well as informal partnerships</li> <li>the tailored traineeship entirely designed by participants and tutors</li> </ul>

Elements of Information intervention	
Country	Italy
Operational Programme name (OP) and Investment Priority (IP)	OP Friuli Venezia Giulia Region IP 9.i Active inclusion, also to promote equal opportunities and active participation, and improve employability
Title of the project/activity, brief description and target groups	"Specific program 22/15 - Training courses to promote the provision of socially responsible actions in primary activities and support of profit and non-profit enterprises, also with the purpose of increasing competitiveness".  Seminars/courses carried out in the region, aimed at employees / directors of profit and non-profit enterprises, consultants, technicians, graduates, etc. with the purpose of presenting the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and of introducing similar actions in companies. The intervention is also addressed at teachers (in formal education, training centres and universities) with the aim of transmitting knowledge on CSR principles to the new generations. Interventions are also planned for students in schools, training and universities.
Country/region/ area	The project was carried out in the regional area
Beneficiaries	I.R.E.S. - Institute of economic and social research of Friuli Venezia Giulia - Social enterprise. Accredited body for training in FVG region
Year	Start year of the 2017 project Year of completion of the 2019 project
Investment priority (IP)	Axis 2 - Social inclusion and the fight against poverty Investment priorities: 9.i) Active inclusion, also to promote equal opportunities and participation active and improve employability. Specific objective: 9.7 Strengthening of the social economy. Action: 9.7.2 Promotion of social inclusion to be carried out in the area of corporate social responsibility.
Funding	Total financing 75,000.00 euros Total financing ESF 37,500.00 euros
Participants	Number of participants in the project / activity: 642 corresponding to 540 different people (someone participated in two seminars given the thematic diversity); 29 seminars were held.

## Elements of Information intervention

Project objectives	<p>The European Commission has defined CSR as "the responsibility of companies for their impact on society" (communication of October 25, 2011, No. 681). More specifically, CSR is the voluntary integration of social and ecological concerns of companies in their commercial operations and in their relationships with the interested parties. Being socially responsible doesn't only mean fully meeting the legal obligations, but also going beyond and investing "more" in the human capital, the environment and in the relations with other interested parties".</p> <p>This translates into the adoption of a company policy that is able to reconcile the economic objectives with the social and environmental objectives, with a view to future sustainability. This benefits the society, the workers and the company and, as several studies have demonstrated, allows for an increase in its competitiveness.</p> <p>In addition to the seminars, the implementing entity provided a series of videos on the topic to be put on the internet to expand the range of possible interested parties. A 40-page guide to CSR application is available online, in the Region's website. Thanks to the project, a network of subjects interested in CSR and its application / dissemination was created.</p>
Target groups	<p>The seminar interventions were of three types:</p> <p>Interventions aimed at employees / administrators of profit and non-profit companies, consultants, technicians, graduates, and the like, in order to present the principles of CSR and the possible introduction into the company of actions in this sense. Examples were provided, as well as explanations on the possible repercussions in terms of competitiveness.</p> <p>Interventions aimed at school, education and university teachers, in order to allow them to acquire useful knowledge for transmitting the CSR principles to the new generations.</p> <p>Interventions aimed at students of educational, training or university institutions.</p>
Innovative elements of the project	<p>The project involved a transversal dissemination of CSR principles: from entrepreneurs, to students, to citizens, to consumers. The partnership that led the project (led by I.R.E.S), was composed of 24 different entities, such as universities, employers' associations, businesses, cultural associations, and other accredited training institutions.</p>
Good practice, transferability and sustainability of	<p>The project was followed by a similar initiative carried out in 2019, on CSR principles with a focus on corporate welfare and occupational health and safety. The transferability of the project is facilitated by the testimony videos produced and the online guide and materials available on the Region's website.</p>

### Elements of Information intervention

the project/activity

Data availability No

Reasons for suggesting project This is one of the first initiatives of this kind that had an excellent response in terms of participation. The spontaneous and informal establishment of a network of interested parties that will continue to collaborate on the topic is a very good sign. However, the results of the project will be seen over time through the adhesion of companies to the CSR principles. It is not easy to monitor this data, just as it is not easy to understand the level of awareness of other types of users.

## 11 Latvia Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014LV16MAOP001)

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the Growth and Employment Operational Programme in Latvia (2014LV16MAOP001) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through 2019. This case study covers the period from 2014 through the end of 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared drawing on desk research and three interviews with the Managing Authority and beneficiaries.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'Integration of persons with disability or mental disorders in labour market and society'. The selected project was classified as a type 1 operation by the evaluation study. Type 1 operations are employment-focused actions (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socio-economic indicators of the context, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU-added value of the OP and selected project as well as challenges and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Success rates were estimated as the number of results generated as a share of the relevant number of participations. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation of achievement rates and success rates. The case study also presents an estimated cost-per-participation and findings from a cost benefit analysis. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for these estimations.

## OP case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p><b>Operational Programme:</b> 2014LV16MAOP001 - Growth and Employment Operational Programme 2014-2020.</p> <p><b>Regions covered by the OP:</b> Latvia, the whole country, less developed. Multi fund OP</p> <p><b>Priority Axes:</b> Axis I: (TO1) Research and innovation; Axis II: (TO2) Information and communication technologies; Axis III: (TO3 &amp; TO11) Competitiveness of SMEs; Axis IV: (TO4) Low-carbon economy; Axis V: (TO5 &amp; TO6) Environment protection and resource efficiency; Axis VI: (TO7) Network infrastructures in transport and energy; Axis VII: (TO8) Sustainable and quality employment; Axis VIII: (TO10) Educational and vocational training; Axis IX: (TO9) Social inclusion and combat poverty; Axis X: Technical assistance ESF; Axis XI: Technical assistance ERDF; Axis XI: Technical assistance CF.</p> <p><b>TO9 IPs selected:</b> IP9i and IP9iv</p> <p><b>Multi fund OP:</b> (ERDF/ESF/CF/YEI)</p>
OP implementation context	<p>The main challenges faced in Latvia are population decline, uneven development of different regions and high inequality.<sup>755</sup> During the 2014-2018 period, the highest proportion of persons facing severe material deprivation was recorded in 2014 (32.7%).<sup>756</sup> This rate has decreased by 13.7 percentage points to 20.6 percent in 2018. Within different age groups, the highest proportion of persons who were facing severe material deprivation was recorded among elderly persons (among those 55 years or over – 27.0% in 2018).</p> <p>The rate of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion has slightly decreased from 32.7% in 2013 to 28.4% in 2018. The highest proportion of persons who were at risk of poverty was recorded for elderly people (42.2%), low educated people (levels 0-2; 53.1%), unemployed people (53.5%) and retired people (53.0%).</p>

<sup>755</sup> Clauwaert, Stefan (2018). The country-specific recommendations (CSRs) in the social field. An overview and comparison. Update including the CSRs 2018-2019. Brussels: European Trade Union Institute.  
<https://www.etui.org/Publications2/Background-analysis/The-country-specific-recommendations-CSRs-in-the-social-field.-An-overview-and-comparison.-Update-including-the-CSRs-2018-2019>; European Commission (2019). 2019 European Semester: Country Report Latvia 2019. Retrieved from:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/2019-european-semester-country-report-latvia\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/2019-european-semester-country-report-latvia_en.pdf)

<sup>756</sup> Eurostat data - t2020\_50, retrieved 27.07.2020.

Section	Description
	<p>The labour market situation has been improving over the last five years in Latvia. Unemployment fell to its lowest rate in five years (7.5% in 2018) and vacancies are rising fast.<sup>757</sup></p> <p>The 2017 tax reform has slightly reduced the tax burden on low wages. However, the reform costs have limited resources for public services, also for social benefits<sup>758</sup>. The social protection of people with disabilities remains weak, and minimum social benefits remain very low. Financing for public healthcare has increased in 2018-2019, but its level is still low relative to other countries and service needs, the scope of publicly covered services is relatively limited, and patients must pay a substantial part of the costs across all health services.<sup>759</sup></p> <p>Social inclusion/poverty needs have not changed between 2014 and 2018 in Latvia,. The only changes in target groups are related to the increased number of asylum-seekers coming to the EU in 2015 and 2016. According to the interview with the representatives of the Ministry of Welfare, a project "Diversity promotion" was changed to provide a support services to asylum seekers. From 6 April 2016 to 31 December 2018, a total of 786 persons received the services of a social worker and a social mentor. Of this group, 374 were relocated asylum-seekers (the relocation scheme established by Council Decisions 2015/1523 and 2015/1601) and 412 came to Latvia on their own. Social workers and social mentors have provided support to 471 men and 315 women.</p>
<p>ESF Priorities and actions</p>	<p><b>Key organisations:</b></p> <p>The key organisations involved in the design and delivery of ESF provisions are the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice.</p> <p>The Ministry of Finance is the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme "Growth and Employment" and is a leading authority in terms of organisation and control.</p> <p>The main priorities and actions of the OP TO9 were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type 1: Actions with an employment objective (promotion of equal opportunities and active participation and improving employability among persons with disabilities, pre-retirement age persons, the Roma people and other people at risk of discrimination, including ex-prisoners);</li> </ul>

<sup>757</sup> European Commission (2019). 2019 European Semester: Country Report Latvia 2019. Retrieved from: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/2019-european-semester-country-report-latvia\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/2019-european-semester-country-report-latvia_en.pdf)

<sup>758</sup> European Commission (2019). 2019 European Semester: Country Report Latvia 2019. Retrieved from: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/2019-european-semester-country-report-latvia\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/2019-european-semester-country-report-latvia_en.pdf)

<sup>759</sup> OECD (2017). Health policy in Latvia. <http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/Health-Policy-in-Latvia-March-2017.pdf>

Section	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type 4: Access to services: Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services, with focus on possible alternatives for children living in institutions and persons with mental disorders living in institutions to transfer from long-term care institutions to life in the community and health promotion activities;</li> <li>• Type 6: Actions influencing attitudes and systems: actions and training activities to social services personnel, so providing support to the other actions implemented under TO9.</li> <li>• The priorities and actions did not change between the planned and the implementation stages. The relevance of both, priorities and actions, is promoted by an annual planning system where social partners are involved.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<p>IP9i: Long-term unemployed persons, unemployed people in condition of vulnerability; prisoners and ex-prisoners; the State Probation Service staff and police staff, staff in municipalities and NGOs associations; people at risk of discrimination and social exclusion (ethnic minorities, incl. Roma, persons with disability, persons with mental disorders, persons with addiction problems, etc.).</p> <p>IP9iv: Social workers, people at risk of poverty, persons with disabilities, long-term unemployed persons; children living in institutions; people with mental disorders living in institutions, families with children with disability; National Health Service, Ministry of Health, Health Inspectorate, Disease Prevention and Control centre, medical institutions, municipalities; medical staff, people who are subject to poverty and social exclusion risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The intended and reached target groups coincide.</li> </ul>
Operations	Total number of operations under TO9: 118
Partnerships	<p><b>Main partners involved in the implementation of the OP TO9<sup>760</sup>:</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Welfare, the State Employment Agency, the Social Integration State Agency, the Society Integration Foundation, the Ministry of Health, the National Rehabilitation Centre "Vaivari", the National Commission of Medical Experts on Health and Work Ability; the Ministry of Justice; the Prison Administration, the State Probation Service, municipalities, social service providers registered in the Social Services Register, health care providers, NGOs (associations, foundations and religious organisations).</p> <p>New partnerships have been developed in delivery of support services to persons with mental disorders to live outside institutions, and to provide health support and health prevention activities.</p>

<sup>760</sup> Annual Implementation Report for the Investment for growth and jobs goal (2019). Data on 11 July 2019.

Section	Description																			
Funding of the OP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New partnerships have been developed between state, municipal, health care institutions and private social service providers or NGOs.</li> <li>Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National co-financing)</li> </ul>																			
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>IP</th> <th>Planned (a)</th> <th>Allocated (b)</th> <th>Spent</th> <th>Project Selection Rate (b/a)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>IP9i</td> <td>108,283,332</td> <td>114,021,904</td> <td>37,416,259</td> <td>105%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9iv</td> <td>156,611,669</td> <td>127,987,254</td> <td>16,782,187</td> <td>82%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>264,895,001</td> <td>242,009,158</td> <td>54,198,447</td> <td>91%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source:</i> SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. <i>Note:</i> Planned amounts refer to the whole 2014-2020 programming period while allocated and spent amounts refer to the period up to the end of the 2018 calendar year (31 December 2018). <b>Co-financing rate:</b> 85%.</p> <p>The Latvian single multi-fund Operational Programme "Growth and Employment" combines support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), and the European Social Fund (ESF). The OP includes a strong deinstitutionalisation component (supported by both ESF and ERDF) which targets transfer to community-based social care of children with disability and adults with disability due to mental disorders. ESIF promotes better access to health care for the socially and territorially excluded. There are no significant changes to the operational programme's planned financial resources to the ESF T09 between 2014 and 2018.<sup>761</sup></p>	IP	Planned (a)	Allocated (b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)	IP9i	108,283,332	114,021,904	37,416,259	105%	IP9iv	156,611,669	127,987,254	16,782,187	82%	Total	264,895,001	242,009,158	54,198,447
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Outputs and results (2014/2018)	<p>Total T09 Participation: 61,296</p> <p>Common Output Indicators – The recorded values for common output indicators are in line with the main priorities and actions. The largest number of participations were recorded for the unemployed, including long-term unemployed; low educational level; and other disadvantaged groups; migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma); and participants with disabilities.</p> <p>The OP T09 also recorded specific output and specific result indicators. The estimated achievement rate for T09 (the recorded values in relation to targets set for the end of the programming period) was 26%. The estimated results specific achievement rate was 91%.</p> <p>Common Output Indicators</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CO01</td> <td>Unemployed, including long-term unemployed</td> <td>20,659</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO02</td> <td>Long-term unemployed</td> <td>16,940</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO03</td> <td>Inactive</td> <td>24,947</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Code	Indicator	Number	CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	20,659	CO02	Long-term unemployed	16,940	CO03	Inactive	24,947							
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<sup>761</sup> Operational programme - last extraction 01/07/2019.

Section	Description	
CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	2,448
CO05	Employed, including self-employed	15,690
CO07	Above 54 years of age	16,904
CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	10,893
CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	9,899
CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	12,130
CO16	Participants with disabilities	12,171
CO17	Other disadvantaged	12,652
CO18	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	658
CO19	From rural areas	30,846
CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	32

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

#### Common Result Indicators

Code	Indicator	Number
CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	254
CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	820
CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	17
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	4,658
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	114
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	4,308

Section	Description		
	CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	5,999
	CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	1,225
	CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	2,601

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

#### Assessment of the OP **Effectiveness:**

- Result indicators of OP show that ESF participants are engaged in job searching, education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment. These activities contribute to the promotion of social inclusion and combating poverty and the social inclusion target of Europe 2020.
- The success rate (the recorded results as a share of the relevant recorded outputs) for Type 1 operations varied by the common result indicator. For example, for CR04 (Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving) it was 23%. For CR06 (Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving) it was 18%. For CR07 (Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving) it was 49%.

#### **Efficiency:**

- In general, the representatives of the Managing Authority suggest that the resources invested in ESF TO9 are proportionate to the results achieved. The cost per participation for operations under IP9i was estimated to be 1,823 euro, which was higher than the EU average (IP9i= 1,488 EUR). This can be explained by the complex approach of the projects, such as the project 'Integration of persons with disabilities or mental disorders in labour market and society'.

#### **Relevance and coherence:**

- The objectives and operations identified for the target groups are relevant to the needs of the target groups. There is a clear coherence between the ESF interventions under TO9 and other policies on social inclusion.

#### **Added value:**

- The ESF support significantly complements the support to target groups provided by the government and municipalities. In synergy, the scope and the effect of provided support is much larger. The ESF fund has been critical in reinforcing the delivery of social services. Some of necessary measures, for example, creation and provision of community based social services to persons with disability due to

Section	Description
	<p>mental disorders for independent life in the community, social care and rehabilitation services for children with disability and their family members, would not be likely possible at all without ESF support.</p>
Challenges and lessons learned	<p>One of the problems Latvia faced in the implementation of TO9 operations is a shortage of particular specialists, namely, social workers, psychiatrists and ergo-therapists.</p> <p>In some cases, the accounting of the ESF participants and linked processes is perceived as unnecessarily complex and burdensome. Some participants perceive the questions regarding their minority status in the questionnaire as very sensitive, sometimes even insulting, and refuse to answer.</p> <p>In some cases, the management of the project is problematic because of the capacity of partners. The problem concerns the capacity of state and municipal organisations and NGOs to administer the operations.</p> <p>The OP has been flexible enough to adapt to the increased number of asylum-seekers coming to the EU in 2015 and 2016. Other significant changes in target groups and actions were not necessary.</p>

## In-depth analysis of selected project - Integration of persons with disability or mental disorders in labour market and society

Section	Description
<p>Basic Facts Box</p>	<p><b>OP:</b> Growth and Employment' Operational Programme 2014-2020 (ERDF/ESF/CF/YEI); IP9 (i) Active inclusion, including promotion of equal opportunities and active participation and improving employability.</p> <p><b>Project:</b> Integration of persons with disability or mental disorders in labour market and society (Personu ar invaliditāti vai garīga rakstura traucējumiem integrācija nodarbinātībā un sabiedrībā) (Nr. 9.1.4.1/16/I/001)</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To provide persons with severe disability or mental disorders with skills to enter into labour market and to improve the social inclusion of participants.</p> <p><b>Beneficiary Organisation:</b> The Social Integration State Agency</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 04 July 2015 – 30 June 2020 (now extended to 30 June 2021 with additional financing)<sup>762</sup> (on-going project)</p> <p><b>Target groups:</b> persons with severe disabilities or mental disorders.</p> <p><b>Total Participants:</b> 100 persons with severe disabilities or persons with mental disorders involved in the trainings; 254 persons with severe disabilities or persons with mental disorders involved in 10 days activity of individual assessment of the person's capacity for education and work.</p> <p><b>Total allocated funds:</b> 1,252,103 EUR (Now extended to 1,752,103 EUR)</p> <p><b>Total allocated ESF funds:</b> 1,064,287 EUR (Now extended to 1,489,287 EUR)</p>
<p>Intervention logic of the project</p>	 <pre> graph LR     R[Rationale: Providing tailored and comprehensive support for the integration of persons with severe disabilities or persons with mental disorders into employment and society.] --&gt; I[Input: The financial input was € 1 252 103.02 over four years.]     I --&gt; A[Activities: Study on labour market demands; Development of 5 continuing education programs and 35 skills training programs; Individual assessment of the person's capacity for education and work; Complementary counselling &amp; activities supporting societal integration; Support for transition into employment.]     A --&gt; O[Outputs: -100 persons with severe disabilities or persons with mental disorders involved in the trainings; - 57 persons employed/ looking for job within six months]     O --&gt; R[Outcomes and results: - Improvement of skills necessary in labour market; - Rising of self-esteem and motivation to work; - Transition into the labour market]         </pre>

<sup>762</sup> Home page of the project. <https://www.siva.gov.lv/esf-2014-2020-esfGRT.html>

Section	Description
Rationale	<p>Persons with severe disabilities and mentally handicapped persons face higher risk of unemployment, social exclusion and risk of poverty, mainly because of insufficient education, low self-esteem and unfriendly labour market. Previous projects providing training to unemployed people in Latvia were not designed to address the specific needs of this particular target group, which needs more comprehensive and tailored support. To improve ability of the target group to integrate into the labour market, persons with severe disabilities or persons with mental disorders have the opportunity to take 5 continuing education programs (duration 6-18 months) and 35 skills training programs (4 months to 1 year). During the training programs, participants receive complementary counselling and activities supporting their social integration. Five professional training programmes developed for persons with severe disabilities are: "Clerk", "Warehouse employee", "Florist", "Gardener", and "Carpenter's assistant". Their development was based on the study on labour market demands and possibilities to employ the target group. 35 skills training programs are associated with previously mentioned professions. During professional trainings and skill programmes, students are living in a service hotel, they receive catering, assistance and advise of different specialists (psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists), opportunities for sports and leisure, transport services. After obtaining the professional qualification, within a 6 month period support for work integration is provided, including career development lessons and counselling. Counselling is provided also to employers on the specific functional disorders of the target group and the necessary adjustments to the workplace. During the training programs the participants visit potential employers, but the employment of participants is not a part of the project.</p> <p><b>Story box</b> "This project is extremely ambitious and extremely expensive, but it does deliver the results. Overall, the number of participants is small, but funding is over one million EUR. It involves several months to a year of work with each client. A lot of resources are used not just financial, but also staff. It is both integration into society and integration into employment. The invisible part of the project has a very high added value. It should be understood, that if the problem is prolonged, recovery also takes time. This is where long-term help is needed." (Interview with the project manager, the Social Integration State Agency)</p>
Objectives	<p>The primary objective of the project was to provide persons with severe disabilities or persons with mental disorders with skills to enter into labour market.</p> <p>In addition, the project aimed at improving the social inclusion of participants.</p> <p>Both objectives are complementary to each other. The training activities helped participants to adapt to a structured daily routine and motivated them to find a job.<sup>763</sup></p>

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<sup>763</sup> Interview with the expert in education, the Social Integration State Agency.

Section	Description
Relevance and coherence/synergies	<p>The project filled a policy gap in Latvia regarding the social and labour market inclusion of persons with severe disability and persons with mental disorders (with psychosocial, intellectual and cognitive disabilities). In general, these groups face higher risk of unemployment, social exclusion and risk of poverty. Main obstacles to integrate into labour market and society are both low self-esteem and insufficient education. The project aims to provide continuing education programs (duration 6-18 months) to persons with severe disability that corresponds to the current economic situation and labour market demands.</p> <p>Although there are different projects providing training to unemployed people in Latvia, these measures were regarded as not well-suited to address the specific needs of this particular target group, which needs more comprehensive and tailored support.</p> <p>The following aspects certify that this operation is successful and relevant to the needs of the target group: development of completely new training programs for skill development with tailored curricula and hands-on training for people with mental disorders that match the individual's abilities and interests; development of training programs that respond to current labour market requirements and foster different social skills that are relevant to the individual, while also attracting staff to provide each participant with the necessary support during training.</p> <p>In order to promote the integration of people at risk of discrimination into society and the labour market, it is planned that the vocational rehabilitation programs and skills training programs developed within the framework of the operation will also be implemented also after the end of the operation (fully financed from the state budget).</p> <p>The project is directly related to the priorities and directions of action set out in the medium-term policy planning documents: "Inclusive Employment Guidelines 2015-2020", and "Guidelines for the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014-2020".</p>
Outputs	<p><b>Target groups:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persons with severe disabilities or persons with mental disorders.</li> </ul> <p><b>Number of participants and other relevant outputs</b> on December 31, 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>100 participants</b> with severe disabilities or persons with mental disorders successfully finished training programs</li> <li>• 43% of all participants were male and 57% were female<sup>764</sup>.</li> <li>• 11% were age 15-22, 30% were age 22-32; 24% were age 33-42; 20% were age 43-52, and 15% were age 53-63.</li> <li>• 57 out of 100 participants were employed within six months or started to search for a job. 25 or 44% of them were male and 32 or 56% were female.</li> </ul> <p><b>Other outputs:</b></p>

<sup>764</sup> Data provided by the project manager, the State Social Integration Agency.

Section	Description
<p>Delivery method and partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five new training programs, which have been accredited as professional training programs, and the establishment of the system for certifying work skills and abilities for low skilled professionals.</li> </ul> <p>The project was implemented by the Social Integration State Agency, which is the only provider of professional rehabilitation services in Latvia and which implements a holistic approach to the assessment of the person’s capacity for work and health and to the provision of the most suitable training for the individuals’ personal needs and provides a support after completing the training.</p> <p>Participants were recruited by using different approaches. The most difficult target group to recruit were persons with mental disorders. To reach this target group the staff of the Social Integration State Agency contacted the social services in municipalities, with local branches of the State Employment Agency, and NGOs who work with persons with mental disorders. Besides letters and visits, they put also advertisements on their home page.</p> <p>The project revealed that some organisations addressed were unwilling to cooperate and that the possibilities to disseminate the information about new opportunities for persons with mental disorders were limited and should be improved<sup>765</sup>.</p> <p>The Simplified Cost Option (SCO) approach was used for the project in several budget positions, particularly, for the administrative costs and reimbursement of transport costs.</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; padding: 10px;"> <p><b>Story box</b></p> <p>“To contact the potential target group, at first we communicated electronically by e-mail about us to particular organisation (municipalities, social service providers, health care providers, NGOs). Next, we organised a visit to them. During the visit, we informed about services we offer, about our project and opportunities for people with mental disorders. Initially, about these 10 days for testing and determining professional suitability, and then about 35 skill training programs. [...] It is difficult to get started. It happened that organisations look with a suspicion, afraid to let us talk directly to people with mental disorders”. (Interview with the expert in education, the Social Integration State Agency)</p> </div>
<p>Funding and efficiency</p>	<p>Funding for the project was provided by the ESF (85%) and state budget of Latvia (15%).</p> <p>If compared to other projects, this project provided more financial input for support to each targeted person.</p> <p>The detailed CBA for the project indicates that, over a two-year time horizon and assuming that those who are employed earn at the 25th percentile, the project has a benefit-cost-ratio of 0.4, while the net cost of the project is EUR 762,000. The low benefit cost ratio and estimated losses are unsurprising, given</p>

<sup>765</sup> Interview with the expert in education, the Social Integration State Agency.

Section	Description
Effectiveness	<p>the scale of the inputs and number of participants involved. Although, it is important to highlight the non-monetary benefits, such as the improvement in the professional team's capability in dealing with and understanding the target group's needs. This may provide longer-term benefits to the project that are not reflected in the estimated benefits and benefit cost ratio.<sup>766</sup></p> <p>Without ESF funding the scale of support to target group would be significantly smaller.</p> <p>The procedures for reporting and monitoring of the project/operation were considered as appropriate<sup>767</sup>.</p> <p>The project resulted in the improvement of skills of all participants of training activities as well as in the transition into the labour market of a significant share of participants.</p> <p>Of the 100 individuals finishing their training, 57 proceeded into the labour market within six months. The number of those who started the training is 115.</p> <p>Raised self-esteem, improved confidence and motivation to work among participants should be reported as well, although these qualities are difficult to quantify<sup>768</sup>.</p> <p>Long-term outcomes of the project or the impact of the project concerns the capacities of the Social Integration State Agency and its staff. Namely, it was the first time for the staff of the Social Integration State Agency to provide training and support activities to persons with mental disorders.</p> <p>Teachers, social workers, career counsellors and others have learned themselves a lot about the peculiarities in the work with this target group, and they are ready to continue their work. Their experience in cooperation with different employers suggests that support measures to employers who hire persons with mental disorders should be intensified.</p> <p><b>Story box</b></p> <p>"I am very happy for all our students. There are those were grumpy and complaining. There is a constant need for supervision by a social worker or the help of a psychiatrist. But with us they open. Most of them were afraid to express their opinions. They were always upset and silent. Our wonderful teachers encourage those students. They teach them how to be more independent and self-sufficient, and to set their own goals." (Interview with the expert in education, the Social Integration State Agency)</p> <p>"Certainly we can observe the growing self-confidence in their abilities. They greatly appreciate that they are motivated to take responsibility here, they feel that they can do more, they have to deal with their own affairs. While living at home, family members with their care reduce their ability to take responsibility for themselves. Certainly, some training should be longer for persons with mental disorders. This training does not guarantee that this self-confidence</p>

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<sup>766</sup> For more information on the detailed CBA, please refer to Annex 5.

<sup>767</sup> Interview with the project manager, the Social Integration State Agency.

<sup>768</sup> Interview with the career counsellor, the Social Integration State Agency.

Section	Description
<p>Challenges and success factors</p>	<p>and responsibility will be maintained. There is no further work with the family at the place of residence. Clients are worried that on their return they will again find themselves in this situation of dependence and inactivity. Here, they feel more independent than they are at home.” (Interview with the career counsellor, the Social Integration State Agency)</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties to reach the target group of persons with mental disorders (reluctance of some organisations to provide information among target group, suspicion of relatives or other stakeholders).</li> <li>• Inability of some target group members to participate in trainings due to different reasons (to involve 100 persons in trainings, it has been planned that half of those who will participate in individual assessment of the person’s suitability for education and work will be involved in training. In the result, only 40% could participate in the training activities).</li> <li>• Difficulties to find employers who are willing to employ the target group;</li> <li>• Difficulties to sustain employment of target group.</li> </ul> <p><b>Success factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Success factors of the project are related to the development of the project team and some particular training programs and employers.</li> <li>• The most successful skills in terms of employment outcomes are shop assistant skills and warehouse employee skills, and there has been a good cooperation with particular chain stores in Latvia.<sup>769</sup></li> <li>• The project proves that persons with mental disorders need continuous support through different stages of the integration into labour market. Providing sufficient support for participants is crucial for their employment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Story box</b></p> <p>“About the aim of the project to integrate into the labour market. The main satisfaction is if a person stays at work for longer than the probation period (a period at the beginning of the contract to assess whether an employee is suitable for the work). Because it is difficult for employers to understand these various diseases and disorders. There is a huge spectrum of mental disorders. It is important that the employer understands the needs of these people in order to integrate them into the new work environment. It is important that colleagues at work would understand and be more tolerant. Sometimes there is a need to repeat something several times, sometimes it would be necessary to show the particular task every day.” (Interview with the expert in education, the Social Integration State Agency)</p>
<p>EU value</p>	<p>Added ESF funding provided a clear added value to fill a policy gap in Latvia regarding the social and labour market inclusion of persons with severe disability and persons with mental disorders (with psychosocial, intellectual and cognitive disabilities).</p> <p>Most of other projects and activities providing training to unemployed people in Latvia are not well-suited to address the specific needs of this particular target group, which needs more comprehensive and tailored support.</p>

<sup>769</sup> Interview with the career counsellor, the Social Integration State Agency.

Section	Description
Elements for transferability /good practices	<p>Without the support of the ESF, this project is unlikely to have been implemented.</p> <p>The project has enhanced capacity of the Social Integration State Agency to deliver services to persons with mental disorders. It is planned that the vocational rehabilitation programs and skills training programs developed within the framework of the project will be implemented also after the end of the project and will be fully financed from the state budget.</p> <p>The transferability of the project is difficult to assess, because it depends on the context of the particular country. Probably, in some Eastern European or post-Soviet countries these practices could be transferable. This assumption is based on the fact, that post-Soviet countries experienced similar policies regarding the persons with severe disability and persons with mental disorders, when these persons were put in isolation without sufficient support.</p>

## **12 The Netherlands - Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014NL05SFOP001)**

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion in the Netherlands (2014NL05SFOP001) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through the end of 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared drawing on desk research and three interviews with the Managing Authority, beneficiary organisation and partner implementing organisation.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'Jeugdwerkloosheidsvrije (Youth unemployment-free) zone'. The selected project was classified as a type 1 operation by the evaluation study. Type 1 operations are employment-focussed actions (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socio-economic indicators of the context, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU-added value of the OP and selected project as well as challenges and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach.

## OP case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p><b>OP:</b> 2014NL05SFOP001 – Netherlands Operational Programme 2014-2020</p> <p><b>Regions covered by the OP:</b> Developed region (Netherlands)</p> <p><b>Priority Axes:</b> The OP is divided into four Priority Axes. Two (priority axes 2 and 3) are dedicated to TO8 and one to TO9.</p> <p><b>IPs:</b> IP9i</p> <p><b>Type of OP:</b> Mono fund (ESF)</p>
OP implementation context	<p>The proportion of people who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion remained relatively stable in the Netherlands from 2014 to 2018 (16.5% in 2014 and 16.7% in 2018).</p> <p>Between 2014 and 2018, the rate of poverty and social exclusion remained stable for women, but slightly increased for men from 15.8% to 16.3%. The overall rate of poverty and social exclusion remains higher for women (17.2% of women in 2018).</p> <p>In 2018, 6.1% of working people were at risk of poverty, which was up from 5.3% in 2014.</p> <p>In addition, a relatively high proportion of persons live in a household with a very low work intensity (8.6% in 2018, similar to the EU average of 8.8%).</p> <p>Moreover, the ageing population constitutes a major challenge and underscores the need to keep sufficient numbers active in the labour force to maintain the welfare system.</p> <p>The Managing Authority is Uitvoering van Beleid (Implementation of Policy), which is the executive agency of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.</p> <p>The Netherlands Enterprise Agency, part of the Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, is the recipient of ESF payments. The Central Government Audit Service is the Audit authority.</p> <p>The ESF Monitoring Committee that evaluates the implementation and progress of the programme includes:</p> <p>The Ministries: Education, Culture and Science; Justice &amp; Security; Economic Affairs and Climate Policy and; Interior and Kingdom Relations</p> <p>Social partners and local authorities.</p> <p>The Dutch Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) and organisations representing education in the Netherlands.</p> <p>The National Institute for Human Rights (CRM)</p> <p>The beneficiaries of ESF TO9 support are local authorities, special schools in 35 labour market regions and the Ministry for Justice &amp; Security.</p> <p>Local authorities are the largest beneficiary group (54% of TO9 funding). The Participation Law, introduced in 2015, puts local authorities in charge of supporting people at the margins of the labour market.</p>

Section	Description			
ESF Priorities and actions	<p>The ESF supports social inclusion actions in the Netherlands through one national OP focused on employment objectives.</p> <p>The main priorities and actions of the OP are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Type 1: Actions with an employment objective</li> </ul> <p>Most OP Actions are part of existing support, e.g. case management.</p> <p>1% of TO9 funding is dedicated to actions including social innovation or transnational cooperation.</p> <p>ESF funds support the implementation of the National Reform Programme, aimed at integrating people in vulnerable conditions into employment through conventional as well as innovative measures aimed at developing methods and instruments to improve active inclusion into the labour market.</p> <p>ESF funds support local authority beneficiary organisations in implementing support for the target group they are responsible for under the Participation Act</p>			
Target groups	<p>The target group is people at the margins of the labour market including unemployed youth, people with disabilities, people who have been unemployed for more than 6-months, older unemployed people, inactive people that are not recipients of public benefits; people with limited language skills, and (ex-) offenders.</p> <p>The target groups were broadly reached, although older people were not supported as much with ESF funding compared to other target groups. Beneficiary organisations generally use other national funds to support this group.</p>			
Operations	<p>227 operations were selected for funding under TO9. Operations largely reflect beneficiary organisations’ strategies to help participants gain entry into the labour market.</p> <p>Most operations are from the 35 labour market regions which submitted applications on behalf of beneficiary organisations (special schools and local authorities).</p>			
Partnerships	<p>No new partnerships were formed.</p> <p>Collaboration between the Managing Authority and the central local authorities (which are responsible for applications of local authority and special school beneficiaries) have improved as a result of the engagement on ESF.</p>			
Funding of the OP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions)</li> </ul>			
IP	Planned (a)	Allocated (b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)

Section		Description			
	IP9i	726,270,248	831,052,396	356,189,636	114%
	Total	726,270,248	831,052,396	356,189,636	114%
<p><i>Source:</i> SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. <i>Note:</i> Planned amounts refer to the whole 2014-2020 programming period while allocated and spent amounts refer to the period up to the end of the 2018 calendar year (31 December 2018).</p>					
<p><b>Co-financing rate: 50%</b></p>					
<p>There are no synergies between ESF and other funding under TO9, but in the same OP there are synergies between ESF funding under TO8 IPs and ERDF funding. Both are used to fund sustainable urban development in the 4 largest cities, focusing on social (ESF) and economic aspects (ERDF).</p>					
Outputs and results (2014/2018)	Total recorded participations for TO9: 517,297				
	<p>The total number of participations greatly overachieved the target set for 2023 of 89,100. The output-level achievement rate greatly exceeds 100%. This high realisation can be attributed to a reduction in administrative burden for beneficiary organisations to implement ESF funding.</p> <p>Common output indicators show that the OP was successful in targeting people at the margins of the labour market (e.g. unemployed) and those in vulnerable conditions (e.g. disabled). People above 54 years of age have proportionally few participations in ESF funded support.</p>				
	Code	Indicator			Number
	CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed			284,163
	CO02	Long-term unemployed			177,436
	CO03	Inactive			125,719
	CO04	Inactive, not in education or training			21,321
	CO05	Employed, including self-employed			107,415
	CO07	Above 54 years of age			41,211
	CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training			33,718
	CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)			300,381
	CO12	Participants who live in jobless households			-
	CO14	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children			-
	CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)			174,010

Section	Description		
	CO16	Participants with disabilities	162,382
	CO17	Other disadvantaged	15,135
	CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	-
	CO18	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	3,665
	CO19	From rural areas	32,639

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Common result indicators show that 65,430 participants were engaged in job searching, education/training, gaining a qualification, or were in employment including self-employment after leaving. After 6 months 50,060 of participants were in employment, including in self-employment. These are early results as some participants have not yet left their support programmes for 6 months.

Code	Indicator	Number
CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	5,114
CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	15,589
CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	8,128
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, on leaving	58,346
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	65,430
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	50,060
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	30,375
CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	2,040
CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	44,916

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

The specific result indicators in the OP measure whether participants have moved into work or more sustainable work. For young people in institutions and ex-offenders, being in education is also a result. Data show results are on track to meet targets, except ex-offenders. For example, the result-level achievement rate was estimated to be 78%. The achievement rate is expected to increase as more participants achieve results after 6 months of leaving the support programme.

Assessment of the OP

Effectiveness:

Section	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The high output-level and result-level achievement rate suggest that the OP was effective in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period.</li> <li>- The estimated success rates – which relate result and output indicators - were more moderate. For example, the estimated success rate for CR04 (Participants in employment, including self-employment, on leaving) was 14% while the estimated success rate for CR06 (Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving) was 12%.</li> </ul> <p>Efficiency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National simplified cost options and a flexible definition of the target group allowing local authorities to target funding to their target groups are the main drivers.</li> <li>- An initial overspend of around 14% on allocated funds compared to the budget is only preliminary: the MA assumes (based on experience) that not all of the allocated amount will be deemed eligible upon final declaration.</li> </ul> <p>Relevance and coherence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The objectives and operations identified for the target groups are relevant to the needs of the target groups. There is clear coherence between the ESF interventions under TO9 and other policies on social inclusion.</li> </ul> <p>Added value of ESF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Volume effects of the operational programme are observable, as the funds enabled support for more participants than would have been possible otherwise.</li> </ul>
<p>Challenges and lessons learned</p>	<p>Flexibility and broad definition of the target group is important in being able to allocate funding in line with local and regional needs as well as to respond to crises such as the refugee crisis.</p> <p>Simplified cost options help effectiveness (increase take-up) and efficiency (lower administrative burden).</p> <p>Applying ESF funding to complex and innovative actions is seen as burdensome. This is the case generally, and is still the case with SCOs, although SCOs are otherwise seen as successfully alleviating some of the administrative burden, in particular for actions that are more established as part of a beneficiary organisations “portfolio”, such as case management (widely applied in the Netherlands). Despite this, there are beneficiary organisations who are eager to develop innovative actions.</p> <p>ESF has been used predominantly to support unemployed or inactive people under the age of 55, as well as those with low educational attainment.</p> <p>People aged 55 or over do not benefit from ESF TO9 as often. This group is often further from the labour market and has complex issues requiring complex support focused on social activation that may be better provided by other national funding.</p>

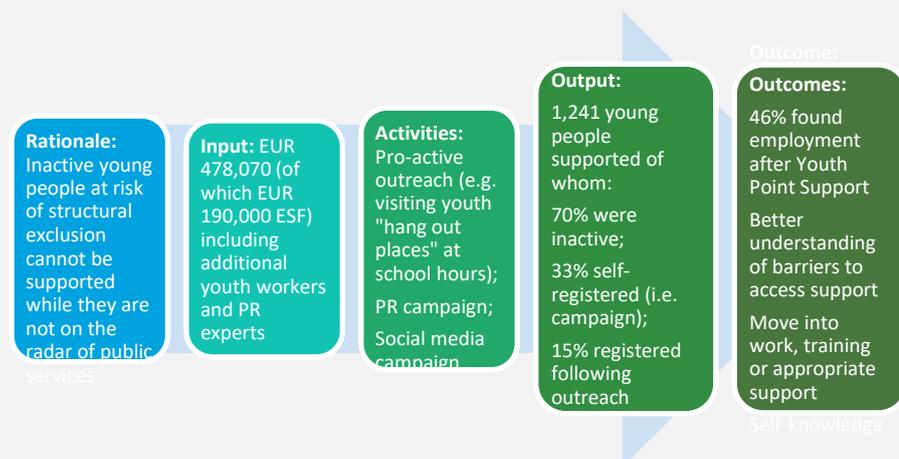
Section	Description
	Achieving results for groups with complex needs remains a challenge, e.g. ex-offenders, people with disabilities, refugees, and older people.

### In-depth analysis of selected project - Jeugdwerkloosheidsvrije zone Midden-Brabant outreach

Section	Description
Basic Facts Box	<p><b>OP:</b> Operational Programme ESF 2014-2020 (2014NL05SFOP001); Priority Axis (PA) 1 Active Inclusion</p> <p><b>Project Name:</b> Jeugdwerkloosheidsvrije zone (Youth unemployment free zone) Midden-Brabant</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> The project promoted the social inclusion of inactive youth through public relations (PR) outreach campaigns and to signpost them to relevant public services.</p> <p><b>Beneficiary:</b> The Tilburg local authority in the Midden-Brabant region.</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> The Youth Point Agency established 'Buro Werktuig', the PR company responsible for outreach.</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 01 July 2017 – 31 December 2018.</p> <p><b>Target groups:</b> The target group included youth aged 23-27 not in education, employment or training (NEET) that were not recipients of public services. This age group covers young people who may be in a vulnerable condition, but are not covered by other services.</p> <p><b>Total allocated funds:</b> € 505,970</p> <p><b>Total allocated ESF funds:</b> € 190,000 (38%) funded by ESF, (62%) funded by the Tilburg central local authority budget.</p>

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Intervention logic of the project/operation



Rationale

A 2013 estimate from the Dutch National Statistics Institute (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek) shows that the Hart van Brabant region

Section	Description
	<p>was home to 3,200 young people who were inactive. Of this group, local authorities in the region estimated a third are at risk of exclusion.</p> <p>Ensuring the inclusion of the target group (i.e. young people in vulnerable conditions) at an early stage is important, as complex barriers and challenges may become structural over time.</p> <p>The project aims to make inactive youth visible to public services and institutions by providing tailored support to individuals in order to improve service provision and accessibility at the system-level.</p> <p>Three activities related to the Youth Unemployment-Free Zone receive ESF funding, under IP9i:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESF Active Inclusion<sup>770</sup> working closely with partners to help unemployed people find a job and help young people in special education make the transition to the labour market (mainstream ESF TO9);</li> <li>• ESF Pilot Joint Action Plan<sup>771</sup>, providing support for young people and refugees</li> <li>• ESF Jeugdwerkloosheidsvrije Zone.<sup>772</sup></li> </ul>
Objectives	<p>By expanding existing outreach activities to be more pro-active, and deploying a PR campaign, the project aims to support inactive youth by promoting opportunities for employment, education and training.</p>
Relevance coherence/ synergies	<p>and</p> <p>The Youth Unemployment-Free Zone strategy, adopted in 2014, strives towards eradicating youth unemployment in the labour market region Midden Brabant.<sup>773</sup></p> <p>The wider strategy aims to support all young people to find a sustainable job, work experience or training within four months of their registration with the dedicated Youth Point, the point of contact for unemployed young people.</p> <p>The ESF-funded outreach activities under the Youth Unemployment-Free Zone are coherent with and relevant to the Youth Unemployment-Free Zone strategy the Participation Law (reforms promoting accessibility for youth with disabilities) and the EU Youth Guarantee.</p>

<sup>770</sup> <https://www.tilburg.nl/stad-bestuur/bestuur/europese-projecten/esf-actieve-inclusie/>

<sup>771</sup> <https://www.tilburg.nl/stad-bestuur/bestuur/europese-projecten/esf-pilot-joint-action-plan/>

<sup>772</sup> <https://www.tilburg.nl/stad-bestuur/bestuur/europese-projecten/esf-sits/>

<sup>773</sup> Labour market regions are a functional division of the Netherlands into 35 labour market regions in which, broadly speaking, local authorities and public services work together to match supply and demand on the labour market

Section	Description
Outputs <sup>775</sup>	<p>The implementation programme for the Youth Unemployment-free zone refers to creating synergies with the national strategy, in particular referring to a letter from the Minister for Social Affairs and Employment setting out causes of youth unemployment (e.g. lack of qualification), as well as the objectives of the European Commission's Youth Guarantee (unemployment spells for young people should not be more than four months).<sup>774</sup></p> <p>This project, focusing on outreach, engages with the hardest-to-reach. i.e. inactive people who have not registered with the public employment service are not eligible for social assistance and are not covered by local authorities responsibility under the Participation Law.</p> <p>Three outreach activities were implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <b>Enhancing the capacity of the existing Youth Point.</b> Youth workers used more proactive methods of engagement to bridge the gap between inactive youth and public services.</li><li>– <b>Setting up the PR agency</b> (Buro Werktuig<sup>776</sup>) for and by young people that enabled them to gain useful skills for the labour market and create a campaign through which they can engage fellow youth.</li><li>– <b>Increasing the online visibility through existing social media channels,</b> to reach young people. The use of social media as a point of entry for youth into the network of public services has already led to an increase in followers and interactions (reactions). It also provides employers with a way of advertising vacancies to the target group. A separate website for parents provides relevant information and contact points.</li></ul> <p>Between 2015-2018, the number of annual registrations with the Youth Point grew from 44 registrations to 714 registrations.<sup>777</sup></p>

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<sup>774</sup> [https://www.regio-hartvanbrabant.nl/images/bestandenvooriedereen/downloadsraadszaken/Radenavond\\_12\\_april\\_2017/Vastgesteld\\_Uitvoeringsprogramma\\_Jeugdwerkloosheidsvrije\\_zone.pdf](https://www.regio-hartvanbrabant.nl/images/bestandenvooriedereen/downloadsraadszaken/Radenavond_12_april_2017/Vastgesteld_Uitvoeringsprogramma_Jeugdwerkloosheidsvrije_zone.pdf)

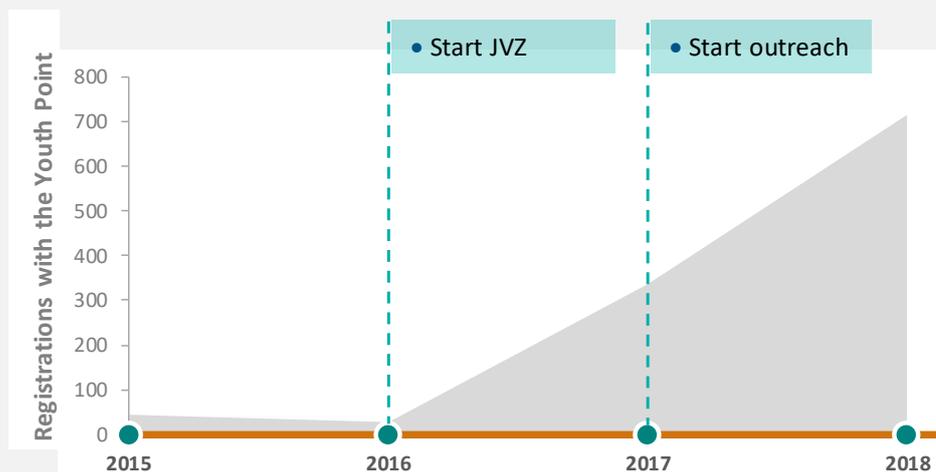
<sup>775</sup> Outputs relating to participants discussed here cover registrations with the Youth Point, and not strictly those who participated in activities funded by ESF.

<sup>776</sup> <https://www.burowerktuig.nl/>

<sup>777</sup> (Panteia, 2019).

Section	Description
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*Registrations at the Youth Point from 2015 to 2018 during implementation of the Youth Unemployment-Free Zone (JVZ) and outreach activities*



*Interim report 2B "Inzicht in uitvoering, output en effecten programma Jeugdwerkloosheidsvrije regio (Insight in implementation, output and effects programme Youth unemployment-free region) by Panteia (2019), provided to ICF by Tilburg LA*

**Delivery method and partnerships**

The delivery of the project built on existing regional partnerships, was also used to implement the wider Youth Unemployment-Free Zone strategy. These partners were also involved in the design.

Tilburg local authority, the central authority for labour market region Midden Brabant, is the project lead.

The main coordinating partner is Midpoint Brabant, with their Youth Point division being responsible for the implementation.

The Youth Point, the contact centre for young people with youth workers, bridges the gap between businesses and employers, government authorities, and educational institutions to address some of the challenges and barriers experienced by young people and youth workers.

Finally, one of the activities implemented by the Youth Point was the establishment of Buro Werktuig, a PR agency "for and by young people". Scheepens<sup>778</sup>, a local PR agency, provided expertise and helped deliver the outreach campaign.

Outreach, central component of the ESF funded operation, was accomplished proactively by youth workers that visited locations frequented by youth during school hours.

<sup>778</sup> <https://www.scheepens.nl/werk/buro-werktuig>

Section	Description
Funding efficiency and	<p>Tilburg local authority and Midpoint Brabant meet regularly to discuss the implementation of the Youth Unemployment-Free Zone Strategy and to provide support and funding to the project. Moreover, The Youth Council (established by the Youth Point and Buro Werktuig) regularly provides insights on the implementation of operations, e.g. the social media campaign:</p> <div><p><b>Story box</b> While one participant enjoyed the outreach advertisement campaign, the Youth Council worried that the depiction of inactive youth was not only may alienate young people further.</p></div> <p>Efficiency should be seen in context of the project's main objective, i.e. to test new ways of reaching inactive young people who are not registered with support services and improve access and provision of services for this group.</p> <p>Planned funding for the project was € 505,970, of which € 190,000 was ESF funding (38% ESF funding). The remainder (€ 315,907) was co-funded by Tilburg as central local authority for the Midden Brabant labour market region, i.e. other local authorities in the region also contributed funding.</p> <p>The actual funding came out slightly under budget, at € 486,887, which constitutes a realisation rate of 96%: some of the initially foreseen activities part of the project were not deemed eligible (enough) for ESF social innovation and transnational cooperation projects (SITS) and therefore were funded by Tilburg rather than ESF. The realisation rate indicates that the funding was sufficient for the implementation of the project and that Tilburg local authority efficiently implemented it.</p> <p>The ESF 2014-2020 programming period introduced the Social Innovation and Transnational Cooperation (SITS) approach. The reporting requirements for ESF SITS projects were not clear at the start and this showed in the quarterly reporting, which were found at first to include insufficient detail. This was addressed by the MA through dissemination of information and close collaboration of regional account holders at the MA with the central local authorities.</p> <p>Overall, EU funding (not just ESF) is seen as introducing a heavy administrative burden. Simplified Costs Options (SCOs) are used in SITS projects to help reduce some of the administrative burden: internal labour costs can be accounted for using hourly registration or addendum and are raised by a standard 32%.<sup>779</sup> Within this specific project, the decision not to include administration (i.e. data collection) on participant outputs and outcomes has reduced administrative costs.</p>

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<sup>779</sup> <https://www.uitvoeringvanbeleidszw.nl/handleiding-projectadministratie/7.2.1-interne-loonkosten>

Section	Description
Effectiveness	<p>The approval and payment of EU funding can often be delayed. Therefore, the Tilburg local authority does not rely on EU funding when budgeting for a project.</p> <p>A cost-benefit analysis estimated that the benefit cost ratio of this project is 14 (the net benefits were estimated to be € 6.625 million while the initial cost was € 486,887.<sup>780</sup> This is under the assumption that young people who registered at the Youth Point at their own initiative, after the start of the PR campaign, did so because of the PR campaign (347 young people). It furthermore assumes that participants in employment earn the minimum wage and that participants who moved into education accrue benefits only in year 2, subject to an employment rate of 70% for 20 to 24-year olds. That said, some of the participants would have ended up in employment or education even had they not taken part in the programme, so the cost benefit ratio is likely to be lower.</p> <p>During the outreach activities, the number of young people who contacted the Youth Point for help increased from 44 in 2015 to 714 in 2018.</p> <p>In 2017 and 2018, 70% of young people who registered were inactive at the time of registration, i.e. the target group of the outreach activities. 33% had registered themselves with the Youth Point at their own initiative (possibly after having had interaction with the PR campaign outreach activities or social media) and 15% registered after being engaged by the Youth Point pro-active outreach by youth workers.<sup>781</sup></p> <p>The outreach activities were very effective in inviting young people to interact with the Youth Point. The social media campaign in particular, also engaged young people outside of the target group.</p> <p>The landscape of youth support organisations have established a better division of roles: The Youth Point focuses on being a bridge between young people and services, and youth workers focus on young people's individual needs.</p> <p>The pro-active outreach approach, initially designed for youth workers to meet young people outside of formal settings was less effective.</p> <p>The Youth Point also received referrals from General Practitioners (GPs) and parents. In response, the Youth Point began to leave information leaflets at GP offices.</p> <p>The project supported numerous inactive youth that had already received vocational education training and were inactive. This highlights the on-going need for support and cooperation between educational institutions and public services.</p>

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<sup>780</sup> See Annex 5 – Cost Benefit Analysis for more information.

<sup>781</sup> (Panteia, 2019).

Section	Description
	<p>In 2018, the following achievements were observed amongst Youth Point participants: 46% of young people transitioned into employment; 12% moved onto social assistance benefits; 10% moved into education and; 2% received health support.</p> <p>Outreach also resulted in the achievement of soft outcomes such as confidence and self-development, illustrated below:</p> <p><b>Story box</b>            A young person struggling with mental health and housing issues registered with the Youth Point after difficulties transitioning into the labour market. After registering to the Youth Point Centre through youth worker outreach, he was referred to a psychologist and helped to address the underlying issues hindered his prospects of securing educational opportunities. By improving his mental health, self-esteem and confidence in the public service system, the previously inactive youth was supported to achieve long-term sustainable employment results.</p> <p>Nevertheless, soft outcomes are not measured by the project. Rather, the focus is on the achievement of short-term targets.</p> <p>At the service level, the project helped to provide new insights into methods to enhancing the accessibility of existing support and service provisions for inactive youth.</p>
Challenges and success factors	<p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Young people with negative experiences in the public service system often distrust institutional support.</li> <li>– Young people are often unfamiliar with public services.</li> </ul> <p><b>Success factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The main success factor has been engaging youth in methods tailored to the particular target group.</li> </ul>
EU Added value	<p>ESF support has helped the project reach a demographic who are in a vulnerable condition that was previously not being reached and has aided a better understanding of barriers experienced by these young people.</p> <p>Through the use of existing regional partnerships the project united stakeholders with a shared purpose and placed youth empowerment initiatives in the local agenda.</p> <p>Better cooperation has also led to better service provision as the available field of support is clearer and young people can be easily referred to the Youth Point.</p>
Elements for transferability/ good practices	<p>Good practices that are transferrable more widely include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increasing visibility of support services and therefore increasing accessibility;</li> </ul>

Section	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Cooperation across services to better streamline provisions of services;</li><li>– Using an individual approach (in this case: young people) to understand the specific needs and issues experienced by people at risk of exclusion or poverty.</li></ul>

### **13 Poland - Knowledge Education Development Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014PL05M9OP001)**

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the Knowledge Education Development (KED) Operational Programme in Poland (2014PL05M9OP001) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through 2019. This case study covers the period from 2014 through the end of 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared from desk research and interviews with national stakeholders.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP, while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project - 'The UN Convention on rights of persons with disabilities in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship'<sup>782</sup>. The selected project was classified as a type 6 operation by the evaluation study. Type 6 operations are actions influencing attitudes and systems (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and the selected project (e.g. socioeconomic indicators, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of the OP and the selected project, together with the challenges and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Success rates were estimated as the number of results generated as a share of the relevant number of participations. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation of achievement rates and success rates. The case study

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<sup>782</sup> The official project title ("Konwencja ONZ o prawach osób niepełnosprawnych w województwie kujawsko-pomorskim", as referred to here: <https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/projekt-konwencja-onz-o-prawach-osob-niepelnosprawnych-w-wojewodztwie-kujawsko-pomorskim>) uses the term 'disabled person' (pol. "osoba niepełnosprawna") rather than a 'person with disability' (pol. "osoba z niepełnosprawnością") as referred to in UN Convention. Therefore the English translation of the project title within this document have been aligned with the UN Convention.

also presents estimates for the cost-per-participation. Annex 5 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation.

## OP Case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p><b>OP:</b> Knowledge Education Development (Programme Operacyjny Wiedza Edukacja Rozwój, POWER) 2014PL05M9OP001</p> <p><b>Regions covered by the OP:</b> 16 provinces of Poland (more developed, less developed)</p> <p><b>Priority Axes:</b> Axis II (TO9) Effective public policies for the labour market, economy and education (<i>Efektywne polityki publiczne dla rynku pracy, gospodarki i edukacji</i>) Axis IV (TO9) Social innovation and transnational cooperation (<i>Innowacje społeczne i współpraca ponadnarodowa</i>) Axis V (TO9) Support for the health sector (<i>Wsparcie dla obszaru zdrowia</i>)</p> <p><b>TO9 Investment Priorities (IPs) selected:</b> IP9i, IP9iv, IP9v</p> <p><b>Type of OP:</b> Multifund (European Social Fund (ESF)/Youth Employment Initiative (YEI))</p>
OP implementation context	<p>The OP was a response to challenges and activities related to the implementation of the 'Europe 2020 Strategy'.</p> <p>It addressed barriers to employment in the Polish labour market: Low participation of women in the labour market (on average about 15% lower than men) due to lack of institutional care for children under three years of age.</p> <p>In 2013, 25.5% of women aged 15-64 were economically inactive (compared to 5.5% of men). The main reason for their professional inactivity was caring responsibilities for children or dependent adults. The number of beneficiaries per social worker remained high, at 66 families on average (20-30 families in 2020).</p> <p>The number of foster care families and family assistants is insufficient, with far too many children (over 20,000 in 2013) in childcare facilities, without an adequate level of individual care.</p> <p>In 2013, 13.5% of Poland's population was aged 65+ (over five million people) and this is forecasted to rise to 17.6% in 2020. The old-age dependency ratio was 19% in 2013, growing to 25.3% in 2018.</p> <p>The position of young people in the labour market is more challenging than that of older age groups as evidenced by their low level of professional activity and a relatively high level of unemployment. At the end of 2013, 18.6% of all registered unemployed were young people, with only one-in-three under-25s professionally active.</p> <p><b>Managing Authorities:</b> The Managing Authority was the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy.</p>

Section	Description
	<p>It was responsible for efficient and correct implementation of the OP overall and its individual projects. It issued guidelines, recommendations and manuals on aspects of programme implementation, as well as undertaking information-sharing and promotion activities<sup>783</sup>.</p>
<p>ESF priorities and actions</p>	<p>Types of OP actions include:</p> <p>Type 1: actions with an employment objective, including: promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility; investing in education, skills and lifelong learning; integration of young people in the labour market; focus on vocational education and training; and participation of women in the labour market.</p> <p>Type 4: access to essential services, including: promoting social inclusion and combating poverty; enhancing institutional capacity and efficient public administration.</p> <p>Type 5: social entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Type 6: measures influencing attitudes and systems.</p> <p>The OP was a national programme that aimed to support systems and structures (with the exception of Priority Axis (PA) I). It complemented the activities of regional programmes, which supported actions targeting individual participants.</p>
<p>Target groups</p>	<p>Young people, including those with disabilities, under 30 years of age, not in employment, education or training (NEET), public administration employees.</p> <p>Local government units (including social assistance organisations) and their employees.</p> <p>Social assistance and inclusion institutions and their employees.</p> <p>Graduates of schools and educational institutions providing vocational education.</p> <p>Education system employees.</p> <p>Teacher training facilities.</p> <p>Pedagogical libraries.</p> <p>Psychological and pedagogical counselling centres.</p> <p>Medical staff.</p> <p>Roma community.</p> <p>Persons serving a prison sentence.</p>

<sup>783</sup> Information from OP KED website. Available at: <https://www.power.gov.pl/strony/o-programie/institucje/institucje-1/>

Section	Description
Operations	<p>Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and their employees.</p> <p>Social economy entities, social enterprises and support centres.</p> <p>Persons intending to establish social economy enterprises.</p> <p>Schools and educational establishments.</p> <p>Universities and research units.</p> <p>Individuals participating in higher education (including students with disabilities).</p> <p>Working age population, primarily from high-risk groups.</p> <p>Dependent persons, including the elderly.</p> <p>Total number of operations: 238.</p> <p>The OP focused on systemic measures at national level and was complemented by regional OPs, which provided individual support.</p> <p>Operations under IP9i included, for example: projects to develop and implement a tool for aggregating, analysing and monitoring data from national-level assessments; social assistance resources at the level of local government units; development and implementation of cooperation models among social assistance/integration institutions and entities of other sectoral policies (e.g. social assistance, education, health, justice and the police); monitoring the activities of government and self-government administrations in respect of the rights of persons with disabilities; creating an instrument to support people with disabilities in their business activities.</p> <p>Operations under IP9iv included, for example: creation of a tool for deinstitutionalisation of foster care at district (<i>poviat</i>) level; providing individual door-to-door transport services for people with reduced mobility; developing standards and pilot projects in the field of assisted housing for people with specific needs, including financing options.</p> <p>Operations under IP9v included, for example: supporting social economy entities by providing repayable financial instruments (e.g. extension of loan offer); creating and developing supra-regional networks of social economy entities, including partnerships, clusters, franchises.</p> <p>Examples of specific projects: (1) 'The UN Convention on rights of persons with disabilities in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship' – the project reviewed 50 tasks of government administration units in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship in light of UN Convention resolutions on the rights of people with disabilities; (2) Coherent regional integration of social economy – the project supported the social economy via counselling and advocacy measures at regional and cross-regional level, in cooperation with the regional social policy centre, within the framework of public policy coherence; (3)</p>

Section	Description																									
	Implementation of a loan tool within the framework of the Social Entrepreneurship National Fund – the project provided financial support for social economy enterprises to develop their activities.																									
Partnerships	<p>Within the framework, OP activities' partnership projects were promoted, with an emphasis on interregional partnerships. In the Pomeranian Voivodeship, for example, social assistance centres, the regional centre for social policy and district labour offices established a partnership in the Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot metropolitan area. The partnership developed joint procedures and documents for district labour offices to standardise their support for emerging social enterprises and exchange experiences.</p> <p>The Managing Authority noted that the OP supports cooperation between various types of stakeholders. For example, project under IP9i aimed at fostering cooperation between institutions supporting the social activation of vulnerable people and district labour offices.</p>																									
Funding of the OP (2014-2018)	<p>Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and national contributions)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>IP</th> <th>Planned (a) EUR</th> <th>Allocated (b) EUR</th> <th>Spent EUR</th> <th>Project Selection Rate (b/a) %</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>IP9i</td> <td>164,961,891</td> <td>103,519,560</td> <td>30,897,921</td> <td>63%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9iv</td> <td>191,789,820</td> <td>181,714,262</td> <td>39,014,085</td> <td>95%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9v</td> <td>87,656,360</td> <td>49,122,283</td> <td>20,420,281</td> <td>56%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>444,408,071</td> <td>334,356,106</td> <td>90,332,287</td> <td>75%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on 10 December 2019.</i></p> <p>OP KED 2014–2020 was financed from the ESF and from a special budget line of the YEI.</p> <p>National funds were used to support actions under the OP.</p> <p>Co-financing rate: 85%.</p>	IP	Planned (a) EUR	Allocated (b) EUR	Spent EUR	Project Selection Rate (b/a) %	IP9i	164,961,891	103,519,560	30,897,921	63%	IP9iv	191,789,820	181,714,262	39,014,085	95%	IP9v	87,656,360	49,122,283	20,420,281	56%	Total	444,408,071	334,356,106	90,332,287	75%
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Outputs and results (2014/2018)	<p>Total participation for TO9: 54,846. The majority of participations were employees of public institutions active in the field of combating poverty and social inclusion. Two specific target groups of participants included ex-prisoners and Roma.</p> <p>Common output indicators – the number of participations were consistent with ESF priorities and actions. The largest number of participants were recorded for other disadvantaged groups – with the</p>																									

Section	Description																																										
	<p>two specific groups of ex-prisoners and Roma - the unemployed<sup>784</sup> and employed (including self-employed)<sup>785</sup>.</p> <p>The OP also recorded specific output indicators. The estimated achievement rate (the recorded values in relation to targets set for the end of the programming period) was 13%. Managing Authority and beneficiaries noted the difficulties in assessing the direct impact on people at risk of exclusion. For example 'The UN Convention on rights of persons with disabilities in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship' project indirectly affects the opportunities for people with disabilities to use government/self-government administration units, making it impossible to measure the numbers of people supported by the project activities. In addition, the Managing Authority notes that participants from projects under IP9i project should be given opportunity to continue activation measures under different TO (e.g. participating in TO8).</p> <p>Common output indicators:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CO01</td> <td>Unemployed, including long-term unemployed</td> <td>25,352</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO02</td> <td>Long-term unemployed</td> <td>538</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO03</td> <td>Inactive</td> <td>5,610</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO04</td> <td>Inactive, not in education or training</td> <td>233</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO05</td> <td>Employed, including self-employed</td> <td>23,884</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO07</td> <td>Above 54 years of age</td> <td>9,681</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO08</td> <td>Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long-term unemployed, or inactive (not in education or training)</td> <td>1,153</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO09</td> <td>With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)</td> <td>16,137</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO12</td> <td>Participants who live in jobless households</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO14</td> <td>Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO15</td> <td>Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as Roma)</td> <td>1,844</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO16</td> <td>Participants with disabilities</td> <td>3,997</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO17</td> <td>Other disadvantaged</td> <td>27,375</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Code	Indicator	Number	CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	25,352	CO02	Long-term unemployed	538	CO03	Inactive	5,610	CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	233	CO05	Employed, including self-employed	23,884	CO07	Above 54 years of age	9,681	CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long-term unemployed, or inactive (not in education or training)	1,153	CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	16,137	CO12	Participants who live in jobless households	-	CO14	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	-	CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as Roma)	1,844	CO16	Participants with disabilities	3,997	CO17	Other disadvantaged	27,375
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<sup>784</sup> This indicator includes also long-term unemployed, but the share of this category supported by this OP was insignificant.

<sup>785</sup> This indicates the employees of public institutions as explained earlier.

Section	Description								
	CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, social economy enterprises)	24						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common result indicators – a total of 29,965 immediate results (CR01-CR04) were achieved, with 9,851 longer-term results (CR06-CR07)<sup>786</sup>. Most of the recorded results (4,824) were participants gaining a qualification (CR03).</li> <li>• The OP also had specific result indicators. The estimated results specific achievement rate was 15%. The interviewed Managing Authorities claimed that the low achievement rate is explained by the small number of projects targeting vulnerable people. However, it should be noted that the composition of the participants groups under TO9 in OP results in significant investments in employees of the public support institutions. While the achievement rate for vulnerable groups (especially ex-prisoners) was relatively high, it was lowered by the rather low rates for the employees of the system. Apart from support for Roma and prisoners, the OP has no direct social inclusion projects that could result in medium and long-term achievements of ESF activities. Regional programmes achieved results faster, through greater impact on a smaller area and the targeting of local target groups, making their effects more noticeable. Differences in results were often justified by contextual specificity, as the labour market and social background in Poland varies substantially by region. The desktop review found limited data on the results of programmes in evaluation studies. No report has been compiled to show the positive influence of completed interventions within the framework of OP KED<sup>787</sup>. The authorities interviewed, however, are dissatisfied with the focus on a results perspective, highlighting the related administrative burden and over-reliance on 'hard' measurable results. This risks overlooking important 'soft' results (e.g. becoming independent of persons with mental illness).</li> </ul> <p>Common result indicators:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CR01</td> <td>Inactive participants engaged in job search upon leaving</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Code	Indicator	Number	CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job search upon leaving	3
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<sup>786</sup> Other indicators excluded due to double counting.

<sup>787</sup> Meta-analysis of evaluations assessing ESF support in Poland – 2018 edition (*Metaanaliza wyników badań ewaluacyjnych dotyczących oceny wsparcia z EFS – raport cząstkowy 2018*), Evaluation for Ministry of Investments and Development, Warsaw 2018.

Section	Description														
	CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	17												
	CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	18,848												
	CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	11,097												
	CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	17,478												
	CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	7,309												
	CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving	2,542												
	CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	164												
	CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	4,113												
	Assessment of the OP	<p><b>Effectiveness:</b> The OP supported structural changes in the fields of employment, social inclusion, health, education and public administration at national level. It focused on systemic measures at national level<sup>788</sup>. Project results were usually indirect and, for example, affected the infrastructure or created a framework for the operation of establishments to help vulnerable people, rather supporting individual participants.</p> <p>The success rate (recorded results as a share of the relevant recorded outputs) for Type 1 operations was generally in line with the EU average. The exception was common result indicator 4, where it amounted to 44%, which was especially high due to effectiveness of actions aimed at ex-prisoners.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Success rate for OP (Type 1 operations)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CR04</td> <td>Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving</td> <td>44%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR06</td> <td>Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving</td> <td>27%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR07</td> <td>Participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving</td> <td>18%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The success rate (recorded results as a share of the relevant recorded outputs) for Type 4 operations was lower than the EU average. Common result indicator 5 amounted to 0.5%.</p>			Code	Indicator	Success rate for OP (Type 1 operations)	CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	44%	CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	27%	CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving
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<sup>788</sup> These were complemented by regional OPs, which provided individual support.

Section		Description
Code	Indicator	Success rate for OP (Type 4 operations)
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaging in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	0.5%

**Efficiency:** The cost per participant for operations under IP9i was estimated at 1,073 euro, lower than the EU average (1,488 euro). The cost per participant for operations under IP9iv was estimated at 1,554 euro higher than the EU average (1,296 euro). The Managing Authority and beneficiaries reported that the timing of implementation of the measures was in line with the plan. However, one should note that as the achievement rates are low (especially for some of the target groups) the efficiency could be increased. Results in the other actions under this PA (especially for ex-prisoners and Roma) were higher. According to Managing Authority representatives this could be attributed to the more systematic support they offered to beneficiaries.

**Relevance and coherence:** The objectives and operations were relevant to the needs of the target groups identified at the programming stage. Funds under TO9 are coherent and with minimum overlaps with TO8<sup>789</sup>. There was clear coherence between the TO9 operations and the policy framework at regional, national and European level. The OP support measures were in line with the priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy. They also directly supported interventions addressing the challenges outlined in the Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs). However, one should note that the problems with coordination of calls between different OPs and sources of funding emerged, as a result of insufficient cooperation between responsible institutions.

According to the Managing Authority's representatives, support at national (OP KED) and regional (RPO) levels complemented one another. At central level, activities were carried out that formed the

<sup>789</sup> According to national guidelines, there is a clear demarcation line between TO8 and TO9 operations. Funds allocated to TO9 cannot finance actions in TO8. However, as both TO8 and TO9 relate to labour market issues, while addressing different problems and focusing on different aspects of activation, they resort to similar target groups. In 2017, the Partnership Agreement was amended, with corresponding changes to the demarcation line between TO8 and TO9. More specifically the description of who can use TO9 changed. The intention was to promote continuation of support for the relevant participants from TO9 under TO8 activities, in order for them not to fall out of the support system.

Section	Description
	<p>basis for activities undertaken in the regions and complemented the interventions already carried out. However, complementarity and coherence might have been limited by the lack of overarching regulations in some areas.</p> <p><b>Added value of the OP:</b> The OP addressed key structural challenges in the fields of employment, social inclusion, health, education and public administration. The ESF accelerated the implementation of the anti-poverty national strategy and other social inclusion programmes.</p> <p>In OP KED projects, some models and tools are being developed to prepare future interventions. One example is monitoring the implementation of programmes for people with disabilities by central institutions and central and local administrations. As the OP is a national programme, its models, mechanisms and standards can later be implemented at regional level (e.g. standards for assisted housing for people with disabilities). The most successful activities were those supporting social economy, at both national and regional level. ESF funds have been crucial in developing this field, as prior to the availability of such funding, no national resources were available to develop the social economy.</p> <p>The use of EU funds initiated the process of de-institutionalisation of social services. As the community-based services could be financed, people in need do not have to resort to institutionalised support. With the implementation of the pilot projects the ESF promoted the de-institutionalisation of some social services, including long-term care services.</p>
Challenges and lessons learned	<p>One of the problems mentioned by interviewed MA was measuring common indicators in a programme that by definition does not directly support vulnerable people. The Managing Authority reported difficulties in finding the right balance between achieving the targets and providing individual – as claimed, often ‘unquantifiable’ - support to participants. The complex monitoring system was also noted as an obstacle.</p> <p>The complexity of the implementation system might also limit the uptake of projects and funds available in the ESF (at both national and regional level).</p> <p>Experts pointed to the need for more integrated support through the development of cross-sectoral cooperation. For example, a ‘one-stop-shop’ approach would give all target groups the necessary information on the services provided by various institutions, or – later – provide</p>

Section	Description
	<p>services to support employment and social integration (in the place of separate PUP and OPS/ PCPR)<sup>790</sup>.</p> <p>Other barriers noted were sociocultural or related to weak support infrastructure, not ready to overcome unforeseen and emerging problems (for example, in case of not well defined or non-existent procedures on the distribution of revenue from commercialisation of intellectual property rights). Analysis of the OP KED suggests that the outcome should be generally positive, applicable to all evaluation criteria<sup>791</sup>.</p> <p>There is evidence that the results of the projects were inadequately disseminated. In the first calls within 'Community-based support system for adults with intellectual disabilities' of the OP KED (PO WER), concerns were raised about the actual dissemination of tested solutions. Previous experience from other projects (e.g. 'EQUAL' in the previous ESF programming period) showed a lack of suitable dissemination at macro level<sup>792</sup>.</p>

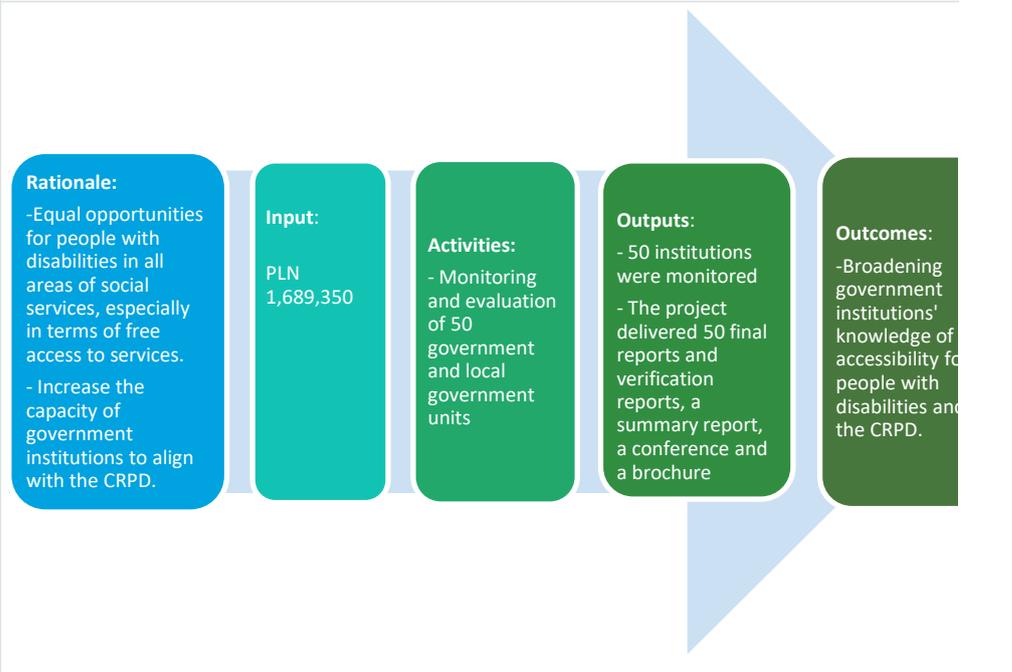
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<sup>790</sup> Meta-analysis of evaluations assessing ESF support in Poland – 2018 edition (*Metaanaliza wyników badań ewaluacyjnych dotyczących oceny wsparcia z EFS – raport cząstkowy 2018*), Evaluation for Ministry of Investments and Development, Warsaw 2018.

<sup>791</sup> Assessment of accuracy and efficiency of project selection criteria in OP KED (*Ocena trafności i skuteczności stosowania kryteriów wyboru projektów w PO WER. Raport końcowy*), Ministerstwo Rozwoju, Warszawa, sierpień 2017 r.

<sup>792</sup> *Raport dla badania pn. „Ewaluacja innowacji społecznych w ramach Programu Operacyjnego Wiedza Edukacja Rozwój” Raport drugi, EGO-Evaluation for Government Organisations s.c., Ośrodek Ewaluacji Sp. z o.o., Warszawa, październik 2018.*

## In-depth analysis of selected project – The UN Convention on legal rights of persons with disabilities in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship

Section	Description
Basic facts box	<p><b>OP:</b> Knowledge Education Development (KED) Operation Programme – OP KED (<i>Program Operacyjny Wiedza Edukacja Rozwój, PO WER</i>).</p> <p><b>Project name:</b> 'The UN Convention on rights of persons with disabilities in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship'.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Increase the capacity of 50 government and local government units operating in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship to deliver policies and practices aligned with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).</p> <p><b>Activity:</b> Review of 50 governmental administration units in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship from the perspective of the adjustment to UN Convention resolutions concerning the rights of persons with disabilities.</p> <p><b>Beneficiaries:</b> 'Stabilo' Foundation.</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 1 January 2017 – 31 October 2018.</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> The project was carried out in partnership with three NGOs: 'Stabilo' Foundation, 'Arkadia' Foundation, Court Watch Polska Foundation.</p> <p><b>Total allocated funds:</b> PLN 1,689,350.40.</p> <p><b>Total allocated ESF funds:</b> PLN 1,423,784.51.</p> <p>Funding was provided by the ESF (85%) and the national budget (15%).</p> <p>Case study is based on five interviews with the Managing Authority, beneficiary, partners and participants.</p>
Intervention logic of the project	 <pre> graph LR     R[Rationale] --&gt; I[Input]     I --&gt; A[Activities]     A --&gt; O[Outputs]     O --&gt; Out[Outcomes]     </pre> <p><b>Rationale:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Equal opportunities for people with disabilities in all areas of social services, especially in terms of free access to services.</li> <li>- Increase the capacity of government institutions to align with the CRPD.</li> </ul> <p><b>Input:</b></p> <p>PLN 1,689,350</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring and evaluation of 50 government and local government units</li> </ul> <p><b>Outputs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 50 institutions were monitored</li> <li>- The project delivered 50 final reports and verification reports, a summary report, a conference and a brochure</li> </ul> <p><b>Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Broadening government institutions' knowledge of accessibility for people with disabilities and the CRPD.</li> </ul>

Section	Description
Rationale	<p>The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 13 December 2006. The Polish government signed it on 20 March 2007 and ratified it on 6 September 2012.</p> <p>Poland is thus obliged to implement the standards of conduct contained in the Convention in order to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise their rights.</p> <p>The project 'The UN Convention on rights of persons with disabilities in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship'sought to increase public policy entities' capacity to implement the provisions of the CRPD.</p> <p>The projects carried out sought to verify and adjust the policies and practices of government and local government (e.g. municipal office, district office) in line with the CRPD<sup>793</sup>.</p>
Objectives	<p>The aim of the project was to increase the capacity of 50 government and local government units in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship to deliver policies and practices aligned with the CRPD.</p> <p>The project analysed the practices of these institutions (e.g. accessibility, digital services, availability of services such as sign language interpretation) and developed recommendations<sup>794</sup>.</p> <p>The project aimed to increase the usability of public services and institutions by people with disabilities.</p>
Relevance and coherence/ synergies	<p>The project was aligned with the CRPD, the Polish Accessibility+ Programme, and the activities of the Ombudsman operating under the Polish Commission for Human Rights<sup>795</sup>.</p> <p>It also aligned with social inclusion strategies: Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship Development Strategy 2020 and the Modernisation Plan 2020+ goal of active society and efficient services<sup>796</sup>.</p> <p>The project was one of 17 national monitoring projects.</p> <p>Although the UN Convention was signed by the Polish government on March 20, 2007, (and the ratification of the Convention by Poland took</p>

<sup>793</sup> <https://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/nabory/26-wysoka-jakosc-polityki-na-rzecz-wlaczania-spoiecznego-i-zawodowego-osob-niepelnosprawnych-1/>

<sup>794</sup> <https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/projekt-konwencja-onz-o-prawach-osob-niepelnosprawnych-w-wojewodztwie-kujawsko-pomorskim>

<sup>795</sup> <https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/projekt-konwencja-onz-o-prawach-osob-niepelnosprawnych-w-wojewodztwie-kujawsko-pomorskim>

<sup>796</sup> Interview with representative of the Managing Authority responsible for the project/operation.

Section	Description
	<p>place on September 6, 2012), the project implementation showed that there is significant room for improvement in practices of public institutions, not only in relation to physical accessibility of services, but also for example to the language used by government workers.</p>
Outputs	<p>The project identified the following results<sup>797</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 50 government and local government units were monitored.</li> <li>- partnership of three NGOs was created.</li> </ul> <p>Through monitoring and evaluation, the project also delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 50 final reports;</li> <li>- 50 verification reports;</li> <li>- One summary report;</li> <li>- One conference<sup>798</sup>;</li> <li>- One brochure on education for people with disabilities<sup>799</sup>.</li> </ul>
Delivery method and partnerships	<p>The project was implemented by a consortium of three organisations, led by the Stabilo Foundation (<i>Fundacja Stabilo</i>).</p> <p>Stabilo Foundation (<i>Fundacja Stabilo</i>) is an organisation that specialises in social consultation and joint projects with government institutions. Arkadia Foundation (<i>Fundacja Arkadia</i>) is a foundation that enhances institutional support and accessibility for people with disabilities. Court Watch Polska Foundation (<i>Fundacja CourtWatch Polska</i>) specialises as a monitoring 'watch-dog' in the area of disability.</p> <p>The partnership was a formal requirement to take part in the programme. The representative of the Managing Authority, as well as members of the foundations, consider the partnership one of success factor of the programme.</p> <p>The partnership was established within the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Confederation of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (<i>Kujawsko-Pomorskiej Konfederacji Organizacji Pozarządowych</i>).</p> <p>The project was delivered in the following stages:            Administrative units to be monitored were selected in accordance with the methodology prepared by the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Persons with Disabilities.            Institutions were contacted by the Stabilo Foundation to finalise the monitoring agreement.            Organisations completed an online self-evaluation survey.            Eight steering committee members were tasked with managing the process of monitoring the institutions, while nine monitoring groups</p>

<sup>797</sup> Data provided by the Managing Authority.

<sup>798</sup> <http://stabilo.org.pl/konferencja-konwencja-onz/>

<sup>799</sup> Brochure titled: 'Savoir-vivre for people with disabilities'.

Section	Description
	<p>were set up, each consisting of three people, including people with disabilities. Each research group visited the administrative unit three times. Consortium drafted conclusions and recommendations based on the data gathered.</p> <p>The monitoring also included interviews with stakeholders, such as residents of a given region, employees of an institution, or organisations that cooperated with that institution.</p>
Funding and efficiency	<p>Funding was provided by the ESF (85%) and the national budget (15%).</p> <p>All stakeholders found that the funds allocated to the programme were sufficient for its proper implementation<sup>800</sup>.</p> <p>ESF support did not fund the subsequent implementation of changes outlined in the monitoring stage. Grants for administrative units to implement the findings could encourage institutional change.</p>
Effectiveness	<p>The project broadened government institutions' knowledge of accessibility issues for people with disabilities and CRPD<sup>801</sup>.</p> <p>The project indirectly enabled people with disabilities to access public services in the region. However, the evidence on effectiveness is hard to quantify.</p>
Challenges and success factors	<p>Success factors<sup>802</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Synergies between the consortium: the cooperation between the three foundations did not experience any major obstacles. The expertise of the individual foundations complemented one another.</li> </ul> <p><b>Story box:</b> '[...] the project was a success thanks to the partnership between the cooperating foundations, who, above all, have extensive experience in the implementation of projects.' <i>(Representative of Managing Authority)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research groups: Each research group of the monitoring unit included a person with a disability, enabling the identification of accessibility issues.</li> </ul>

<sup>800</sup> Interview with representative of Stabilo Foundation and CourtWatch Polska Foundation.

<sup>801</sup> Interview with representative of the Managing Authority responsible for the project/operation.

<sup>802</sup> Interview with representative of the Managing Authority responsible for the project/operation.

Section	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced accessibility for people with disabilities in smaller municipalities or rural municipalities that receive limited support from public institutions.</li> </ul> <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Administrative units' lack of knowledge of the CRPD.</li> <li>- Lack of public trust and fear of negative consequences associated with the evaluation affected units' willingness to participate in the monitoring.</li> <li>- Lack of funds to implement the recommendations stemming from the monitoring.</li> </ul> <p><b>Story box:</b>            'We had difficulties making changes to the accessible bathrooms due to funding constraints and architectural barriers.'  <i>Representative of local government unit</i></p>
EU added value	<p>Advantages for the foundations included: development of research processes for stakeholders; networking and relationship building with the institutions monitored; NGO networks.</p> <p>The foundations reported an increase in own their knowledge of the CRPD and accessibility issues for people with disabilities. For example, the brochure on the language used in conversations with people with disabilities by employees of governmental and self-governmental institutions have been prepared and disseminated. It helps to directly serve the public institutions' customers with disabilities.</p>
Elements for transferability/good practices	<p>There were 17 monitoring projects across the country, in 16 regional and one national administration.</p> <p>The project could be useful to other EU Member States struggling to implement the CRPD at an institutional level.</p>

## 14 Poland - Silesian Voivodeship Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014PL16M2OP012)

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the Silesian Voivodeship Operational Programme in Poland (2014PL16M2OP012) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through the end of 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The preparation of the case study drew from desk research and interviews with national stakeholders.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP, while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'Social Economy Support Centre – central-western subregion'. The selected project was classified as a Type 5 operation by the evaluation study. Type 5 operations relate to actions focused on social entrepreneurship (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and the selected project (e.g. socioeconomic indicators, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of the OP and the selected project, together with the challenges and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Success rates were estimated as the number of results generated as a share of the relevant number of participations. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation of achievement rates and success rates.

### OP Case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p><b>OP:</b> Regional Operational Programme (ROP) for Silesian Voivodeship (2014PL16M2OP012).</p> <p><b>Regions covered by the OP:</b> Silesian Voivodeship (less developed regions)</p> <p>Priority Axes (PA): PA IX (Thematic Objective 9 (TO9) - Social inclusion (European Social Fund (ESF)), PA X (TO9): Revitalisation of social and health infrastructure (European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)).</p> <p><b>TO9 Investment Priorities (IPs) selected:</b> IP9i, IP9iv, IP9v.</p> <p><b>Type of OP:</b> Multi-fund ERDF/ESF.</p>
OP implementation context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Silesian Voivodeship - region, which had the second highest share of national GDP and was the second largest research centre in the country, is characterised by a high degree of industrialisation. There is a higher employment rate in the service sector, a lower rate in the production sector, and a relatively high level of structural unemployment (stemming from skills/qualifications mismatch).</li> </ul> <p>At the end of December 2013, 208,296 persons were registered as unemployed in Silesian Voivodeship. At 11.2%, the unemployment rate</p>

Section	Description
	<p>was slightly lower than the national average (11.4%). This rate varied across the region, however, from 5.4% in Katowice to 21.7% in Częstochowa.</p> <p>At the end of December 2013, the number of unemployed persons with disabilities amounted to 12,800, having increased by 347 persons (2.8%) in a single year. The share of the unemployed with disabilities increased slightly from 6.1% in 2012 to 6.2% in 2013.</p> <p>In 2013, the severe poverty rate in the Voivodeship was 4.8% (7.4% in Poland), while the relative poverty rate was 11.2% (16.2% in Poland). The share of people under the statutory poverty line was 8.3% (12.8% in Poland). However, the Silesian Voivodeship was the only region in Poland with higher rates of severe poverty in cities than in villages.</p> <p>In 2013, 123,934 families (296,430 individuals) were receiving social assistance in the Silesian Voivodeship. 6.4% of the population benefitted from social assistance, compared to 9.6% nationally.</p> <p>In 2013, there were 97 social economy entities working on integration in the Silesian Voivodeship (social integration centres, social integration clubs, professional activity centres, occupational therapy workshops, social cooperatives, non-profits, etc.).</p> <p>While the regional OP modified once, the Detailed Description of the Priority Axis was changed 38 times during the period.</p> <p><b>Managing Authority:</b> The Managing Authority responsible for the implementation of the OP is the Board of the Silesian Voivodeship.</p> <p>The core tasks were performed by the following departments: Department of Regional Development, Department of European Regional Development Fund and Department of European Social Fund.</p>
ESF Priorities and actions	<p>Types of actions within this OP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Type 1: actions with an employment objective;</li> <li>– Type 4: access to essential services;</li> <li>– Type 5: social entrepreneurship;</li> <li>– Type 6: measures influencing attitudes and systems.</li> </ul> <p>The priorities and actions did not change between the planning and the implementation stages. The only changes were<sup>803</sup>:</p>

<sup>803</sup> An analysis of indicators was carried out in 2015 and 2017. In 2015, a report that analysed 20 indicators was published ("Verification and estimation of the values of selected ROP WSL 2014-2020 indicators"). In 2017, a subsequent statistical analysis was published ("Analysis concerning the verification of the established

Section	Description
Target groups	<p>Change in the target value of the indicator from the performance framework (due to a change in allocation);            Changes in target values of result indicators (due to the change of allocation);            Transfer within the PA of EUR 1,035 million from social economy to social services.<sup>804</sup></p> <p>Target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– According to the definition in the national guidelines on TO9<sup>805</sup> - persons at risk of poverty and social exclusion, including people with disabilities, ex-offenders, persons suffering from housing exclusion, and substance abusers;</li> <li>– Communities inhabiting disadvantaged rural areas;</li> <li>– Pregnant women and young people in rehabilitation programmes, etc.<sup>806</sup>;</li> <li>– Social economy entities, including social enterprises.</li> </ul> <p>As both TO8 and TO9 relate to labour market issues, they often target the same groups (e.g. workers, young people) but cover different problems and focus on different aspects of activation. In 2017, the Partnership Agreement was amended, with corresponding changes to the demarcation line between TO8 and TO9.</p>
Operations	<p>Total number of operations under TO9: 210.<sup>807</sup></p> <p>Operations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IP9i: measures to support for reintegration and socio-occupational rehabilitation of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion through use of potential of entities operating for social and professional activation; comprehensive social and professional integration programs for people with disabilities; comprehensive activation programs targeted at making people independent; measures to strengthen the social and professional potential of local communities, taking into account the specificities of the territory and inhabiting communities.</li> </ul>

methodology and estimation of the value of selected product and result indicators for the ESF under ROP WSL 2014-2020").

<sup>804</sup> In addition, as part of the first change of the Regional Operational Program of the Silesian Voivodeship, funds in the amount of EUR 20 million were transferred from IP9i to IP 9iv

<sup>805</sup> Operational programme.

<sup>806</sup> Operational programme.

<sup>807</sup> As identified in the extraction from SFC2014.

Section	Description										
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IP9iv: measures for the development of care and specialised care services to prioritise community-based care, including support to the foster care; actions to improve the quality and availability of family support services; actions for the development of assisted housing services, by providing access to services provided in sheltered housing, flats or supported training homes for people at risk of poverty or exclusion supporting the process of their social or professional integration;</li> <li>• IP9v: targeted counselling, education and business services for effective functioning of social economy entities, including increasing vocational qualifications of social economy employees within the framework of social entrepreneurship; support for people excluded or at risk of social exclusion through social economy entities; Providing animation and incubation services at the local level, in particular to support partnerships that enhance the social economy.</li> </ul>										
Partnerships	<p>The Managing Authority implemented the principle of partnership with relevant regional and local institutions at programming, monitoring and evaluation stages.</p> <p>Projects under TO9 were implemented through several partnerships and collaborations between social services, including units specialising in care services (e.g. Regional Foundation for the Support of the Blind), other institutions (e.g. local government - municipal office, district office), NGOs, foundations and associations. Partnerships are created both formally and informally.</p> <p>Partnerships provided a solid framework for project implementation. Some partnerships established during previous programming period applied jointly for the allocation of funds in this programming period. For example, the Regional Cooperation Association that implemented the project 'Social Economy Support Centre - central-western subregion' has been operating since 2006 and includes care services (Regional Foundation of the Support of the Blind), official units (Ruda Agency of Development, 'Inwestor'), private entities (Vinci &amp; Vinci Legal Advisors and Lawyers, M.Zychla, P.Vinci, Polish Television, Katowice branch).</p>										
Funding of the OP (2014-2018)	<p>Annex 1 Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>IP</th> <th>Planned<sup>808</sup></th> <th>Allocated<sup>809</sup></th> <th>Spent<sup>810</sup></th> <th>Absorption rate (Allocated/Planned)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>IP9i</td> <td>€138,416,774</td> <td>€81,547,623</td> <td>€35,702,657</td> <td>59%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	IP	Planned <sup>808</sup>	Allocated <sup>809</sup>	Spent <sup>810</sup>	Absorption rate (Allocated/Planned)	IP9i	€138,416,774	€81,547,623	€35,702,657	59%
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<sup>808</sup> Operational programme - last extraction 01/07/2019

<sup>809</sup> Annual implementation report - last extraction 12/07/2019

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Section	Description																																	
	IP9iv	€128,013,418	€54,301,886	€10,541,320	42%																													
	IP9v	€38,267,900	€31,319,434	€9,647,404	82%																													
	Total	€304,698,092	€167,168,943	€55,891,380	55%																													
	<p><i>Source:</i> SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.</p> <p>Multi-fund OP: ESF/ERDF.</p> <p>National funds are used to support actions under the OP. The national co-financing rate is 15%.</p>																																	
Outputs and results (2014-2018)	<p>Total recorded number of TO9 participations: 10,967</p> <p>Common output indicators – The largest number of participations was among inactive groups, over 54 years of age, with low educational level. The OP also supported participants with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>The estimated achievement rate (the recorded values in relation to targets set for the end of the programming period) amounted to 46%. Implementation was slower than expected, as a slightly improved socioeconomic situation in the region following the planning period affected some beneficiaries (unemployment rate of 4.3% in 2018, compared to 5.8% overall in Poland). In addition, the coexistence of various financing possibilities and instruments, including integrated territorial investments (ZIT) and regional territorial investments (RIT), caused coordination problems, leading to overlaps and internal competition among institutions involved. Finally, social benefits – primarily the introduction of the ‘Family 500+’ programme<sup>811</sup> – reduced interest in participation. All of these factors influenced the implementation of the programme.</p> <p>Common Output Indicators:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CO01</td> <td>Unemployed, including long-term unemployed</td> <td>2,461</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO02</td> <td>Long-term unemployed</td> <td>924</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO03</td> <td>Inactive</td> <td>6,969</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO04</td> <td>Inactive, not in education or training</td> <td>1,303</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO05</td> <td>Employed, including self-employed</td> <td>1,537</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO07</td> <td>Above 54 years of age</td> <td>3,259</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO08</td> <td>Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training</td> <td>987</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO09</td> <td>With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)</td> <td>3,371</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO12</td> <td>Participants who live in jobless households</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Code	Indicator	Number	CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	2,461	CO02	Long-term unemployed	924	CO03	Inactive	6,969	CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	1,303	CO05	Employed, including self-employed	1,537	CO07	Above 54 years of age	3,259	CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	987	CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	3,371	CO12	Participants who live in jobless households	-
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<sup>811</sup> Parents can receive a tax-free benefit of PLN 500 (about EUR 120) per month per child until they reach the age of 18. It was introduced in November 2017 and significantly changed the financial situation of low-income families (especially those with more than two children).

Section	Description	
CO14	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	-
CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	65
CO16	Participants with disabilities	3,884
CO17	Other disadvantaged	3,361
CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	-

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Common result indicators – In total, 16 immediate results (CR01-CR04) were recorded. The interviewees noted several reasons for the slow intake and low achievement rates. As stated by the Managing Authority the low number of results generated in the immediate term can be explained by the length of time required to provide comprehensive and individualised support to participants. In addition, the assistance primarily targeted people who are far from the labour market e.g. elderly people and people with mental illness) and therefore the OP was inherently likely to be less efficient than an intervention that would instead have targeted people closer to the labour market. Stakeholders interviewed noted that the common result indicators caused concern among the participants when measured six months after the intervention. In many cases, the social service interventions were not designed to lead to employment, meaning the indicators were not well suited for measurement.

The OP also defined specific result indicators. The estimated specific results achievement rate was 12%. The overall performance of TO9 varied across the OPs. The interviewed Managing Authority attributed this relatively low level of achievement to the slow start of the programmes as a result of complicated administrative procedures. However, there is no evidence in existing evaluation studies<sup>812</sup> to further back up this statement, and the level of achievement is assessed to be low.

<sup>812</sup> The studies revised included: "Verification and estimation of the value of selected indicators of the Regional Operational Program of the Śląskie Voivodeship for the years 2014-2020" Wrocław Regional Development Agency SA, December 2015; "Analysis of the situation of voivodships in the areas of influence of the European Social Fund in 2007-2014" Ministry of Development, March 2016; "Meta-analysis of the results of evaluation studies on the evaluation of support from EFS - partial report 2016" Evalu, October 2016; "Meta-analysis of the results of evaluation studies on the evaluation of support from EFS - partial report 2016" Evalu, June 2018; "Complementarity of interventions implemented under the ROP WSL 2014-2020 - evaluation of the mechanisms for implementing complementary projects. Final report" Dispatch, December, 2017; "Evaluation of the level of achievement of the value of the long-term result indicator "Number of people in a better situation

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Assessment of the OP	<p><b>Effectiveness:</b> The obstacles encountered by the Managing Authority in the implementation of the OP and the achievement of its objectives stemmed from the improving labour market situation, inadequate coordination of actions, slow start of the programmes and bureaucratic burden.</p> <p>Changing socio-economic situation resulting in a change in the condition of target groups in projects implemented under the ESF significantly hindered the recruitment of project participants under T09, and had a negative impact on effectiveness<sup>813</sup>.</p> <p>The success rate (the recorded results as a share of the relevant recorded outputs) for Type 1 operations was lower than the EU average - common result indicator 4 was 0.06%. This was especially low for people at the risk of poverty and social exclusion working looking for work, participating in education or training, acquiring qualifications, working (including self-employed) after leaving the program.</p>																														

on the labour market, six months after leaving the program" under the ROP WSL for 2014-2020, Dyspersja 2017; "Evaluation of social innovation within the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development" First report. EGO, January 2018; "Evaluation of social innovation within the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development" Second report, EGO, October 2018.

<sup>813</sup> Mid-term evaluation on material progress of the Regional Operational Program of the Silesia Voivodeship for the years 2014-2020 and the contribution of the Program to the implementation of the EU 2020 strategy for the mid-term review

Section	Description
	<p>The Managing Authority attributed this to the length of time required to provide comprehensive and individualised support to participants and target groups who are more challenging to activate (e.g. people over 55 years and people with mental illness). As claimed by the MA, the effectiveness of this support would be enhanced if implemented in conjunction with longer-term projects (lasting over 3 years) that enhance the employment-readiness of the target group.</p> <p>Other actions indirectly supported the aims of social inclusion, such as public employment services for those leaving prison, taking into consideration the clear demarcation lines between regional and central levels and TO8 and TO9 activities. The Managing Authority noted that financial supports should be longer in order to support these target groups more effectively. It also emphasised the need for more coordinated and complex interventions that takes into account the broader socioeconomic context. The need for co-financing (which could also be provided in-kind) can hinder the effectiveness of ESF operations under TO9, especially in relation to actions involving NGOs. This not only relates to the initiation of projects, but also to the risk of uneven cash flow and staff shortage during the project<sup>814</sup>.</p> <p>The Managing Authority and beneficiaries noted the generation of soft outcomes in particular that ESF changed participants' situations. The projects helped participants in several ways, including self-presentation skills, coping with stress, increasing digital skills. The Managing Authority pointed out that people with advanced mental illness became more independent (e.g. shopping, preparing meals without the help of assistant).</p> <p><b>Efficiency:</b> At the end of 2018, 145 projects were completed for a grant of EUR 24 million. The Managing Authority and the beneficiary interviewed reported that the resources allocated and the timing of the implementation of the measures were in line with what was planned. However, some more complex operations with social economy entities, such as the 'Social Economy Support Centre (central-western subregion)' project, might have had lower efficiency, because of many of the independent factors relating to programming and implementation, which changed over time (e.g. product prices, minimum wage guidelines). Projects thus need to be continuously adapted and their efficiency might change over time.</p> <p>Organisational and administrative arrangements at all levels were considered important for the overall efficiency of operations. They were generally negatively perceived, however, given the burden they imposed on applicants and beneficiaries.</p>

<sup>814</sup> According to the „Evaluation regarding the participation of entities of the third sector in the implementation of the Regional Operational Program of the Silesian Voivodeship for 2014-2020“ 39.3% of third sector entities encountered financial problems while applying for RPO funds, while 24.1% pointed to lack of staff.

Section	Description
Challenges and lessons learned	<p><b>Relevance and coherence:</b> The objectives and operations implemented were relevant to the needs of the target groups identified and covered by operations. Inadequacy of interventions in some of areas (and thus the difficulty in fully achieving the objectives of the regional OP WSL 2014-2020 in relation to these areas, mainly concerning the ESF) in existing evaluation studies is attributed to a general change in the socio-economic situation, with particular emphasis on changes in the labour market and the introduction of the 500+ program<sup>815</sup>. These changes, which are undoubtedly beneficial from the point of view of the region and its inhabitants, mean that certain problems, challenges and objectives of the Program lose their relevance and the rationale for undertaking specific actions concerning them decreases. Due to the indicated change in the socio-economic situation, certain adaptation activities were undertaken under the Program, which were oriented at adapting the provisions and objectives of the Program to the current situation. Other instruments, including ZIT and RIT, were also used in the region, making coordination of actions problematic.</p> <p><b>Added value:</b> ESF funds supported the implementation of measures to reduce poverty and enhance social inclusion, with a view to integrating individuals into the labour market and reducing inequality in access to social services. The Managing Authority used the ESF funds to reinforce social and health services. Day care homes, which in majority related to expansion of existing ones, but also included establishment of new facilities, for example, improved the care system for the elderly. As noted by interviewees the most successful were activities in the field of supporting social economy, as the national funds have not been available. ESF funding broadened the scale of the social economy sector, through for example establishing new jobs in social enterprises, increasing the number and stability of jobs in the social economy, increasing the employability and social activation of people at risk of social exclusion. Research conducted by the Regional Centre for Social Policy of the Silesian Voivodeship showed that in the years 2014-2018, 1,018 jobs were created in social enterprises as a result of grants. These workplaces were co-financed by the ESF (82.5%), as part of the support granted by the Social Economy Support Centre (OWES). One in two jobs subsidised in this period (51.2%) still existed one year later.</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Initially, the delay was associated with the approval of the regional OP WSL 2014-2020, which was a prerequisite for launching the</p>

<sup>815</sup> Mid-term evaluation on material progress of the Regional Operational Program of the Silesia Voivodeship for the years 2014-2020 and the contribution of the Program to the implementation of the EU 2020 strategy for the mid-term review

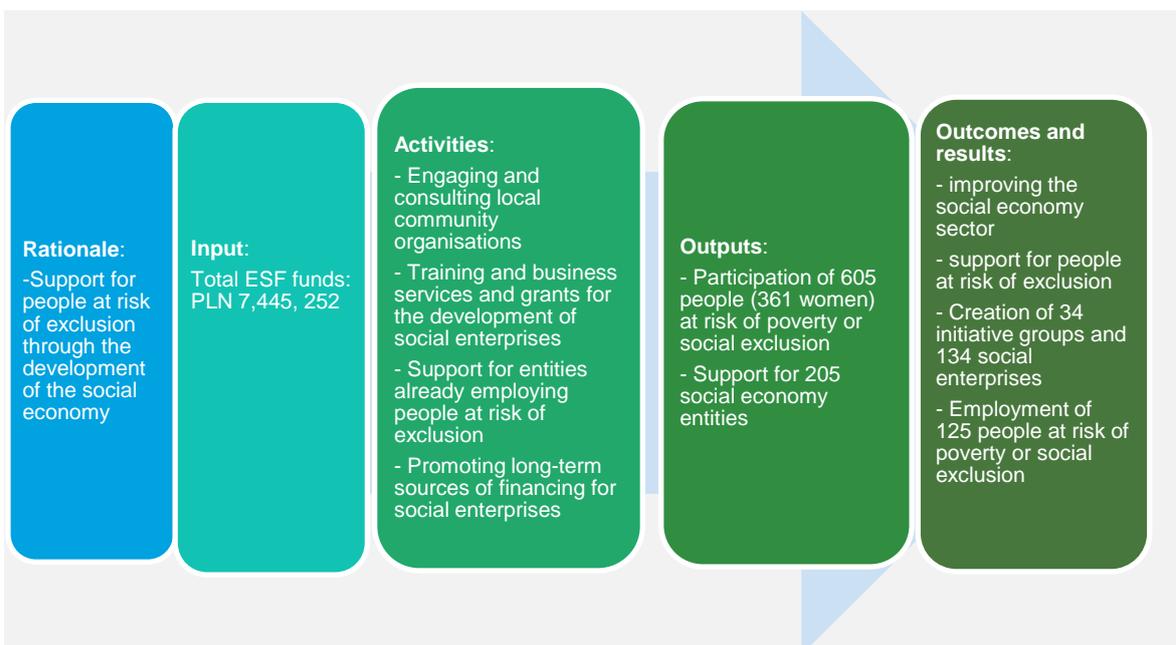
Section	Description
	<p>intervention<sup>816</sup>. Later, the pace of implementation was slow, due to low interest in the calls for proposals, as well as a delay in preparing the local development programmes (related to beneficiaries' lack of understanding of terms and conditions of the ESF). Regular information meetings were set up with prospective applicants for calls for proposals.</p> <p>The region struggles with a shortage of properly trained or educated social workers and a shortage of healthcare staff, creating staffing issues for some projects<sup>817</sup>.</p> <p>The delayed implementation of the initial phase of the ROP for Silesian Voivodeship 2014-2020 shortened the time intended for the realisation of medium-term objectives (primarily financial) and influenced the entire programme. According to MA, the relatively long time taken to evaluate applications for financing further impeded the realisation of projects or resulted in some project activities being cancelled.</p> <p>Mutual conditioning of projects financed from the ERDF and ESF required cross-fund complementarity. The introduction of two funds required the use of mechanisms to provide linking financial interventions from a given source (for certain elements). In the initial phase of the ROP implementation the involved institutions did not have the mechanisms to coordinate the calls and support multi-fund complementarity, which slowed down the process. No integrated projects were implemented within the framework of the ROP for Silesian Voivodeship 2014-2020. Due to the complicated procedures to be followed during the call for proposal or reporting on the progress of project work, the institutions involved were not interested in implementation of such projects.</p> <p>For PA IX (social inclusion), there were no major implementation problems from 2015-2016. In 2017, however, issues emerged with (low) interest in competition, narrowed target groups (connected to socioeconomic changes) and improved living conditions of the population. Those issues were met with countermeasures in the form of information meetings for each competition and individual meetings with potential applicants. This likely limited the possibility of achieving the target values of indicators set at a time when the scale of needs in the discussed areas was larger.</p>

<sup>816</sup> Mid-term evaluation on material progress of the Regional Operational Program of the Silesia Voivodeship for the years 2014-2020 and the contribution of the Program to the implementation of the EU 2020 strategy for the mid-term review

<sup>817</sup> Interview with Managing Authorities and the focus group.

## In-depth analysis of selected project: Social Economy Support Centre (central-western subregion)

Section	Description
Basic facts box	<p><b>OP:</b> Regional Operational Programme for Silesian Voivodeship for 2014-2020.</p> <p><b>Project Name:</b> Social Economy Support Centre (central-western subregion).</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> August 2015 - July 2018.</p> <p><b>IP:</b> 9v - Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises, as well as social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> The project provides people at risk of poverty with stable jobs in social enterprises in the area of central-western Silesian Voivodeship (i.e. <i>Bytom, Katowice, Piekary Śląskie, Ruda Śląska, lubliniecki district, tarnogórski district</i>).</p> <p><b>Beneficiary:</b> Regional Cooperation Association.</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Ruda Agency of Development 'Inwestor', Polish Television, Katowice branch, Vinci &amp; Vinci Legal Advisors and Lawyers, M.Zychła, P.Vinci, Regional Foundation of the Support of the Blind.</p> <p><b>Total Allocated Funds:</b> PLN 8,759,120 ( EUR 1,962,218).</p> <p><b>Total Allocated ESF Funds:</b> PLN 7,445,252 (EUR 1,667,942).</p> <p>Funding was provided by the ESF (85%) and the national budget (15%)</p> <p>This case study is based on four interviews with the Managing Authority, beneficiary, partners and participants.</p> <p>Annex 2</p>



<p>Rationale</p>	<p>Silesian Voivodeship is divided into four subregions (Central, North, South and West), with six Social Economy Support Centres.</p> <p>The Social Economy Support Centres have been operating in Poland for 15 years and support the activities of European programmes.<sup>818</sup></p> <p>The project was adapted to meet the requirements of the ESF and address the needs of people at risk of social exclusion.</p> <p><i>In response to the question of how adaptation to the needs of people at risk of social exclusion was addressed: 'We have been dealing with the area of social economy since 2006, so this project was a natural continuation for us.'</i></p> <p><i>Representative of Social Economy Support Centre</i></p>
<p>Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Economy Support Centres aimed to<sup>819</sup>:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Support people at risk of poverty and exclusion to establish social economy entities and provide support for existing social enterprises in employing vulnerable groups.</li> <li>– Provide counselling, education and business services to enhance the capacities of social enterprises. This included increasing the vocational qualifications of existing and new social economy entities' employees.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>818</sup> Information from the Social Economy Support Centre. Available at: <http://swr.pl/owes/>

<sup>819</sup> Information from RarInvestor. Available at: <http://www.rarinwestor.pl/osrodek-wsparcia-ekonomii-spoecznej>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish sustainable sources of funding for social economy entities.</li> </ul>
Relevance and coherence/ synergies	<p>The project was aligned with the strategy of the Social Economy Support Committee (Komitet Wsparcia Ekonomii Społecznej) and the Social Economy Department of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy.</p> <p>The Social Economy Support Center is crucial in providing comprehensive support and strengthen the potential of the local social economy sector and expand the range of activities of social economy entities (PES).</p>
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outputs of the Social Economy Support Centre: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 605 persons at risk of poverty or exclusion were supported (556 planned)</li> <li>- 205 social enterprises (139 planned); as well as public and private sector entities.</li> <li>- 125 persons found employment (123 planned)</li> <li>- 134 jobs were created (132 planned)<sup>820</sup>.</li> <li>- 34 initiative groups were established, which developed guidelines for the creation of social enterprises.<sup>821</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>78 full time jobs were created (41 planned).<sup>822</sup></p>
Delivery method and partnerships	<p>All measures of the Social Economy Support Centre were implemented in cooperation with the district labour office, social support centre, district family support centre and other institutions operating in the area of social exclusion and labour market, including certain local self-governments.</p> <p>The project was carried out in partnership with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Regional Cooperation Association;</li> <li>- The Ruda Agency of Development 'Inwestor';</li> <li>- Polish Television, Katowice branch;</li> <li>- Vinci &amp; Vinci Legal Advisors and Lawyers, M.Zychla, P.Vinci;</li> <li>- The Regional Foundation of the Support of the Blind.</li> </ul> <p>Beneficiaries were given wage subsidies to employ 1 to 5 people per company. Grants were also provided to enhance the entities, i.e. renovation or equipment purchase.</p> <p>The subsidy was intended for the employment of workers struggling to access the labour market - people at risk of social exclusion (especially the unemployed) and people with disabilities.</p>

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<sup>820</sup> Interview with the facilitator of the Social Economy Support Centres

<sup>821</sup> Data provided by managing authorities

<sup>822</sup> Data provided by managing authorities

	<p>The grants were paid in instalments every three or six months. After the end of the subsidy companies were required to retain the employee for at least one year.</p> <p>Project activities also included: (1) presentations by local communities of civic organisations' initiatives; (2) consulting, training and business services for the development of social economy entities; (3) grants for establishing social enterprises; (4) support for entities already operating in creating additional jobs; (5) searching for long-term sources of financing; (6) targeted counselling, education and business services for effective functioning of social economy entities, including increasing vocational qualifications of social economy employees within the framework of social entrepreneurship.</p>
Funding and efficiency	The project was considered to have generated savings and efficiencies.
Effectiveness	<p>According to the interviewees, the effectiveness of the project was confirmed by the generation of both outputs and soft results.</p> <p>The funds allowed the beneficiary to surpass all planned targets.</p> <p>Number of supported persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion amounted to 109% of the target;</p> <p>Number of social economy entities supported (level of realisation) was 147% of the target;</p> <p>Number of initiative groups that developed guidelines for the creation of social economy entity as the result of the activity of the Social Economy Support Centre was 261% of the target.</p> <p>Social enterprises continued to operate after the end of financing, indicating development in the social economy sector, greater labour market integration of people at risk of social exclusion.</p>
Challenges and success factors	<p>Several challenges and success factors have been identified.</p> <p>Success factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A supplementary payment system for the Silesian Voivodeship allowed for more efficient and transparent financial flows, as well as coordinated payment of instalments. This allowed the project to be implemented efficiently, as it allowed to retain the financial liquidity and support the entities on continuous basis.</li> <li>– Social enterprise networks of cooperation helped to reach a larger audience (potential participants of the project), increasing the number of participants in the project.</li> <li>– Cooperation with other Social Economy Support Centres facilitated the exchange of information with other regions in Poland and the promotion of good practices.</li> </ul>

	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The social economy sector was underdeveloped in Poland, with legal and economic gaps in the labour market. Lack of awareness of the sector created limited transparency and engagement with society at large. It was difficult for entrepreneurs to start investing in a social enterprise in the absence of access to information about good practices.</li> <li>- Strict regulations on the project budget limited the possibility of flexible changes to the project. Both the beneficiaries and the participants pointed out that the unit standard costs (USC) and the Standard Cost Option (SCO) slowed down the pace of development of projects throughout their implementation.</li> </ul> <p>'These regulations quite often constrained us. We would have been more adaptable without the restrictions that were given to us. (...) e.g. the target group was described in a rigid way without the necessary flexibility.'</p> <p><i>Representative of the Social Economy Support Centre</i></p> <p>'Word-of-mouth marketing works. Our client, who benefits from our support, passes on the information that our project exists and encourages others to take part.'</p> <p><i>Representative of the Social Economy Support Centre</i></p>
<p>EU Added value</p>	<p>The employment of persons at risk of poverty and exclusion in existing social enterprises contributed to positive changes in the approach to the social economy sector in the region. It helped to build positive attitudes towards persons at risk of poverty and exclusion, by elevating the stigma and showing the society, not only positive social, but also economic influence of these entities. It is important as the problem still prevails in Polish society and more actions are needed to support this positive attitudes.</p> <p>Specialised staff were employed for the project, including a trainer with extensive experience in social entrepreneurship (over 120 people were trained in the whole country within the framework of the Integrated Social Economy Support System implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy).</p> <p>The project created opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs and start-up companies. The ESF funds helped them to take their first step into the labour market and develop their businesses.</p> <p>When the Social Economy Support Centre (central-western subregion project) ended, the project provider undertook a project 'Social Economy Support Centre Regional Cooperation Association', to implement the recommendations developed in the original project.</p>

Elements for transferability / good practices	Good practices were shared throughout the whole region (and nationally) in the social economy sector. The positive impact, relating to important (and often sustainable) roles of social economy entities in achieving social and economic aims in the Silesian Voivodeship and in the social economy sector continued after the completion of the project. <sup>823</sup> One example can be taken from an action that sought to counteract the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. OWES coordinated efforts of social enterprises operating in the region, which was sustained subsequently.
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### **15 Poland - Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014PL16M2OP014)**

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship Operational Programme in Poland (2014PL16M2OP014) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through the end of 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared from desk research and interviews with national stakeholders.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP, while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'Consultation Point for Violence in Wydminy'. The selected project was classified as a Type 4 operation by the evaluation study. Type 4 operations are actions focused on access to services (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socioeconomic indicators, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of the OP and selected project, together with the challenges and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Success rates were estimated as the number of results generated as a share of the relevant number of participations. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation of achievement rates and success rates. The case study also presents estimates for the cost-per-participant. Annex 5 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for these estimations.

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<sup>823</sup> Interviews with participants

## OP Case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p><b>OP:</b> <i>Warmińsko-Mazurskie</i> Voivodeship Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014PL16M2OP014).</p> <p><b>Regions covered:</b> <i>Warmińsko-Mazurskie</i> Voivodeship (less developed region)</p> <p><b>Priority Axes (PA):</b> PA XI (Thematic Objective 9 (TO9)) - Social inclusion (<i>Włączenie społeczne</i>), PA VIII (TO9): Areas in need of revitalisation (<i>Obszary wymagające rewitalizacji</i>).</p> <p><b>TO9 Investment Priorities (IPs) selected:</b> IP9i; IP9iv; IP9v<sup>824</sup>.</p> <p><b>Type of OP:</b> Multi-fund (European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)).</p>
OP implementation context	<p>Compared to other regions in the country, the economy of <i>Warmińsko-Mazurskie</i> Voivodeship was relatively weak. In 2013, the GDP per capita was PLN 30,764 or 71.5% of the national average (PLN 43,020).</p> <p>The main challenge in the region was engaging economically inactive groups at risk of social exclusion.</p> <p>In 2013, the <i>Warmińsko-Mazurskie</i> Voivodeship provided assistance and support to 211,625 individuals within families, or 14.63% of the population of the Voivodeship. Primary reasons for granting support in the province were: unemployment, poverty, disability and disadvantage in matters of care and education, as well as running a household.</p> <p>The region was characterised by a very difficult labour market, as evidenced by the highest unemployment rate (21.7%) in the country for several years. In 2013, long-term unemployment reached 54.5%, a large proportion of whom lived in rural areas (49.8%).</p> <p>The situation on the regional labour market improved during the period of the project, however. The employment rate rose from 46.2% in Q3 2013 to 50.6% in Q3 2018. Similarly, the unemployment rate fell from 21.7% in 2013 to 10.4% in 2018.</p> <p>An ageing society presented another challenge, with 17.01% of the total population of the <i>Warmińsko-Mazurskie</i> Voivodeship (245,690 people) at post-productive age (60+ women, 65+ men) in 2014.</p> <p>The region had a relatively high percentage of people with disabilities, at 13.6% in 2011, compared to the national average of 12.2%.<sup>825</sup> According to the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities (PFRON), in 2018 there were 139,801 people with disabilities in the region, amounted to 9.7% (compared to 8.09% nationwide).</p>

<sup>824</sup> Operational programme - last extraction 27 December 2018.

<sup>825</sup> Operational programme - last extraction 27 December 2018.

Section	Description
	<p>In 2014, 3.8% of children under three years of age attended kindergartens, nursery wards and children's clubs in the <i>Warmińsko-Mazurskie</i> Voivodeship.</p> <p>At the end of 2014, there were 44 general hospitals in the Voivodeship, with 6,639 hospital beds available. The number of treated patients amounted to 285,800, meaning there were 43 patients per hospital bed.</p> <p>There was a decrease in the number of social welfare recipients, which fell from 211,625 persons in 2013 to 145,742 in 2017.</p> <p><b>Managing Authority:</b></p> <p>The <i>Warmińsko-Mazurskie</i> Voivodeship Board was responsible for correct and effective implementation of the OP. The Regional Policy Department of the Marshal's Office of the <i>Warmińsko-Mazurskie</i> Region in <i>Olsztyn</i> carried out the tasks of the Managing Authority on behalf of the Board.</p> <p>The programme was implemented by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Department for the Management of Regional Development Programmes, within the scope of activities co-financed from the ERDF;</li> <li>– Department of the European Social Fund, within the scope of activities co-financed from the ESF;</li> <li>– Regional Centre for Social Policy, within the scope of activities co-financed from the ESF;</li> <li>– Promotion Coordination Department, for information-sharing and promotion activities;</li> <li>– Internal Audit and Certification Department was the certifying authority.</li> </ul> <p>Implementation also involved the Finance and Treasury Department and the Public Procurement and Control Department.</p> <p>The Regional Operational Programme (ROP) was modified twice during the period analysed but the changes did not affect TO9.</p>
ESF Priorities and actions	<p>Type of actions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Type 1: actions with an employment objective;</li> <li>- Type 4: access to essential services. More specifically, day care centres, seniors' clubs, healthcare day centres, training accommodation, sheltered accommodation;</li> <li>- Type 5: social entrepreneurship.</li> </ul> <p>According to the Managing Authority, requests to change certain target groups subsequently changed the activities in particular actions. For example, after the evaluation of the first stage of project, assistance</p>

Section	Description
	<p>from the 'Consultation point for violence in Wydmiany' was expanded from victims and perpetrators of domestic violence to provide support for entire families, necessitating the recruitment of a child psychologist. The priorities and actions remained the same, however<sup>826</sup>.</p>
Target groups	<p>People at risk of poverty and exclusion, i.e. low-skilled persons, unemployed and long-term unemployed people, inactive people, women and caretakers, people with disabilities, children from families at risk of poverty.</p> <p>Due to economic and social changes (ageing society and socioeconomic improvements) in the region, the structure of the target groups changed.</p>
Operations	<p>154 operations were implemented under TO9.<sup>827</sup></p> <p>Operations encompassed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IP9i: activation of excluded persons and persons at risk of social exclusion in accordance with the individualized development path; services addressed to excluded persons and persons threatened by social exclusion by social integration entities, i.e. social integration centres and clubs, professional activity establishments, occupational therapy workshops and entities acting for social and professional activation (whose primary task is not economic activity); promotion of equal opportunity; active participation; and increasing employability;</li> <li>- IP9iv: facilitating access to affordable, stable and high quality services, including healthcare and social services provided for the common good, especially facilitating access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality healthcare services for children from families at risk of poverty and / or social exclusion.</li> <li>- IP9v: promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises, as well as social and solidarity economy, in order to facilitate access to employment, including providing services for setting up new or supporting existing social enterprises (animation, incubation and business services), subsidies and bridge support for setting up social enterprises leading to employment, subsidies and bridge support for creating jobs in functioning social enterprises and coordination of the social economy in the region.</li> </ul>

<sup>826</sup> Interview with Managing Authority and beneficiary.

<sup>827</sup> As recorded in the SFC 2014, extracted on December 10, 2019.

Section	Description																									
Partnerships	<p>The programme was prepared, implemented, monitored and evaluated in accordance with the principle of partnership and cooperation<sup>828</sup>.</p> <p>Projects under TO9 were implemented through several partnerships and collaborations between public (e.g. social services, care services) and non-public organisations (e.g. social enterprises).</p> <p>Parts of the partnerships were formal and were already established at the programming level. On occasion, they were unofficial and established at project implementation level. Partnerships to implement the project 'Consultation point for violence in Wydmiany' was informal and included a municipal social welfare centre, interdisciplinary teams from a municipal social welfare centre (including Blue Card Working Groups), court curatorship, police, schools (psychologists and educators, teachers), health centres (private and public), municipality office, municipal cultural centre, the Alcohol Relief Commission in Wydmiany.</p> <p>The Managing Authority involved in the in-depth project reported that the partnerships between stakeholders were solid and lasting. For example, in the social economy sector, the partnership was established at grassroots level. The initial idea was to exchange experience and knowledge, but partners eventually began to jointly apply for funds<sup>829</sup>.</p>																									
Funding of the OP (2014-2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions)</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>IP</th> <th>Planned<sup>830</sup></th> <th>Allocated<sup>831</sup></th> <th>Spent<sup>832</sup></th> <th>Absorption rate (Allocated/Planned)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>IP9i</b></td> <td>€85,882,353</td> <td>€47,872,352</td> <td>€11,060,390</td> <td>56%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>IP9iv</b></td> <td>€41,176,471</td> <td>€12,209,361</td> <td>€3,678,622</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>IP9v</b></td> <td>€23,529,412</td> <td>€9,891,285</td> <td>€7,874,143</td> <td>42%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td>€150,588,236</td> <td>€69,972,998</td> <td>€22,613,155</td> <td>46%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-fund OP: ERDF and ESF.</li> <li>Co-financing rate: 85%.</li> <li>Total allocated funds: EUR 2,033,261,294.</li> </ul>	IP	Planned <sup>830</sup>	Allocated <sup>831</sup>	Spent <sup>832</sup>	Absorption rate (Allocated/Planned)	<b>IP9i</b>	€85,882,353	€47,872,352	€11,060,390	56%	<b>IP9iv</b>	€41,176,471	€12,209,361	€3,678,622	30%	<b>IP9v</b>	€23,529,412	€9,891,285	€7,874,143	42%	<b>Total</b>	€150,588,236	€69,972,998	€22,613,155	46%
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<sup>828</sup> Annual implementation report - last extraction 19 July 2019.

<sup>829</sup> Interview with Managing Authority.

<sup>830</sup> Operational programme - last extraction 01/07/2019

<sup>831</sup> Annual implementation report - last extraction 12/07/2019

<sup>832</sup> Annual implementation report - last extraction 12/07/2019

Section	Description																																													
Outputs and results (2014/2018)	<p>Total number of recorded participations: 12,236.</p> <p>Common output indicators – the recorded outputs were in line with the main priorities and actions. The largest number of participations was recorded among the unemployed (including long-term unemployed), inactive, low educational level and other disadvantaged groups, participants with disabilities, and participants over 54 years age. The recorded values for common output indicators included micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative and social economy enterprises).</p> <p>The OP also recorded specific output indicators. The estimated output specific achievement rate (recorded values in relation to targets set for the end of the programming period) was 28%. The Managing Authority noted that the improving economic situation in the region lowered the unemployment rate and numbers of people seeking support. In addition, beneficiaries’ misunderstanding of procedures meant that some projects only started in 2017<sup>833</sup>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common Output Indicators:</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CO01</td> <td>Unemployed, including long-term unemployed</td> <td>6,122</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO02</td> <td>Long-term unemployed</td> <td>2,753</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO03</td> <td>Inactive</td> <td>4,113</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO04</td> <td>Inactive, not in education or training</td> <td>600</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO05</td> <td>Employed, including self-employed</td> <td>2,001</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO07</td> <td>Above 54 years of age</td> <td>1,555</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO08</td> <td>Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training</td> <td>918</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO09</td> <td>With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)</td> <td>3,951</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO12</td> <td>Participants who live in jobless households</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO14</td> <td>Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO15</td> <td>Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)</td> <td>88</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO16</td> <td>Participants with disabilities</td> <td>2,961</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO17</td> <td>Other disadvantaged</td> <td>4,745</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO23</td> <td>Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)</td> <td>11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source:</i> SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.</p> <p>Common result indicators – a total of 1,119 immediate term results (CR01-CR04) and 367 longer-term results (CR06-CR07) were</p>	Code	Indicator	Number	CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	6,122	CO02	Long-term unemployed	2,753	CO03	Inactive	4,113	CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	600	CO05	Employed, including self-employed	2,001	CO07	Above 54 years of age	1,555	CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	918	CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	3,951	CO12	Participants who live in jobless households	-	CO14	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	-	CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	88	CO16	Participants with disabilities	2,961	CO17	Other disadvantaged	4,745	CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	11
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<sup>833</sup> Interview with Managing Authority.

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	<p>achieved<sup>834</sup>. Most of the recorded results (655) were disadvantaged participants engaged in job search, education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment (CR05).</p> <p>The OP also had specific result indicators. The estimated results specific achievement rate was 48%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common Result Indicators:</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CR01</td> <td>Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving</td> <td>108</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR02</td> <td>Participants in education/training upon leaving</td> <td>42</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR03</td> <td>Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving</td> <td>447</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR04</td> <td>Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving</td> <td>522</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR05</td> <td>Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving</td> <td>655</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR06</td> <td>Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving</td> <td>344</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR07</td> <td>Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR08</td> <td>Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving</td> <td>58</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR09</td> <td>Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving</td> <td>201</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.</i></p>	Code	Indicator	Number	CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	108	CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	42	CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	447	CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	522	CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	655	CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	344	CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	23	CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	58	CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	201
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Assessment of the OP	<p><b>Effectiveness:</b> TO9 supported the implementation of social inclusion policy in Poland. Operations supported the labour market integration of vulnerable people (e.g. people with disabilities, ex-offenders, people in extreme poverty, recipients of minimum income), providing these people access to essential services, such as healthcare and social services, as well as assistance to access social economy entities. The success rate (the recorded results as a share of the relevant recorded outputs) for Type 1 operations was lower than the EU average. For common result indicator 4, it was 8%. The same situation was observed for Type 4, where common result indicator 5 was 1%. Analysis of the in-depth project suggests that the target group classified in the programming no longer demonstrates a need for support. The socioeconomic situation in the region has improved, leading to higher employment rates (46.2% in Q3 2013 and 50.6% in Q3 2018) and lower unemployment rates (10.4% in 2018 and 21.7% in 2013). The number of social welfare recipients decreased (from 211,625 people in 2013 to 145,742 in 2017) and the structure of households changed (reduction</p>																														

<sup>834</sup> Other indicators excluded due to double counting.

Section	Description
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in the number of multi-person households using the social welfare support system in favour of single-person households).

Code	Indicator	Success rate for OP (type 1 operations)
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	8%
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	5%
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	4%

Code	Indicator	Success rate for OP (Type 4 operations)
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job search, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	1%

**Efficiency:** The cost per participant for operations under IP9i was estimated at €1,871, higher than the EU average (IP9i = €1,488). The Managing Authority for the in-depth project reported delays at the beginning of project implementation, caused by beneficiaries' misunderstanding of implementation and reporting of ongoing projects. In addition, some projects only started to actively support the target group in 2017, despite the fact that the funds were brought in 2015. This slow intake could be attributed to the problems at the initial stage of the programming period with the set up of relevant procedures and coordination of actions between institutions.

According to available evaluations, the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of OP was high. The objectives and assumptions defined at the stage of ROP programming remained valid, although the characteristics of the labour market and use of social services subsequently changed. Despite the decreasing level of poverty and social exclusion in recent years in the *Warmińsko-Mazurskie* Voivodeship, problems persisted, thus the intervention logic remained valid.

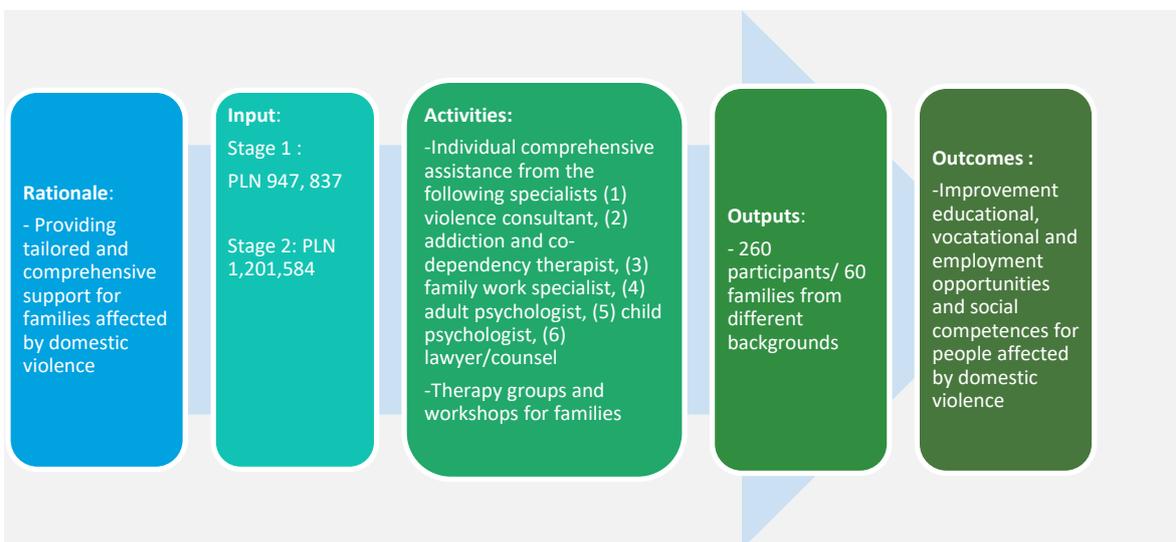
**Relevance and coherence:** The objectives and operations implemented were relevant to the needs of the target groups identified and were achieved. The Managing Authority for the in-depth project noted due to economic and social changes, the structure of the target group should change, with greater weight given to the following groups: (1) elderly people – an ageing society makes it increasingly important to provide care at regional and local level (municipalities and

Section	Description
	<p>districts) that supports elderly people to maintain their independence while activating their carers; (2) persons with disabilities – providing services that foster their independence, such as early rehabilitation to prevent withdrawal from social life and total social exclusion; (3) young mothers who interrupted their professional careers to care for their children; (4) complex supports for families with children. The ROP was coherent with other EU programmes and with national policy. There was no overlap between TO9 and TO8, although the Managing Authority reported that one person could receive support under TO8 and TO9 when support was requested for two different purposes.</p> <p><b>Added value:</b> The ROP was an important tool in the implementation of the 'Development Strategy of the <i>Warmińsko-Mazurskie</i> Voivodeship until 2025' and, like other operational programmes, also contributed to reaching the objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy. The Managing Authority observed that, without EU support, the project would be limited in scope and impact. At the same time, it was a part of Poland's development goals, expressed in the country's strategic documents and operationalised in the 'Partnership Agreement, taking into account the position of the services of the Commission on the development of the Partnership Agreement and programmes in Poland for the years 2014-2020 of 28 September 2012'.</p> <p>According to the Managing Authority representative, the process of ROP implementation strengthened stakeholder cooperation, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The process required stakeholders to engage in multiple meetings with social service and labour market institutions, creating good cooperation, particularly in the area of social economy.</p>
Challenges and lessons learned	<p>The main challenge for beneficiaries was the requirement to adapt to the rules and regulations of operation of the European Union (EU) funds. Where rules for implementing projects in accordance with EU directives (e.g. other approaches to recording results, measuring indicators) were new to the beneficiaries, they caused delays in the implementation of the measures. Beneficiaries who had never carried out EU-funded projects struggled to adapt to the rules and regulations of the funding.</p> <p>At the programming stage, attention should be paid to potential social and economic changes in the region, i.e. a programme should be created to reach people who will be seeking help in the future. This would avoid situations in which it is difficult to reach the target group</p>

## In-depth analysis of selected project: Consultation point for violence in Wydminy

Section	Description
Basic facts box	<p><b>Project Name:</b> Consultation point for violence in Wydminy.</p> <p><b>Duration:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– First stage: January 2017 – 31 January 2019.</li><li>– Second stage: 01 February 2019 – 31 January 2021.</li></ul> <p><b>OP:</b> Regional Operational Programme of <i>Warmińsko-Mazurskie</i> Voivodeship 2014–2020 (2014PL16M2OP014)</p> <p><b>Priority Axis (PA):</b> PA XI (TO9) - Social inclusion; 9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including healthcare and social services of general interest;</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> The objective was to further the integration of participants affected by domestic violence in education, training and the labour market.</p> <p><b>Target group:</b> Families affected by domestic violence (both victims and perpetrators), aged 15-64.</p> <p><b>Funding (first stage):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Total allocated funds: PLN 947,837.</li><li>– Total allocated ESF funds: PLN 805, 661.</li></ul> <p><b>Funding (second stage):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Total allocated funds: PLN 1,201,584.</li><li>– Total allocated ESF funds: PLN 1,021,346.</li></ul> <p>Funding was provided by the ESF (85%) and contribution of Wydminy municipality (5%).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>

### Intervention logic of the project/operation



<p><b>Rationale</b></p>	<p>The rationale for the project was developed by the municipal social welfare centre in Wydminy (<i>Gminny Ośrodek Pomocy Społecznej - GOPS</i>) in response to high rates of domestic violence. The number of 'Blue Cards' (domestic violence reports filed by the police) increased, with 27 Blue Cards issued from 2013-2014 (compared to seven the previous year)<sup>835,836,837</sup>.</p> <p>Although domestic violence was prevalent, there were few tools to support the victims and perpetrators of such violence.</p> <p>Victims of domestic violence needed specialised measures and communication with staff that could provide tailored support,</p> <p>Before the project, the local social welfare centre had one consultant to support people affected by violence. That consultant was also responsible for psychological and therapeutic assistance and contributing to legal measures.</p> <p>The project was established to address the lack of support available<sup>838</sup>.</p> <p>'Before the project, we only had a consultant who dealt with the Blue Cards and had to play the role of consultant as well as therapist and psychologist. This was far too little. So one day we sat down, brainstormed and decided to establish this much needed initiative.;</p>
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<sup>835</sup> Report on the municipal programme for counteracting family violence and protecting victims of family violence in the Wydminy commune, 2014.

<sup>836</sup> Report on the municipal programme for counteracting family violence and protecting victims of family violence in the Wydminy commune, 2013.

<sup>837</sup> Information from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) portal. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/methods-and-tools/poland/blue-card-police-procedure>

<sup>838</sup> Interview with the facilitator of the municipal social welfare centre in Wydminy.

	<p><i>(Facilitator of the municipal social welfare centre in Wydminy)</i></p>
Objectives	<p>The primary objective of the project was to establish support services for the inhabitants of Wydminy municipality affected by domestic violence. The second stage of the project expanded that support to include entire families<sup>839</sup>.</p> <p>The scope of the project covered various forms of violence (psychological, physical, sexual and economic violence, and neglect).</p> <p>Through consultations and therapeutic meetings, the project aimed to help perpetrators of violence to manage their harmful behaviours, as well as improving the life outcomes for victims of domestic violence.</p>
Relevance and coherence/ synergies	<p>The project responded to the need for publicly available tools to tackle domestic violence for people experiencing or perpetrating domestic violence.</p> <p>The project was considered highly relevant by the municipality units - the regional social policy centre in Olsztyn (<i>Regionalny Ośrodek Pomocy Społecznej</i>) and the municipal social welfare centre in Wydminy (<i>Gminny Ośrodek Pomocy Społecznej w Wydminach</i>)<sup>840</sup>.</p>
Outputs	<p>The target group of the project was people who experienced social exclusion because of violence – both victims and perpetrators – aged 15-64.</p> <p>The first stage of the project focused on victims and perpetrators. After evaluation, assistance was expanded to support entire families.</p> <p>Stage 1 outputs: During the first stage, support was provided to 125 persons (48 perpetrators and 77 victims) affected by domestic violence<sup>841</sup>.</p> <p>Stage 2 outputs: By the end of January 2021, 30 families/120 persons (around 72 women, 48 men) experiencing domestic violence in the household will be assisted<sup>842</sup>.</p>
Delivery method and partnerships	<p>The project was financed by the ESF, represented by the regional social policy centre in Olsztyn (<i>Regionalny Ośrodek Pomocy Społecznej</i>).</p> <p>The project was implemented by the municipal social welfare centre in Wydminy (<i>Gminny Ośrodek Pomocy Społecznej Wydminach</i>) since the beginning of 2017.</p>

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<sup>839</sup> Interview with the facilitator of the municipal social welfare centre in Wydminy.

<sup>840</sup> Interview with representative of the managing authority responsible for the project/operation.

<sup>841</sup> Information from the project website. Available at: <http://punktpomocy.pl/oprojekcie/>

<sup>842</sup> Information from the project website. Available at: <http://punktpomocy.pl/oprojekcie/>

The project did not involve the recruitment of participants. Due to the sensitive subject matter, participants applied for the programme themselves, or were referred to the consultation point by other authorities and institutions, such as the police and schools.

Specialists providing support included a violence consultant, an addiction and co-dependency therapist, a family work specialist, an adult psychologist, a child psychologist and a lawyer/counsel<sup>843</sup>.

The violence consultant was the first point of contact for participants. During the interview, the consultant created a tailored support plan and connected them to other specialists depending on their particular needs (i.e. if they are children, if they are struggling with addiction).

The assistance was individually tailored to the needs of the applicants.

In addition to individual therapy, participants had the opportunity to take part in workshops for parents and/or a therapeutic development group<sup>844</sup>.

The project used an 'Infokiosk', which was located in the municipal social assistance centre. This allowed anonymity and privacy in accessing resources. Individuals could get information about domestic violence or details of the supports available through the project<sup>845</sup>.

Promotion of the project within the municipality:

- Information about the project was included on the website of the municipality and at the municipal social welfare centre in Wydminy;
- Leaflets and posters were left in parishes, churches, health centres, shops and institutions such as the municipality, community centres;
- Campaigns in schools, where information leaflets were distributed and children passed on the information to their parents;
- Advertising campaign on YouTube<sup>846</sup>.

No official partnerships were created for the project, but there is a general cooperation among the following entities: the municipal social welfare centre (coordination and implementation); implementation support units, such as court curatorship, the police, interdisciplinary teams; Blue Card Working Groups; schools (psychologists and educators, teachers); health centres (private and public); municipality office; municipal cultural centre<sup>847</sup>.

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<sup>843</sup> Data provided by the Managing Authority.

<sup>844</sup> Information from the project website. Available at: <http://punktpomocy.pl/>

<sup>845</sup> Information from the official website of the municipality of Wydminy. Available at: <https://wydminy.pl/nowa/multimedialny-infokiosk-w-siedzibie-gops-w-wydminach/>

<sup>846</sup> Online project campaign: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVsrEmngBkM>

<sup>847</sup> Interview with the facilitator of the municipal social welfare centre in Wydminy.

Funding and efficiency	<p>The project was funded by ESF funds and contributions from the Wydmyny municipality.</p> <p>Stage 1: 95% ESF funds and 5% own contribution of the Wydmyny municipality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– (Total allocated funds: PLN 947,837. Total allocated ESF funds: PLN 805,661).</li></ul> <p>Stage 2: 94% of funding from ESF and 6% from the Wydmyny municipality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– (Total allocated funds: PLN 1,201,584. Total allocated ESF funds: PLN 1,021,346)<sup>848</sup>.</li></ul> <p>The main cost of the project was recruitment of specialists and experts to provide assistance<sup>849</sup>.</p>
Effectiveness	<p>The project improved the quality of life of family members, as well as changing their life trajectory. The Managing Authority and beneficiary noted that the specialists working directly with participants in the project indicated changes in participants' lives (e.g. alcohol abusers seeking rehabilitation, victims trying to find a job).</p> <p>After the first year it was evident that concealed domestic violence was prevalent. Despite the support, the number of Blue Cards remained at the same level (from 2018-2019, 28 Blue Cards were issued, compared to 27 between 2013 and 2014)<sup>850,851</sup>.</p> <p>Social awareness of domestic violence increased, with more people reporting incidences of violence, due to enhanced mechanisms of support.</p> <p>Victims and perpetrators of violence became more willing to engage with the consultation point, increasing numbers of participants.</p> <p>Examples of changes in participants' lives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Strengthened self-empowerment and motivation - 20 persons found employment, one regained full custody of her three children and secured municipal housing.</li><li>– In Giżycko, 10 people were charged with suspected violence against their families. Five of the perpetrators were convicted by a final judgment and one was placed in a youth care centre.</li><li>– Seven instances where the victim of domestic violence was distanced from the perpetrator.</li></ul>

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<sup>848</sup> Information from the project website. Available at: <http://punktpomocy.pl/oprojekcie/>

<sup>849</sup> Interview with the facilitator of the municipal social welfare centre in Wydmyny.

<sup>850</sup> Report on the municipal programme for counteracting family violence and protecting victims of family violence in the Wydmyny commune, 2014.

<sup>851</sup> Data provided by the Managing Authority.

Challenges and success factors	<p>The first stage of the project also supported labour market integration. 16.67% of people (10 women, 10 men) at risk of poverty or social exclusion participated in education or training, or gained qualifications after leaving the programme.</p> <p>Success factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The tailored plan created by the violence consultant to address the needs of individual participants.</li> <li>– Support continued after the project, with the scope of the measures broadened to include all members of families affected by violence, and the addition of child psychologists.</li> <li>– Regional cooperation of public units (e.g. police, schools) helped the project to reach as many participants as possible and increased public awareness of domestic violence (e.g. cooperation and training in schools).</li> </ul> <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The project was implemented in a poor rural area, with high levels of distrust of support institutions.</li> <li>– Social stigmatisation of participants and fear of further exclusion.</li> <li>– Difficulties in obtaining measurable results.</li> </ul>
EU Added value	<p>The region suffered from a lack of funds to address social problems like domestic violence. There was a lack of programmes to educate people in the region on how to deal with domestic violence<sup>852</sup>.</p> <p>ESF funding provided an opportunity to create a comprehensive assistance project. This would not have been possible without the ESF funding, prior to which the municipality could only afford a single specialist for domestic violence support<sup>853</sup>.</p> <p>The project contributed to developing cooperation between the municipal social assistance centre, schools and the police. It created a new framework for cooperation between units that, despite their close contact, had never formed partnerships<sup>854</sup>.</p>
Elements for transferability / good practices	<p>The problem of domestic violence remains visible in most Polish regions. Providing help to victims and perpetrators seems to be an extremely effective tool, which helps to combat the phenomenon and the social exclusion of affected groups.</p>

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<sup>852</sup> Interview with representative of the Managing Authority responsible for the project/operation.

<sup>853</sup> Interview with the facilitator of the municipal social welfare centre in Wydminy.

<sup>854</sup> Interview with representative of the Managing Authorities responsible for the project/operation.

The extent of the assistance provided was a unique feature of the project, with support provided not only to victims, but to perpetrators and children from violent families.

This type of project could be introduced in every municipality in Poland that currently suffers from a lack of suitable tools to help families in domestic violence situations.

## 16 Poland - Wielkopolskie Voivodeship Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014PL16M2OP015)

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship Operational Programme in Poland (2014PL16M2OP015) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through the end of 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The preparation of the case study drew from desk research and interviews with national stakeholders.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP, while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'Healthcare and social services for dependant elderly persons in the local communities of seven municipalities in the Wagrowiecki district'. The selected project was classified as a Type 4 operation by the evaluation study. Type 4 operations are operations focussed on access to services (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socioeconomic indicators, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of the OP and selected project, together with the challenges and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Success rates were estimated as the number of results generated as a share of the relevant number of participations. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation of achievement rates and success rates. The case study also presents estimates for the cost-per-participant. Annex 5 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation.

### OP Case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p><b>OP:</b> Wielkopolskie Voivodeship Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014PL16M2OP015).</p> <p><b>Regions covered by OP:</b> Wielkopolskie Voivodeship (less developed).</p> <p><b>Priority Axes (PA):</b> PA VII (TO9) - Social inclusion.</p>

Section	Description
	<p><b>Thematic Objective 9 (TO9) Investment Priorities (IPs) selected:</b> IP9i; IP9iv; IP9v<sup>855</sup>.</p> <p><b>Type of OP:</b> Multi-fund (European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)).</p>
<p>OP implementation context</p>	<p>The labour market in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship was one of the most active in Poland, with an employment rate of 56.8% in 2013, rising to 59% in Q3 2018.</p> <p>In 2013, the level of employment varied between groups: people aged 55-64 years – 39.5%; people with disabilities – 21.7%; under-educated people (lower than primary level education) – 14.1%. There was also a difference in the employment rate between women (48.9%) and men (68.1%).</p> <p>The unemployment rate decreased from 9.6% (Q1 2013) to 3.2% in 2018 (the lowest result in the country).</p> <p>At the time the programme was developed temporary contracts were commonplace. In 2015, 29.2% of employment contracts in the region were temporary contracts.</p> <p>In Wielkopolskie Voivodeship, a significant number of people were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. In 2013, 25.9% of people were at risk of poverty or exclusion amounted. In 2018, that poverty threshold rate had fallen to 16.9%.</p> <p>In 2013, 190,285 people received social exclusion and social assistance benefits. In 2018, those were granted to 172,064 people (79,589 families). Nearly half of the beneficiaries were people of working age (46.5%), 27.2% were people in pre-productive age, while 22.1% were people of retirement age. The percentage of beneficiaries in older age increased.</p> <p>Problems with healthcare services were illustrated by insufficient number of specialists, including oncologists, cardiologists, paediatricians and psychiatrists.</p> <p>A low number of social economy entities. In 2013, there were 241 social economy entities, with 1,872 employees. In 2017, there were more than 200 social cooperatives, 28 non-profit companies, more than 100 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) conducting business activity (mostly foundations) and 142 reintegration entities.</p> <p>Managing Authorities:</p> <p>The Managing Authority is the Board of the Wielkopolskie Region.</p> <p>Along with ensuring that the programme was implemented correctly and efficiently, the Managing Authority issued guidelines, recommendations and manuals on various aspects of programme implementation, and carried out promotion and information activities.</p>

<sup>855</sup> Operational programme - last extraction 1 July 2019.

Section	Description
	<p>The following bodies were appointed as intermediate bodies for the implementation of the Regional Programme for the Wielkopolska Region: voivodeship labour office in Poznań, Metropolis of Poznań (ZIT Association for Poznań City Hall – the 'seat' of the Metropolis is located in Poznan), Association Kalisko-Ostrowska agglomeration (ZIT Association for the Development of AKO).</p>
<p>ESF Priorities and actions</p>	<p>Type of actions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type 1: actions with an employment objective;</li> <li>• Type 4: access to essential services;</li> <li>• Type 5: social entrepreneurship.</li> </ul> <p>The priorities and actions did not change between the planning and implementation stages. They focused on employment objectives, enhancing basic skills, access to basic school education and services and social entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Key changes in the area were: increasing the allocation to financial tools to EUR 20.38 million due to the identification of a financial gap stemming from the increase the use of this form of support; increasing the allocation to PA X - Technical assistance by EUR 8 million in order to maintain efficient and effective implementation of WRPO 2014+. Other changes included modifications to the types of projects, beneficiaries and target groups, as well as the identification of three additional strategic projects.</p> <p>Within the framework of TO9, the planned amount for the OP decreased from EUR 232,106,305 in the first adopted version to EUR 226,223,952 euro in the last adopted version.</p>
<p>Target groups</p>	<p>The programme targeted people at risk of exclusion and poverty, including: people struggling with homelessness; people excluded from society and the labour market due to age and/or health; children and adolescents in social rehabilitation facilities and foster care; people with disabilities; and the long-term unemployed.</p> <p>The target groups did not change between the planning and the implementation stages. The Managing Authority indicated that the groups identified at the time of programming could not be flexibly changed during the implementation phase, which would have improved the effectiveness of some projects. For example, the projects did not include support for caregivers of people with disabilities who are not active in the labour market.</p>
<p>Operations</p>	<p>Total number of operations under TO9: 170<sup>856</sup>.  Operations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IP9i: (1) programmes for the integration of people and families at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion aimed at socio-occupational activation through educational, social and professional instruments;</li> </ul>

<sup>856</sup> Recorded in the SFC2014, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Section	Description
	<p>social and professional activation of people, families / groups / communities at risk of poverty or social exclusion using instruments of professional, educational, social and health activation, including legal and civic counselling, projects aimed at networking and providing tools to increase the social activity of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and acting on their behalf and strengthening deinstitutionalization. (2) reintegration and social and vocational rehabilitation services, in particular in social integration centres, social integration clubs and vocational activity establishments;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IP 9iv: (1) increasing access to social services, in particular community and care services, as well as family and foster care services for people at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion including support for children and young people in day support facilities, to improve access to support services for the elderly and with disabilities, to increase access to protected, assisted housing , including training and related services - as an action leading to active integration); (2) increasing the accessibility of social services, in particular healthcare services for people at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion (programs for early disease detection, treatment and medical rehabilitation for children); providing tools for the development of social services to local service providers and increasing the potential of local communities to provide social and health services independently, using deinstitutionalization tools.</li> <li>- IP9v: ongoing provision of advisory, training and animation support for social economy entities or social enterprises, including subsidies for creating social economy entities and creating jobs in them, operations regarding the provision of animation, incubation and business services to support the development of the social economy, operations to improve the qualifications and professional experience of social entities employees, coordinating the development of the social economy sector in the region, including supporting entities in reaching a wider market and consumers, stimulating demand for their services.</li> </ul>
Partnerships	<p>Operations under TO9 were implemented through partnerships and collaborations between social services, care services, social enterprises and local governments.</p> <p>The principle of partnership was implemented at all stages: programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation<sup>857</sup>.</p> <p>The beneficiaries reported that the partnerships with local governments were crucial. Local governments provided the infrastructure used to implement the operations (e.g. buildings in which support is provided, medical equipment). On completion of the project, the ESF support arrangements should continue to be used by local authorities (project partners).</p>

<sup>857</sup> Annual implementation report - last extraction 28 May 2019.

Section	Description																																	
Funding of the OP (2014-2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions)</li> </ul>																																	
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>IP</th> <th>Planned<sup>858</sup></th> <th>Allocated<sup>859</sup></th> <th>Spent<sup>860</sup></th> <th>Absorption rate (Allocated/Planned)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>IP9i</td> <td>€86,000,000</td> <td>€40,368,805</td> <td>€14,731,838</td> <td>47%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9iv</td> <td>€103,498,477</td> <td>€57,755,600</td> <td>€16,930,149</td> <td>56%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9v</td> <td>€36,725,475</td> <td>€34,969,471</td> <td>€14,852,826</td> <td>95%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>€226,223,952</td> <td>€133,093,876</td> <td>€46,514,813</td> <td>59%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	IP	Planned <sup>858</sup>	Allocated <sup>859</sup>	Spent <sup>860</sup>	Absorption rate (Allocated/Planned)	IP9i	€86,000,000	€40,368,805	€14,731,838	47%	IP9iv	€103,498,477	€57,755,600	€16,930,149	56%	IP9v	€36,725,475	€34,969,471	€14,852,826	95%	Total	€226,223,952	€133,093,876	€46,514,813	59%								
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<i>Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.</i>																																		
Multi-fund OP: ESF and ERDF. National funds were used to support actions under the OP. The national co-financing rate was 15%.																																		
Outputs and results (2014/2018)	<p>Total number of recorded participations under TO9: 36,427</p> <p>Common output indicators –the largest number of participations were among inactive people, and other disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>The OP also recorded specific output indicators. The estimated achievement rate (the recorded values in relation to targets set for the end of the programming period) was 43%. The Managing Authority and beneficiaries in some projects reported that it took more time to reach participants because they already benefitted from other assistance (e.g. 'Family 500+ or 'Family Benefit', a family income support or because trust had to be built before someone would participate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common Output Indicators:</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CO01</td> <td>Unemployed, including long-term unemployed</td> <td>8,356</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO02</td> <td>Long-term unemployed</td> <td>3,425</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO03</td> <td>Inactive</td> <td>21,869</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO04</td> <td>Inactive, not in education or training</td> <td>5,560</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO05</td> <td>Employed, including self-employed</td> <td>6,202</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO07</td> <td>Above 54 years of age</td> <td>8,294</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO08</td> <td>Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training</td> <td>4,236</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO09</td> <td>With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)</td> <td>14,592</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO12</td> <td>Participants who live in jobless households</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO14</td> <td>Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Code	Indicator	Number	CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	8,356	CO02	Long-term unemployed	3,425	CO03	Inactive	21,869	CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	5,560	CO05	Employed, including self-employed	6,202	CO07	Above 54 years of age	8,294	CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	4,236	CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	14,592	CO12	Participants who live in jobless households	-	CO14	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	-
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<sup>858</sup> Operational programme - last extraction 01/07/2019

<sup>859</sup> Annual implementation report - last extraction 12/07/2019

<sup>860</sup> Annual implementation report - last extraction 12/07/2019

Section	Description	
CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	131
CO16	Participants with disabilities	9,521
CO17	Other disadvantaged	25,904
CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	-

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Common result indicators –2,791 immediate results (CR01-CR04) and 8,863 longer-term results (CR06-CR07) were recorded. Most of the recorded results (4,824) consisted of participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving (CR06).

The OP also had specific result indicators. The estimated specific result indicators achievement rate was 80%.

Reallocation of OP funds is being considered.

In all PAs of the ROPWV 2014+<sup>861</sup>, the interim objectives of the performance framework (measured by financial progress indicators and output indicators) were achieved or exceeded (in some cases considerably). The Performance Reserve assigned to individual PAs was not at risk, therefore.

IP9i: 181 of 402 submitted applications were approved for co-financing. The number of projects amounted to 172. 47% of the allocation to IP (in compliance with the national performance framework) was contracted. Progress in IP9i was satisfactory. The implemented projects assumed support for 15,366 persons, i.e. 51% of the target value of indicator of the number of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion covered by the programme. However, this indicator showed high sensitivity to unit costs per participant, which were too low to have the intended effects.

IP9iv: 116 of 203 submitted applications were approved for co-financing. The number of projects amounted to 109. 55.8% of the allocation to IP (in compliance with the national performance framework) was contracted. The objectives of IP9iv were achieved to a satisfactory degree. In total, the number of persons covered for social services was 75% of the target value, while the number of persons covered by health services stipulated in the programme was almost double compared to the target.

<sup>861</sup> PA 1 Innowacyjna i konkurencyjna gospodarka/ Innovative and competitive economy; PA 2 Społeczeństwo informacyjne/ Information society; PA 3 Energia / Energy; PA 4 Środowisko/ Environment; PA 5 Transport / Transport; PA 6 Rynek Pracy/ Labour market; PA 7 Włączenie społeczne/ Social inclusion; PA 8 Edukacja/ Education; PA 9 Infrastruktura dla kapitału ludzkiego/ Infrastructure for social capital; PA 10 pomoc techniczna/ Technical assistance.

Section	Description																														
	<p>IP9v: 12 of 15 submitted applications were approved for co-financing. The number of projects amounted to 11. 95.3% of the allocation to IP (in compliance with the national performance framework) was contracted. The value of indicators shown in signed agreements guaranteed the achievement of all programme indicators. Even the indicator on number of workplaces created in social enterprises was anticipated to be fully achieved, given increased efficiency and higher values in projects than assumed in the contracts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common Result Indicators:</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CR01</td> <td>Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving</td> <td>415</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR02</td> <td>Participants in education/training upon leaving</td> <td>51</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR03</td> <td>Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving</td> <td>1,265</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR04</td> <td>Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving</td> <td>1,060</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR05</td> <td>Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving</td> <td>1,936</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR06</td> <td>Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving</td> <td>4,824</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR07</td> <td>Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving</td> <td>4,039</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR08</td> <td>Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving</td> <td>139</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR09</td> <td>Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving</td> <td>832</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.</i></p>	Code	Indicator	Number	CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	415	CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	51	CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	1,265	CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	1,060	CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	1,936	CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	4,824	CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	4,039	CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	139	CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	832
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Assessment of the OP	<p><b>Effectiveness:</b> The main objective of the OP was to improve economic competitiveness and social cohesion within the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship. It was expected to eventually reduce disparities within the region by raising employment and social integration among disadvantaged persons. The success rate (recorded results as a share of the relevant recorded outputs) for Type 1 operations (actions with an employment objective)<sup>862</sup> varied according to whether a participant completed the programme. For common result indicator 4, it was 11% and for common result indicator 6, it was 33%. The results may reflect the generally good economic situation in the region compared to the rest of Poland. For example, the employment rate in the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship was 59% in Q3 2018, slightly above the national rate which was 54.6%.</p>																														

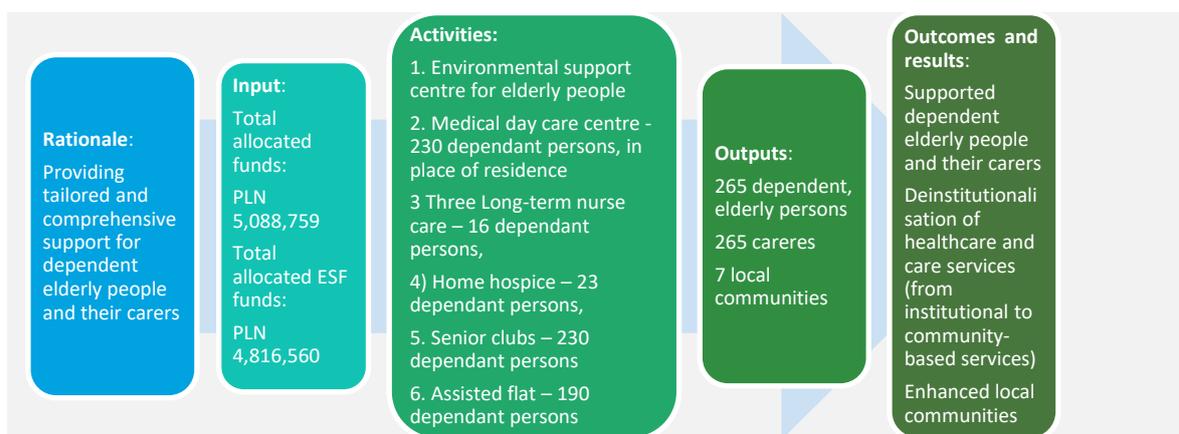
<sup>862</sup> Success rates could not be estimated for other types of operations for this OP.

Section	Description		
	Code	Indicator	Success rate for OP (type 1 operations)
	CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	11%
	CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	33%
	<p>The success rate for Type 4 operations for common result indicator 5 (Disadvantaged participants engaged in job search, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving) was 5%.</p>		
	<p><b>Efficiency:</b> The cost per participant for operations under IP9i was estimated at EUR 1,551, which was comparable to the European average (IP9i = EUR 1,488).</p>		
	<p>The Managing Authority and the beneficiary reported that the allocated resources were in line with what was planned. Considering the financial progress and the recorded results, implementation of the operational programme was effective. The support for some groups (inactive participants) was more effective than for others (e.g. participants above 54 years of age who were unemployed, including long-term unemployed, or inactive, not in education or training). Reallocation of OP funds is being considered to better support the groups that were under-represented.</p>		
	<p><b>Relevance and coherence:</b> The objectives and operations implemented were relevant to the needs of the participants. The identified target groups were relevant to the needs of the region. The Managing Authority noted the need to extend the target group to persons with mental health problems and to implement more operations that would support local communities to reintegrate persons at risk of exclusion. There was coherence between TO9 operations, the policy framework, and regional, national and European level.</p>		
	<p><b>Added value:</b> ESF funds supported the implementation of measures to reduce poverty and enhance social inclusion, with a view to integrating individuals into the labour market and reducing inequality in access to social services. The OP was consistent with national policies and other regional programmes (e.g. the Regional plan of social economy development in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship 2013-2020 (RPRES)). There is a risk that the delivery of social and health services in the region will not be sustained without the support of ESF TO9, for example 'Healthcare and social services for dependant elderly persons in the local communities of seven municipalities in the Wągrowiecki district' project developed a medical day care centre for elderly people that will require the support of local authorities.</p>		
Challenges and lessons learned	<p>Eligibility rules (especially accounting for projects) were demanding and difficult for beneficiaries. Beneficiaries who had not used European funds before struggled to understand the regulations and conditions of</p>		

Section	Description
	financing. There were cases when these regulations had to align with national regulations. For example, in IP9iv, when creating a day care centre to address the medical needs of elderly persons, the beneficiary had to take into account the requirements of the National Health Fund, which did not translate into European standards.

### In-depth analysis of selected project: Medical day care centre in Wągrowiec

Section	Description
<b>Basic facts box</b>	<p><b>OP:</b> Wielkopolskie Voivodeship Poland (2014PL16M2OP015)</p> <p><b>Project Name:</b> Medical day care centre in Wągrowiec (Healthcare and social services for dependant elderly persons in the local communities of seven municipalities in Wągrowiecki district).</p> <p><b>Beneficiaries:</b> The project is implemented under the responsibility of Competence Centre Counselling and Training Group A. Gawrońska Sp. j.</p> <p><b>Project Partners:</b> Wągrowiec County and Wielkopolska Association of Volunteers of Palliative Care Home Hospice and Wągrowiec Municipality, Wągrowiec Municipality, Skoki Municipality, Wapno Municipality, Damasławek Municipality, Gołańcz Municipality, Mieścisko Municipality.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> The main objective of the project was to create community-based medical and healthcare in the region. It aimed to create access to a territorially coordinated comprehensive programme of high quality, personalised and integrated healthcare and care services in Wągrowiecki district.</p> <p><b>Target groups:</b> The programme targeted dependent persons and carers in local communities. The project was carried out in the municipalities of Wielkopolskie region: Damasławek, Gołańcz, Mieścisko, Skoki, Wapno and Wągrowiec.</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 1 August 2018 until 30 November 2020.</p> <p><b>Total allocated funds:</b> PLN 5,088,759 (EUR 1.2 million).</p> <p><b>Total allocated ESF funds:</b> PLN 4,816,560 (EUR 1.1 million).</p>



Rationale	The region struggled with lack of medical care services for elderly people and poorly equipped geriatric departments. The medical day care centre responded to the need for non-institutionalised medical assistance (e.g. rehabilitation while staying at home, treatment which will prevent the need for hospitalisation).
Objectives	<p>The project aimed to support dependent persons in local communities within the framework of de-institutionalisation of healthcare and care services. It was intended to fill the gap that arose due to the lack of progress in de-institutionalisation of medical services in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship. The project sought to create access to a comprehensive regional coordinated programme that provided high quality, personalised and integrated healthcare and care services in Wągrowiecki district.</p> <p>The project provided a comprehensive system of healthcare and social support for elderly people, lessening the number of (preventable) hospitalisations.</p>
Relevance and coherence/ synergies	<p>The programme was aligned with the regulations of the Ministry of Health, which set the framework and guidelines for the effective operation of day care centres.</p> <p>The programme was relevant for meeting the needs of the ageing population, increasingly struggling with inadequate institutional services.</p>
Outputs	<p>The programme supported the following people and local activities<sup>863</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 265 dependent and elderly persons (170 women and 95 men);</li> <li>– 265 carers (225 women and 40 men);</li> <li>– Seven local communities.</li> </ul> <p>The following forms of support were established<sup>864</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– One community support centre for elderly people;</li> </ul>

<sup>863</sup> Data provided by the Managing Authority.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– One medical day care centre;</li> <li>– Long-term nurse care – 16 dependant persons;</li> <li>– Home hospice – 23 dependant persons;</li> <li>– Senior clubs – 230 dependant persons;</li> <li>– Assisted flat – 190 dependant persons.</li> </ul>
Delivery method and partnerships	<p>The project was implemented under the responsibility of Competence Centre Counselling and Training Group A. Gawrońska Sp. J<sup>865</sup>.</p> <p>The project partners were: Wągrowiec County and Wielkopolska Association of Volunteers of Palliative Care Home Hospice and Wągrowiec Municipality, Wągrowiec Municipality, Skoki Municipality, Wapno Municipality, Damasławek Municipality, Gołańcz Municipality, Mieścisko Municipality<sup>866</sup>.</p> <p>Partnerships with local authorities were an extremely important element of this initiative. Local authorities helped to ensure the sustainability of the results after the end of the project and funding period.</p> <p>The main activity for participants involved admission to the medical day care centre, where they underwent an overall geriatric evaluation before staying in the centre, allowing for a tailored plan to be created. The support improved basic medical care, overall health and movement, and overall quality of life. The medical care aimed to provide a level of physical fitness that allowed participants to live independently.</p> <p>Patients of the medical day care centre could attend individual and group activity-based therapy sessions, mobility rehabilitation sessions, lectures and workshops with speakers, as well as group physical activities.</p> <p>After leaving the centre, participants received ongoing support in the form of care services for three months in the municipality (senior club, assisted flat, care services in the place of residence, telecare) and care services in the form of home hospice and long-term nurse care.</p> <p>Caretakers were also provided with psychological care, as well as workshops and individual consultations with a psychologist and geriatrist in order to complement their knowledge of elderly care.</p>
Funding and efficiency	Total allocated funds: PLN 5,088,759 (EUR 1.2 million).

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<sup>865</sup> A training and advisory company that specialises in developing project applications in response to competitions announced under the Human Capital OP. It develops project applications in response to the competitions announced under the Wielkopolska ROP 2014-2020 and the Knowledge Education Development OP for 2014-2020. Information from Competence Centre Counselling and Training Group A. Gawrońska Sp. J. Available at: <https://centrum-kompetencji.pl/>

<sup>866</sup> Information from Competence Centre Counselling and Training Group A. Gawrońska Sp. J. Available at: <https://centrum-kompetencji.pl/>

	Total allocated ESF funds: PLN 4,816,560 (EUR 1.1 million). The project is still underway, making it difficult to determine the financial feasibility.
Effectiveness	<p>The project introduced a medical day care centre in Wągowiecki district, which allowed the transition from institutional to community-based care services.</p> <p>The targets of the project (dependent elderly people and their carers) were achieved.</p> <p>The beneficiary and participants noted that all activities in the project were matched to the needs of participants.</p>
Challenges and success factors	<p>Success factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to medical care, the programme supported participants in their social reintegration into their local communities by activating senior citizens' clubs. Participants were invited to meetings and workshops and encouraged to build relationships and support networks.</li> </ul> <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The health service in the region was based on institutional services. The beneficiary reported that as the first organisation to deal with multi-branch assistance for the elderly, it had to deal with:</li> <li>Lack of experience in establishing day care centres.</li> <li>Adapting and preparing infrastructure for care support, including adaptation of commercial buildings to the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities.</li> </ul>
EU Added value	<p>According to the beneficiary, it would not have been possible to implement the project without ESF funds.</p> <p>No evidence of any real deinstitutionalisation of medical and health care existed in the region prior to ESF funding.</p>
Elements for transferability / good practices	The project contributed to reducing barriers and deficiencies that hindered social functioning for elderly persons experiencing social exclusion through facilitating direct access to professional care services in the local community, activation of dependant seniors, and increasing caretakers' knowledge and skills.

## **17 Portugal - Poise Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014PT05M9OP001)**

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the Operational Programme (OP) in Portugal (2014PT05M9OP001) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through the end of 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared drawing on desk research, a focus group with stakeholders and

four interviews with the Managing Authority, intermediate body, partner and Ministry.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'MAVI – Support models for an independent life'. The selected project was classified as a type 4 operation by the evaluation study. Type 4 operations are concerned with access to services (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socio-economic indicators of the context, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU-added value of the OP and selected project as well as challenges and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Success rates were estimated as the number of results generated as a share of the relevant number of participations. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation of achievement rates and success rates. The case study also presents estimates for the cost-per-participation. Annex 5 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation.

## OP Case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p>OP: (2014PT05M9OP001) Social Inclusion and Employment (POISE - Programa Operacional Nacional Inclusão Social e Emprego) 2014PT05M9OP001</p> <p>Regions covered by the OP: 4 less developed regions (North, Centre, Alentejo and Azores), 1 transition region (Algarve) and 2 more developed regions (Lisbon and Madeira).</p> <p>Priority Axes: The OP is divided into four Priority Axes. Priority Axis 3 (Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination) covers a total of four IPs covering TO9. TO9 funding is dedicated to IP9i, IP9iii, IP9iv and IP9v.</p> <p>Type of OP: Multi fund (ESF and YEI)</p>
OP implementation context	<p>ESF support was planned during a period of deep economic and social crisis in Portugal (2011-2014).</p> <p>Between 2014 and 2018, the following improvements occurred:</p> <p>The GDP per capita in Portugal rose from 16,600 euro to 18,900 euro.</p> <p>The employment rate rose from 67.6% to 75.4%.</p> <p>The rate of unemployment decreased from 14% to 7%</p> <p>The share of young people neither in employment nor training (NEET) dropped from 15% to 10%.</p>

Social indicators (poverty risk, deprivation, health status etc.) also registered important improvements between 2014-2018.

In the context of improvements in the economic situation, the OP was revised with the aims to:

Strengthen Portugal 2020, the partnership agreement between Portugal and the European Commission to stimulate growth and job creation; and

Enhance the effectiveness of existing public policies and basic services.

The operational programme was revised to remove three investment priorities, including IP9v, and one specific objective under IP9i related to voluntary work.<sup>867</sup> 19% of planned funds for TO9 were shifted to TO8.<sup>868</sup>

The MA is called the "Management Authority National Operational Programme Social Inclusion and Employment 2014-2020" (Autoridade de Gestão Programa Operacional Nacional Inclusão Social e Emprego, 2014-2020).

The MA is a mission structure created by the Portuguese government for the management, monitoring and execution of the OP. The MA responds to the Inter-ministerial Coordination Commission (CIC Portugal 2020), with logistical and administrative support provided by the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security.<sup>869</sup> The actions under the OP are designed to complement public policies at regional, national and Community level in the fields of employment and social inclusion.<sup>870</sup> The most important delivering agencies are the national PES (IEFP) and the national Institute of Social Security (ISS).

The MA National Operational Programme Social Inclusion and Employment 2014-2020 is a national structure for a thematic OP. The general coordination of all OPs is ensured by the national Agency for Development and Cohesion (AD&C). This coordination by the AD& includes monitoring of the programming, reprogramming and monitoring processes of the European Structural and Investment Funds, in liaison with the authorities managing operational programmes (OPs).

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<sup>867</sup> See AIR POISE Version 3.2, pp. 1, 42, 58, 59, 88 and 134

<sup>868</sup> Source: Operational programme - last extraction 01/07/2019 and author's own calculations

<sup>869</sup> Website of the MA POISE, page "Who we are":  
<https://poise.portugal2020.pt/quem-somos>

<sup>870</sup> See CEDRU (2014), pp. 12-13

ESF and actions	<p>Priorities The main priorities of the OP were:</p> <p>Promoting sustainability and quality in work</p> <p>Youth Employment Initiative</p> <p>TO9: Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination</p> <p>Types of actions TO9:</p> <p>TO9 - IP 9i: Actions with the objective to increase competences of target groups and their employability; this includes actions like higher education scholarships for students; vocational training for the long-term unemployed; qualification of people with disabilities, enhancing basic skills, basic school education, and local social development communities (CLDS)</p> <p>TO9 – IP 9iii: Actions that raise awareness of strategically positioned individuals whose work is of major relevance for the achievement of TO9 (in public administration, media, companies), this includes actions like training of health sector professionals and professionals working with young people in condition of vulnerability; enhancing the National Centre for the Support of the Integration of Migrants (CNAIM).</p> <p>TO9 – IP 9iii: Actions that build the capacity of individuals and organisations who work with the target groups (professionals and volunteers)</p> <p>TO9 – IP 9iv: Support to networks and programmes that promote the access to essential services; this includes actions like specialized services for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and for people with disabilities</p> <p>TO9 - IP 9v: Support to social entrepreneurship and its contribution to job creation and socio- professional integration of persons in condition of vulnerability<sup>871</sup>, this includes actions like the promotion of Social Impact Bonds (SIBs)</p>
Target groups	<p>The target groups are people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, people with disabilities, migrants, homeless people and Roma communities.<sup>872</sup></p>

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<sup>871</sup> AIR POISE Version 3.2, pp. 32-33, 89-132.

<sup>872</sup> AIR version 3.2, p. 149

**Operations** Total number of operations under TO9: 801

The IP 9i which received almost 80% of the allocated resources under TO 09 (9i) included activities for the qualification and labour market integration of persons in condition of vulnerability, such as "Qualification and support for the employment of people with disabilities", "Modular training and Active Life for LTU", "Capacity building for inclusion", "Portuguese for all (PPT)", "Social and professional insertion of the Roma community", "Project of municipal and intercultural mediators", "Communities for Local Social Development - CLDS", "Specialized volunteer scholarship" and "Higher Education Scholarships to students needy". With the reprogramming of 2018, this IP was significantly reinforced in order to intensify support for the qualification of disadvantaged active persons.

**Partnerships** Partners for implementation include:

The National Public Employment Service (IEFP), Institute of Social Security (ISS), the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIME), the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (IGC)

Civil society partners

The National Council for the Social Economy (CNES), Permanent Commission of the Solidarity Sector (CPSS), António Sérgio Cooperative for the Social Economy (CASES) and others.<sup>873</sup>

**Funding of the OP** the Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions)

IP	Planned (a)	Allocated (b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)
IP9i	940,188,665	636,403,132	181,113,419	68%
IP9iii	52,000,000	13,365,317	5,250,680	26%
IP9iv	100,552,512	66,222,088	20,938,772	66%
IP9v	72,352,941	28,845,446	3,954,731	40%
Total	1,165,094,118	744,835,982	211,257,602	64%

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. Note: Planned amounts refer to the whole 2014-2020 programming period while allocated and spent

<sup>873</sup> AIR version 3.2, pp. 157 and 160-161

amounts refer to the period up to the end of the 2018 calendar year (31 December 2018).

Co-financing rate ESF-POISE: 85%<sup>874</sup>

The reprogramming of the OP in 2018 reduced TO9 by €221,117,647 and increased TO8 by € 245,407,707.<sup>875</sup>

Other EU funds used to support actions under the OP include the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).<sup>876</sup>

Outputs and results (2014/2018)

and Total ESF TO9 Participation: 105,216

Common Output Indicators: Unemployed (including LTU) and persons with low educational level held by far the largest share of participations. Considerable numbers of participations of disabled persons and other disadvantaged groups were also recorded. Due to data protection regulations no data about the participation of migrants and homeless persons were collected.

Based on the specific output indicators the achievement rate (the recorded values in relation to targets set for the end of the programming period) is estimated at 23%, far below the estimated EU-average of 99%.

Common Output Indicators:

Code	Indicator	Number
CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	60,285
CO02	Long-term unemployed	51,238
CO03	Inactive	40,644
CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	1,754
CO05	Employed, including self-employed	4,287
CO07	Above 54 years of age	13,881
CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	13,280
CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	58,018
CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	-
CO16	Participants with disabilities	10,711
CO17	Other disadvantaged	31,850
CO18	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	-
CO19	From rural areas	34,925

<sup>874</sup> See AIR POISE Version 3.2, p. 144, section 3.2 Total financial appropriation by fund and national co- financing (€), Table 18a: Financing plan

<sup>875</sup> Source: Operational programme - last extraction 01/07/2019

<sup>876</sup> See AIR POISE Version 3.2, p. 144, section 3.2 Total financial appropriation by fund and national co - financing (€), Table 18a: Financing plan

CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	-
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Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019

Common Result Indicators: 17,723 immediate-term results (CR01-CR05) were achieved and 3,245 longer-term results (CR06-CR09) were achieved. Most of the recorded results (3,627) were observed in terms of increasing employability by VET and other means (CR03 and CR07). After participation, 6,105 participants were in employment and 6,748 were actively searching for a job.

According to information from the Managing Authority the estimate of 23% refers to the end of 2018. In March 2020, the achievement rate was above 50%. This indicates that the implementation has strongly accelerated, which is consistent with the information gathered through interviews that serious challenges in implementation were experienced in the first years of the OP.

Code	Indicator	Number
CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	410
CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	8,039
CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	-
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	2,936
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	6,338
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	1,694
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	76
CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	249
CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	1,226

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

#### Assessment of Effectiveness of the OP

The delays in implementation resulting from extensive administrative procedures (see section below) reduced the generation of outputs and subsequently also the effectiveness of some measures under TO9. This problem affected especially new types of activities and/or less

experienced beneficiaries (NGOs, SMEs). More experienced entities like the national Public Employment Service (IEFP) running older types of activities like the CEI - Contract Employment-Insertion had less difficulties in managing the problem.

Until 2016, calls regarding 38 of 69 typologies of operations under the OP had been launched. During the reprogramming in 2018, the total number of typologies of operations was reduced to 55.<sup>877</sup>

Ex-ante evaluations stated that the alignment of operations to national policies had been achieved and favoured the effectiveness of the measures, but the representative of the MA pointed out that the national authorities must increase the efficiency of alignment and operationalisation in order to accelerate implementation.

The success rate (the recorded results as a share of the relevant recorded outputs) for Type 1 operations was low. This may to a large extent the result of the above-mentioned delays in implementation, that affected in particular new types of actions (like MAVI, see below) and beneficiaries with less experience in dealing with the administrative procedures of ESF projects. Further problems rose from the adoption of a new information system (SIIFSE) that was not sufficiently well prepared before the start of the implementation of the OP. The flaws of the system (difficulties with uploading data regarding physical and financial execution and others) created serious problems for the implementation of all OPs in PT, in particular for smaller and/or less experienced beneficiaries. These problems with the SIIFSE were finally resolved in 2018.

Code	Indicator	Success rate for OP (type 1 operations)
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	3%
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	2%
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	12%
Success rate for OP (type 2 operations)		
CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	1%
CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	8%
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	15%
Success rate for OP (type 3 operations)		

<sup>877</sup> See AIR version 2018.1, p. 5

CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	8%
CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	No value reported
Success rate for OP (type 4 operations)		
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	6%

The OP produced measurable results for a large number of participants (sum of common result indicators: 20,968), mostly in the area of employment and employability.<sup>878</sup>

No significant information about the reduction of discrimination as a result of TO9- actions, about soft outcomes could be found in the Annual Implementation Reports, interviews, national evaluations and focus group.

The MAVI-project is an example of testing new services relating to the persons in condition of vulnerability (see in-depth analysis below).

Efficiency: The estimate of the cost per participation for operations under IP9i is EUR 1,795 euro (1.2 times the EU average of EUR 1,488 euro), the respective value for operations under IP9iii is EUR 1,643 euro which is almost the double of the EU-average (EUR 847 euro).

According to the tentative explanation given by the MA the average higher costs of IP 9i may have resulted from one measure under this IP (support for education and training for persons with disability or incapacity) that had a very high cost per person (11,000 euros). In relation to IP 9iii the MA pointed out that 60% of activities under this IP did not register the number of participants, as for instance awareness campaigns. Thus, the calculation of the costs per participant did not include a considerable number of participants who had not been counted and this resulted in the inflation of the calculated cost per participant.

Relevance and coherence: Ex-ante evaluations confirmed the relevance of the OP for the target groups and the coherence between the TO9 operations and the national and European policy framework. The Focus Group with a representative of the Managing Authority and other stakeholders indicated some problems with the delimitation between TO9, TO8 and TO10, namely in relation to the division of the

<sup>878</sup> 38% of the 20,968 were participants in education/training upon leaving, 30% were disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving and 14% were participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving (see EXCEL "PT final results OPs", Sheet 4: Common Result Indicators, Table 4.1a: Cumulative total (2014-2018) for CR indicators by OP in percentage)

target group of education and training (considered as an artificial division) and in relation to young people addressed by TO10 and TO8.

Added value: The OP was of major importance for the intensification of national policies against poverty and exclusion. This was from the start the case in relation to well-tried types of measures implemented by experienced institutions (as for instance the Employment Insertion Contract implemented by the national PES), and with considerable delays and difficulties also in relation to innovative activities. Existing networks of stakeholders in the combat against poverty and exclusion were consolidated. Local actors try to transform some social services introduced in the form of projects under the OP into permanent services, but this raises some major problems (funding and licencing requirements).<sup>879</sup> Without the support of the ESF TO9 some social services will probably not survive in the present form and/or extension.

Challenges and lessons learned Challenges encountered in the implementation:

During programming of this OP too many types of measures were launched which was a major obstacle for a quick start of implementation

The rapidly changing social and economic context.

Delays in implementation due to extensive administrative procedures. Representatives of the MA and stakeholders criticised what they consider an excessive administrative burden on beneficiaries and intermediate bodies, in particular in relation to the documentary verification associated with public procurement procedures, particularly in ESF, causing significant delays in the implementation. This criticism is directed at European and national regulations.

How to maintain support to groups in need after cessation or reduction of European support?

Lessons learned:

New rules regarding public procurement are needed in order to reduce the tension between the need to implement programs on the one hand and the obligation to stick to the rules on public procurement. This refers in the first place to the rules set by the national Ministry of Finance.

It is important that the legal obligation in the regulation to move to e-cohesion is addressed in practice and promotes EU should promote the dematerialisation of administrative processes.

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<sup>879</sup> The representative of the intermediate body ISS explained that temporary activities supported by the ESF do not require a licence, but when they are transformed into permanent services licencing is usually required.

Maximum periods for the implementation periods of certain types of projects should be extended, in particular those related to initiatives with to support innovative elements.

More flexibility in the implementation description of planned actions is desirable.

The portfolio of TO9 actions should mainly include measures that can be swiftly implemented along with a smaller share of experimental/innovative measures

## In-depth analysis of the project – Modelos de Apoio à Vida Independente (MAVI) – Support models for an independent life

Section	Description
Basic facts box	<p><b>OP:</b> Social Inclusion and Employment (POISE); IP 9iv</p> <p><b>Project name:</b> MAVI – Support Models for an Independent Life [Modelos de apoio à vida independente]; MAVI is a pilot project</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Promote the autonomy and participation of persons with disability in the various contexts of life, and according to their needs and wishes.</p> <p><b>Target groups:</b> Persons with a certified disability or incapacity of at least 60% and aged 16 or more. People with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders or mental illness may benefit regardless of their degree of certified disability.</p> <p><b>Intermediate body:</b> National Institute of Rehabilitation (INR)</p> <p><b>Beneficiaries:</b> Legal persons under private non-profit law, specifically the Independent Life Support Centres (CAVI), with the legal nature of Non- Governmental Organisation of People with Disabilities (ONGPD) and the status of Private Institution of Social Solidarity (IPSS).</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> Established in 2017, still on-going</p> <p><b>Total allocated funds:</b> 25,579,032 euro</p> <p><b>Total allocated ESF funds:</b> 21,742,177 euro</p>

Intervention logic of the project/operation



Rationale	<p>MAVI is a pilot project that aims at initiating a paradigm shift in public policies for the inclusion of people with disabilities and seeks to combat institutionalisation.<sup>880</sup> The MA and the stakeholders understand that this aim of de-institutionalisation does not question the necessity of institutionalisation in a large number of cases.<sup>881</sup></p> <p>ESF funding for this operation is essential because it would not otherwise have received support.</p>
Objectives	<p>The objective is to promote the autonomy and participation of persons with disability in the various contexts of life, and according to their needs and wishes.</p>
Relevance and coherence/synergies	<p>The services provided by the project are determined by the participants and beneficiaries and are incorporated into an Individualized Personal Assistance Plan (PIAP). This process ensures that the projects operations are relevant and adequately address the needs of the target groups (people with disabilities).</p>
Outputs	<p>35 independent life support centres (CAVI) were established, in mainland Portugal (13 in the North, 90 in central Portugal, 6 in the Lisbon region, 5 in the Alentejo and 2 in the Algarve).</p> <p>The 35 centres provide services to between 10-50 participants and supported until December 2018 a total number of 765 participants (386 women, 379 men).</p>

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<sup>880</sup> [http://www.inr.pt/resultados-de-pesquisa/-/journal\\_content/56/11309/48890?p\\_p\\_auth=n7EGiBb3](http://www.inr.pt/resultados-de-pesquisa/-/journal_content/56/11309/48890?p_p_auth=n7EGiBb3)

<sup>881</sup> See the summary of the Focus Group held on 11th of February 2020.

Delivery method and partnerships	<p>The implementation process begins with the establishment of the Independent Life Support Centres (CAVI) and certification by the National Institute of Rehabilitation (INR).</p> <p>The support centres receive requests for personal assistance from participants or their legal representatives. They recruit personal assistants to provide individualized services.</p> <p>The centres and participants create Individualized Personal Assistance Plans (PIAP) which can be described as follows:</p> <p>These plans determine the hours of support per week the participants will receive and the types of support that will be provided.</p> <p>Most forms of support cover: hygiene, food and health maintenance; domestic care; travel; employment, vocational training and higher education attendance; development of social networks of support.</p> <p>The delivering agency organizes and supervises the implementation of the operation as well as monitoring and evaluation.<sup>882</sup></p> <p>Most CAVIs were created by cooperatives and IPSS associations (Private Institutions for Social Solidarity).</p>
Funding and efficiency	<p>According to data provided by the MA (19 February 2020) the funds allocated to the measure until December 2019 totalled EUR 26,138,453 euro and the amount that was actually spent was EUR 7,370,099 euro. Until December, 765 persons with disability had received support under the measure. Using these, figures we can calculate an average expenditure per person of EUR 9,634 euro.</p> <p>The average amount spent per participant (funds spent in TO9 divided by total ESF TO9 participants) was EUR 2,008 euro, far below the average expenditure for the average MAVI-participant. The reason for this difference is that the service provided under MAVI is highly personalized and labour intensive. One of the notable advantages of MAVI is that participants receive personal assistance during longer periods of time and beyond the usual working hours.<sup>883</sup></p>
Effectiveness	<p>The creation of 35 Independent Life Support Centres (CAVI) and the provision of the new type of personalized support under MAVI to 765 participants demonstrates a certain degree of effectiveness of the measure.</p>

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<sup>882</sup> See Decree-Law 129/2017; <https://dre.pt/pesquisa/-/search/108265124/details/maximized>

<sup>883</sup> Testimony of three MAVI-participants registered in a video provided by the MA (e-mail 18th February 2020).

The testimonies of three participants indicate that the measure achieves in fact its objective of increasing the autonomy of participating persons with disability and of promoting their participation in working life and in cultural activities.<sup>884</sup>

The compilation of data regarding the measure by the intermediate agency INR is under way, but the results still need to be consolidated and are therefore not yet available.

#### **Story box<sup>1</sup>**

“The personal assistants have helped in managing our home, in going out, medical consultation and with some exercises we can do at home. Thanks to them I do no longer depend on the good will of other people, and my parents are no longer so overburdened. Before, my mother could not leave home because she had to give us assistance.”

(Participant 1) “This project has allowed me to do certain things in a more autonomous way. The personal assistant gives me some general support like cleaning and going to the hairdresser, but what I really needed and what I like most is her helping me to digitalize books. Thus, I can read the book and clarify doubts with the help of the personal assistant.” (Participant 2) “I went to live alone because supporting me was a work overload for my family. Living alone brought a growing number of difficulties, it was a real challenge. And then the CAVI appeared. It offered everything I had longed for. Now I have two assistants, I can do longer hours, I can go sleep later, receive visitors on Sundays, something which was almost impossible before and prepare some dishes in the kitchen. Now I can live as I want to.” (Participant 3)

The project was selected for the in-depth analysis because it has an innovative approach with prospects of important improvements in the lives of participants.

The MA had strongly recommended the selection of the project for an in-depth analysis. At the time of the interview with the MA-representative (16 September 2019) it was not foreseeable that

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<sup>884</sup> The three testimonies in the above-mentioned video are given by two female teachers (one blind and the other quadriplegic) and a female teenager with another kind of disability. The blind teacher states that the service provided under MAVI makes it possible for her to digitalize and read books, and the quadriplegic teacher explains that MAVI ensures personal assistance for longer periods and outside the regular working hours (in comparison with other support programmes), thus making it possible for her to have a much richer working and private life. The teenager highlights that the assistance under MAVI is an enormous relief for her parents.

	<p>consolidated compiled by the intermediate body INR would not be available for this study.</p>
Challenges and success factors <sup>885</sup>	<p>Success factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Existing network of NGOs with the capacity to create structures that provide the comprehensive assistance according to the high standards set by the measure</li><li>Effective dissemination of the measure</li><li>Demand for the type of service provided in the target group of the measure</li></ul> <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Relatively high costs per participant</li><li>MAVI obliges already existing organisations who work with disabled persons to create specific external structures (CAVI) for the implementation of the measure. This obligation may be questioned under several aspects (reasonability, efficiency).</li><li>Inclusion of mentally disabled persons may be a problem because measure is much easier to access for the physically handicapped.</li></ul>
EU value added	<p>According to the representative of the Managing Authority of the OP, the operation would not have been implemented without ESF funding. Due to the high costs per participant the operation will probably need further ESF funding after the conclusion of the pilot phase.</p> <p>The operation's logic of providing personalized assistance at the participants' private residences is common practice in several other EU-members states and new in the Portuguese context. The ESF funding makes this transfer possible, but it requires some adaptations because the paradigm shift postulated in the Decree-Law that creates the measure may be too far-reaching for a country where the support within the institutions is indispensable for a large part of the persons with disability.<sup>886</sup></p>
Elements /good practices	<p>The successful implementation of local centres for the implementation transferability of the measure (CAVI) indicates that the design of the measure is manageable, irrespective of the possibility of simplification (elimination of obligation to create specific bodies, as suggested by a stakeholder).</p>

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<sup>885</sup> This section draws strongly on the debate at the Focus Group with representatives of the MA and several stakeholders on 11th of February 2020.

<sup>886</sup> See debate at the Focus Group with representatives of the MA and several stakeholders on 11 February 2020.

The character of the service provided (highly personalized assistance) and the participation of a considerable number of persons indicate that the measure has the potential to be successful in other contexts.

The high costs per participant may be an obstacle for the transfer.

The Managing Authority POISE had requested more comprehensive data from the intermediate body INR, but this information is not yet available. Therefore, a more precise description of good practice cannot be given in this report.

## 18 Portugal - Centro Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014PT16M2OP002)

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the National Operational Programme in Portugal (2014AT05SFOP001) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through the end of 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared drawing on desk research and three interviews with the Managing Authority, intermediate body, and Ministry.

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'SIZÉ'. The selected project was classified as a type 1 operation by the evaluation study. Type 1 operations are employment-focused actions (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socio-economic indicators of the context, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU-added value of the OP and selected project as well as challenges and lessons learned.

Success rates were estimated as the number of results generated as a share of the relevant number of participations. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation. The case study also presents estimates for the cost-per-participation. Annex 5 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation.

### OP case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p><b>OP:</b> (2014PT16M2OP002) Regional OP Centro 2014-2020 - Programa Operacional Regional do Centro 2014-2020</p> <p><b>Region covered:</b> Central Portugal (less developed)</p> <p><b>Priority Axis:</b> The OP is divided into nine Priority Axes. Priority Axis 5 (Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination) covers a total of four IPs covering TO9. TO9 funding is dedicated to IP9a and IP9d (ERFD) and to IP 9i and IP 9vi (ESF)</p>

Section	Description
OP implementation context	<p><b>Multi fund OP:</b> ESF and ERDF</p> <p>ESF support was planned during a period of deep economic and social crisis in Portugal (2011-2014).</p> <p>Between 2014 and 2018, the following improvements were witnessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The GDP per capita in Central Portugal rose from 14,100 euro to 16,400 euro.</li> <li>The employment rate rose from 69.9% to 76.6%.</li> <li>Unemployment decreased from 12% to 6%</li> <li>The share of young people neither in employment nor training (NEET) dropped from 14% to 9%.</li> </ul> <p>Social indicators (poverty risk, deprivation, health status etc.) also registered important improvements between 2014-2018.</p> <p>In the context of the improving economic situation, the OP was revised with the aim to redirect part of the funds that had been allocated to financial instruments to other priorities in the region, in particular to strengthen cohesion through local investment in equipment and infrastructure for basic services (education, health, equipment social, cultural heritage, urban rehabilitation and access) and to competitiveness (System of Incentives to Entrepreneurship and Employment).</p> <p><b>Managing Authority</b></p> <p>The Managing Authority is the 'Management Authority of the Operational Programme Centre 2020' (Autoridade de Gestão do Programa Operacional Centro 2020). The Managing Authority is part of the Commission for Coordination and Regional Development of Central Portugal (CCDRC).<sup>887</sup> The MA OP Centre 2020 is a regional structure coordinated by the national Agency for Development and Cohesion (AD&amp;C). The AD&amp;C ensures the general coordination, including monitoring of the programming, reprogramming and monitoring processes of the European Structural and Investment Funds, in liaison with the authorities managing operational programmes (OPs).<sup>888</sup></p> <p>The Ministry of Planning is responsible for the implementation of the regional operational programmes, in cooperation with other ministries.</p> <p>Key organisations involved in the implementation of TO9 activities</p>

<sup>887</sup> Decree-Law 137/2014

<sup>888</sup> See AD&C website <https://www.adcoesao.pt>

Section	Description
<p>ESF Priorities and actions</p>	<p>include the National Public Employment Service (IEFP) and Local Action Groups that help to facilitate Local Contracts of Social development (CLDS).<sup>889</sup></p> <p>Types of TO9 operations under this OP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– IP 9i: Type 1: actions with an employment objective: promotion of employment insertion contracts (CEIs); higher education scholarships for displaced students.</li> <li>– IP 9i: Type 3: basic school education: schools of the educational territories for priority intervention programme (TEIP)</li> <li>– IP 9vi: Type 4: access to essential services: support to health services and equipment</li> <li>– IP 9vi: Type 5: social entrepreneurship</li> <li>– IP 9vi: Type 6: measures influencing attitudes and systems</li> </ul> <p>ESF Priorities TO9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination</li> </ul> <p>Actions under TO9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Actions to support insertion, namely, support for the conclusion of Employment-Insertion Contracts (CEI and CEI+), integrated actions (innovative and/or experimental) of local promotion of active inclusion.</li> <li>– Initiative “Culture for all”</li> <li>– Support for intermunicipal initiatives that promote the quality of life and well-being of elderly people, active ageing and healthy and voluntary.</li> <li>– Actions to promote the educational success of students and the reduction of early school leaving in disadvantaged territories</li> <li>– Support for displaced students from a perspective of territorial cohesion, through mobility grants for students in need.</li> <li>– Support for job creation by the unemployed and inactive through the creation of businesses or employment support for existing businesses which create jobs; support for entrepreneurship and job creation by the unemployed and young people looking for their first job;</li> <li>– Development of networks of neighbourhood services to local communities;</li> </ul>

<sup>889</sup> AIR OP Centro 2020, version. 6.0, p. 207

Section	Description
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Testing social innovation solutions and new social responses, reinforcing the inclusive and solidary logic of the supported territories;</li> <li>– Animation of support structures (business incubators) that facilitate rural-based entrepreneurship;</li> <li>– Implementation of training plans adapted to local needs;</li> <li>– Support for qualification, especially of young people, for the implementation of social innovation projects;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Supporting initiatives to combat climate change (green jobs).<sup>890</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Unemployed persons in different conditions: receiving support or not, single-parent family or whose spouse or unmarried partner is also unemployed, victims of domestic violence.</p> <p>Persons with particular difficulties in social inclusion: persons with disabilities or incapacity, children and young people at risk, elderly, people with addictive behaviours</p> <p>Students and pre-school, basic and secondary schools, students in higher education in need.</p> <p>Local communities.<sup>891</sup></p>
Operations	<p>Number of operations under TO9: 1,096 (31 January 2020)</p> <p>The IP 9i which received 100% of the allocated resources under TO 09 (9i) included activities for the qualification and labour market integration of persons in condition of vulnerability, such as the Employment-Insertion Contracts (CEI and CEI+), Integrated actions (innovative and/or experimental) of local promotion of active inclusion, Culture for all (social inclusion through culture), Support for intermunicipal initiatives for the elderly, Actions to promote educational success, and Support for displaced students.</p>
Partnerships	<p>Partners for implementation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Intermediate bodies: The National Public Employment Service (IEFP), the National Health Service (SNS), the Institute of Social Security (ISS), the Ministry of Education.</li> <li>– Beneficiaries: Local institutions including schools and hospitals.</li> </ul>

<sup>890</sup> AIR OP Centro 2020, version. 6.0, pp.55-58 and 207-213

<sup>891</sup> AIR OP Centro 2020, version. 6.0, p. 212

Section	Description																				
	<p>– Beneficiaries: Public and private companies, NGOs, social enterprises, municipalities and trade unions.<sup>892</sup></p> <p>Large parts of the region covered by this OP have a low population density. Local partnerships are of particular importance for reaching out to the remote areas. In this relation the Local Action Groups (GAL) helped played a very important role. The GAL are networks of local actors (municipalities, associations, companies) and have accumulated during their long existence considerable knowledge about applying for ESF-support and managing projects</p>																				
Funding of the OP	<p>Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>IP</th> <th>Planned (a)</th> <th>Allocated (b)</th> <th>Spent</th> <th>Project Selection Rate (b/a)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>IP9i</td> <td>63,891,308</td> <td>29,576,217</td> <td>29,573,003</td> <td>46%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IP9vi</td> <td>47,067,332</td> <td>1,430,578</td> <td>-</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td>110,958,640</td> <td>31,006,795</td> <td>29,573,003</td> <td>28%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source:</i> SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. <i>Note:</i> Planned amounts refer to the whole 2014-2020 programming period while allocated and spent amounts refer to the period up to the end of the 2018 calendar year (31 December 2018).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In combination with the ESF, ERDF resources were also used to reach the TO9, namely under IP 9a (Investing in health and social infrastructure) and IP 9d (Undertaking investment in the context of community-led local development strategies).</li> <li>• Co-financing rate: 85%.</li> </ul>	IP	Planned (a)	Allocated (b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)	IP9i	63,891,308	29,576,217	29,573,003	46%	IP9vi	47,067,332	1,430,578	-	3%	<b>Total</b>	110,958,640	31,006,795	29,573,003	28%
IP	Planned (a)	Allocated (b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)																	
IP9i	63,891,308	29,576,217	29,573,003	46%																	
IP9vi	47,067,332	1,430,578	-	3%																	
<b>Total</b>	110,958,640	31,006,795	29,573,003	28%																	
Outputs and results (2014/2018)	<p>Total TO9 Participants: 16,354</p> <p>The primary target group of the OP (unemployed persons including LTU, see above) represents the largest number of participations. Persons with low educational level are also highly represented. Persons aged more than 54 years and other disadvantaged groups have a minor but relevant share.</p> <p>Based on the specific output indicators the achievement rate (the recorded values in relation to targets set for the end of the programming period) is estimated at 94%, very close to the estimated EU-average of 99%.</p> <p>The implementation of the OP had registered serious difficulties in the beginning (see section “Challenges” below), but after a delay it was possible to accelerate implementation. The achievement rate was</p>																				

<sup>892</sup> AIR OP Centro 2020, version 3.0, chapter 7.2. Involvement of relevant partners”

Section	Description																																																			
	<p>best in typologies with mature activities (already existing before the start of the OP), while typologies with new activities and less experienced beneficiaries were lagging behind.</p> <p>Common Output Indicators:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CO01</td> <td>Unemployed, including long-term unemployed</td> <td>16,354</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO02</td> <td>Long-term unemployed</td> <td>2,695</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO03</td> <td>Inactive</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO04</td> <td>Inactive, not in education or training</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO05</td> <td>Employed, including self-employed</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO07</td> <td>Above 54 years of age</td> <td>2,323</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO08</td> <td>Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training</td> <td>2,323</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO09</td> <td>With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)</td> <td>10,330</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO15</td> <td>Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO16</td> <td>Participants with disabilities</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO17</td> <td>Other disadvantaged</td> <td>1,471</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO18</td> <td>Homeless or affected by housing exclusion</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO19</td> <td>From rural areas</td> <td>10,074</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO23</td> <td>Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source:</i> SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common Result Indicators: 5,648 immediate-term results (CR01-CR05) were achieved and 8,612 longer-term results (CR06-CR09) were achieved. 95% of the recorded results (13,566) were related to the gaining of employment including self-employment (CR04).</li> </ul> <p>The OP also has specific result indicators. As the targets for these indicators were set as a ratio without a reference, the achievement rate could not be estimated</p>	Code	Indicator	Number	CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	16,354	CO02	Long-term unemployed	2,695	CO03	Inactive	-	CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	-	CO05	Employed, including self-employed	-	CO07	Above 54 years of age	2,323	CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	2,323	CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	10,330							CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	-	CO16	Participants with disabilities	-	CO17	Other disadvantaged	1,471	CO18	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	-	CO19	From rural areas	10,074	CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	-
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Assessment of the OP	<p>Effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The registered success rates may not reflect the full reality because of delays in the collection of the respective data. Therefore, it is not possible to give an informed interpretation of the figures.</li> </ul>																														
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Section		Description
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CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	3%
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CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	2%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The OP produced measurable results for a large number of participants (sum of common result indicators:14,296), almost totally in the area of employment.</li> <li>– No significant information about the reduction of discrimination as a result of TO9-actions and about soft outcomes could be revealed in the Annual Implementation Reports, interviews and focus group. No evaluations with this kind of information are available.</li> <li>– The SI2E-initiative is an example of (see in-depth analysis below).</li> <li>– Significant delays occurred due to the problems with the new information system (SIIFSE) that was not sufficiently well prepared before the start of the implementation of the OP. The flaws of the system (difficulties with uploading data regarding physical and financial execution and others) which is of the responsibility of the coordinating Agency of Development and Cohesion (AD&amp;C) created serious problems for the implementation of the OP, in particular for smaller and/or less experienced beneficiaries.<sup>893</sup></li> <li>– The representative of the MA of this OP stated that the complexity of the ESF’s administrative demands represented a further obstacle for OP and contributed to the significant delays in implementation of measures. Other interview partners (MA POISE, intermediate body ISS) and the Focus Group supported this assessment, highlighting the documentary verification</li> </ul>		

<sup>893</sup> See interviews with representatives of the MAs of the Regional OP Centro and of the Thematic OP POISE and with the representative of the intermediate body ISS. See also AIR version 2018.1, p. 134: “There was a delay in making the information system for submitting ESF payment claims linked to incentive schemes available.”

Section	Description
	<p>associated with public procurement procedures (national and European), particularly in ESF.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Despite of the problems and variations, the overall achievement rate was close to 100%, but there were strong variations in the success rates of the different types of activities that may be at least in part a result of the beneficiaries’ varying capacity to deal with the information system and with the ESF’s administrative demands. According to the MA’s representative, SMEs and schools had bigger problems, in contrast to the national PES (IEFP) whose delivery of the measure “Employment Insertion Contracts” (CEI) was highly effective.</li> <li>– Projects implemented after the revision of operational programmes in 2018 experienced delays due to insufficient delegation of responsibilities.</li> </ul> <p>Efficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The cost per participation for operations under IP9i was estimated to be €1,808, which was noticeably but not excessively higher than the EU average (IP9i=€1,488). The proximity of the average cost of participations in the OP to the EU-average support the statement of the MA’s representative that no overspending had been registered.</li> <li>– Partnerships with Local Action Groups (GAL) helped to increase efficiency by supporting small and medium sized enterprises apply for funding under the operational programme. The GAL are networks of local actors (municipalities, associations, companies) and have accumulated during their long existence considerable knowledge about applying for ESF-support and managing projects.</li> <li>– Administrative burdens and regulations regarding public procurement were major obstacles that reduced efficiency. It is not possible to present within this case study a conclusive assessment about the adequacy or inadequacy of regulations, but the insistence of all interview partners in both case studies in Portugal (OP Centro 2020 and OP POISE) in their critique that the administrative burden is too large indicates the existence of a problem that needs to be resolved.</li> </ul> <p>Relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The ex-ante evaluation highlights the strategic coherence between the high “strategic coherence between the prospective</li> </ul>

Section	Description
	<p>diagnosis and the interventions proposed by the OP” and the “virtuous relationship with the Europe 2020 strategy”.<sup>894</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Objectives and operations of the OP addressed the needs of target groups. The promotion of Employment Insertion Contracts (CEI), which have supported participants to remain in their labour market, proved to be a particularly effective measure.</li> </ul> <p>Added value of ESF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The OP was of major importance for the intensification of regional policies against poverty and exclusion. This applies to tried-and-tested measures such as the Employment Insertion Contracts (CEI) and also to innovative measures like the SI2E (see in-depth study below). Existing networks of stakeholders in the combat against poverty and exclusion were consolidated, namely those with the participation of Local Action Groups (GAL)., the national PES and Educational Territories for Priority Intervention.<sup>895</sup></li> </ul>
Challenges and lessons learned	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Several factors resulted in serious delays to implementation including the late approval of the OP, delays caused by the information system (SIIFSE) and by the excessive administrative burden on beneficiaries and intermediate bodies resulting from European and national regulations in relation to the documentary verification associated with public procurement procedures.</li> </ul> <p>Lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– MAs and stakeholders consider the European and national regulations regarding public procurement too complex and a cause of significant delays in implementation of all OPs.<sup>896</sup></li> <li>– It is essential that information systems are fully operational before the implementation of the OP begins, because otherwise there will be major delays in implementation.<sup>897</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>894</sup> A. M. Figueiredo (coord.) EX-ANTE EVALUATION AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CENTRE'S OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME - Final Report of the Ex-ante Evaluation, Lisbon / Quatenaire; pp. 14-15

<sup>895</sup> Interview with representative of MA.

<sup>896</sup> Common opinion of representatives of MA, intermediate bodies and beneficiaries expressed at the Focus Group held on 11th of February 2020.

<sup>897</sup> Interview with representative of the MA Centro 2020 Mr Jorge Brandão, 3 September 2019

## In-depth analysis of selected project - SI2E

Section	Description
Basic Facts Box	<p><b>OP:</b> Regional OP Centro 2014-2020 - Programa Operacional Regional do Centro 2014-2020; IP9i</p> <p><b>Project:</b> SI2E - Sistema de Incentivos ao Empreendedorismo e Emprego (System of Incentives to Entrepreneurship and Employment), IPs9d (ERDF) and 9vi (ESF) Incentive scheme for micro and small companies to create jobs and receive financial support to pay wages (ESF) and cover expenses for physical aspects of their operation (ERDF).</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> SI2E aims to operationalise support for entrepreneurship and job creation through the Regional Operational Programmes for the North, Centre, Alentejo, Lisbon and Algarve.<sup>898</sup></p> <p><b>Duration:</b> Established in 2017, still on-going</p> <p><b>Beneficiaries:</b> Micro- and small companies as beneficiaries and persons who want to create / maintain a job for themselves and unemployed persons as participants</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Local Action Groups (GAL), Intermunicipal Communities (CIMs) and Metropolitan Areas</p> <p><b>Total allocated funds:</b> 3,582,442 euro</p> <p><b>Total allocated ESF funds:</b> 3,045,075 euro</p> <p><b>Total national contribution:</b> 537,366 euro</p>
Intervention logic of the project/operation	
Rationale	<p>The fundamental idea of SI2E is to mobilize micro and small companies for job creation. The project operates in cooperation</p>

<sup>898</sup> Ministerial Order 105/2017 that created the System of Incentives to Entrepreneurship and Employment (SI2E), Article 1.2, <https://dre.pt/home/-/dre/106579662/details/maximized>

Section	Description
Objectives	<p>with local actors (GAL, CIM and Metropolitan Areas). This cooperation ensures greater effectiveness by application close to the territories in where the system promotes business investment.<sup>899</sup></p> <p>SI2E is aligned with the operational programme’s primary objective to promote sustainable employment in the region</p> <p>The initiative aims to create 1,400 jobs through the programme’s beneficiaries (micro and small companies).</p> <p>The objectives of the operation address the needs of participants (the need for employment) by supporting small businesses and incentivizing job-creation on the regional level.</p>
Relevance and coherence/synergies	<p>The rationale of the operation is in line with other regional and national strategies on social inclusion. It responds in particular to the problem of scarce employment opportunities in the low-density areas in the region covered by the OP. The employment growth since 2014 reduced the quantitative side of this problem and thus to a certain extent the relevance of the SI2E for job seekers.</p>
Outputs	<p>Companies made much more use of the SI2E-support co-financed by the ERDF than the SI2E-support given by the ESF.<sup>900</sup></p> <p>Beneficiaries of the operation are small businesses.</p> <p>The project aims to provide opportunities for employment for 1,400 people by 2020. By the end of 2018, 138 ESF operations were approved which forecast to create 333 jobs. 1,142 applications were under examination with a forecast to create 2 941 jobs, so the final target is expected to be achieved.<sup>901</sup></p>
Delivery method and partnerships	<p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Companies interested in applying for support under the project must obtain a compliance certificate with the Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (IAPMEI).</li> <li>– ESF support is used to promote self-employment and to subsidise wages of unemployed persons that are hired.</li> <li>– ESF support is increased if fixed-term jobs (minimum 12 months) are transformed into open-ended contracts (to be maintained for 24 months minimum).</li> </ul>

<sup>899</sup> Ministerial Order 105/2017, [Introduction and Article 1.2](#)

<sup>900</sup> AIR OP Centro 2020, cersion 2018.1, p. 18

<sup>901</sup> AIR OP Centro 2020, version Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators, p. 215, AIR OP Centro 2020, version 2018.1, p. 283

Section	Description
	<p>Outreach and dissemination are carried out through cooperation with the local action groups (GAL) and the intermunicipal communities (CIM)</p> <p>Partners for implementation include: Local Action Groups and Intermunicipal Communities (CIMs).</p>
Funding efficiency and	<p>Funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– SI2E is funded by the ESF and the ERDF.</li> <li>– ESF subsidizes the wages for participants.</li> <li>– Projects under 100,000 euro are managed by Local Action Groups and are financed by ESF.</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	<p>Effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The SI2E was created in 2017 and its implementation began with some delays. Therefore, it was not possible to arrange measurable results that would allow an evidence-based assessment of this measure’s effectiveness.</li> <li>– The measure had been chosen for an in-depth study because of its specific approach that allows to involve / support very small companies who have generally difficulties to successfully benefit from incentive schemes.</li> <li>– According to the MA’s assessment the measure will achieve its objective in terms of labour market integration of participants. This is a relevant result for the persons employed and also for the companies who increase their productive capacity.</li> <li>– By strengthening small businesses in the low-density areas in quantitative terms (employment volume) and in qualitative terms (regional innovation strategy for smart specialisation / RIS3) SI2E increases employment opportunities for the populations in the low-density territories that dominate the region covered by the OP Centro 2020.</li> </ul>
Challenges and success factors	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The implementation of SI2E required complex negotiations with local partners (Local Action Groups / GAL and Intermunicipal Communities / CIM) to elaborate each of the calls for tender. The high number of applications submitted and the need to build the capacity of the technical structures of the CIM and GAL and of the MA also contributed to the delay of implementation. It was necessary to meet this challenge because the cooperation with the local partners was a central success factor.</li> </ul>

Section	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In the context of the improving situation on the labour market companies had growing difficulties in finding registered unemployed persons with the adequate profile for the jobs they intended to create with the help of the SI2E. This invalidated a considerable number of projects.</li> <li>- Due to difficulties with processing the examination of SI2E payment claims that delayed the implementation of the measure the MA was forced to purchase in 2019 services for this purpose.<sup>902</sup></li> <li>- The combination of two funds (ESF and ERDF) for two types of support (employment and investment) within the same incentive system is a success factor, but it poses also a challenge, because companies tended to make much more use of the ERDF-support than the support from the ESF. Companies can always make use of the ERDF-support for investments in structures, but the ESF-support depends strongly on the existence of a large supply of eligible unemployed persons, and this supply decreased rapidly in the course of economic recovery.</li> </ul> <p>Success factors were not identified.</p>
EU Added value	<p>The project has offered specific support to persons in need of employment (as self-employed or salaried workers) through micro and small companies. According to the representative of the MA, this would not have been possible without European support, namely from the ESF and other funds.</p> <p>SI2E's approach supports people excluded from the labour market living in remote areas where SMEs and micro-companies are the main employers. The involvement of micro-companies is of particular importance for the low-density areas in the region because other incentive schemes are usually designed to be used by larger entities.</p>
Elements for transferability/good practices	<p>The key design principles, namely the mobilisation of micro and small companies with the support from local actors for the creation and maintenance of jobs, has been a good practice with a potential for transferability. The major problem for the ESF-component of the measure is that it was tailored for a situation with high unemployment, and that it was not possible to adapt the measure to the new situation.</p>

<sup>902</sup> AIR OP Centro 2020, version 2018.1, pp. 19 and 202-203

## 19 Sweden - Case study on ESF Support to Social Inclusion - Investments in Growth and Development Operational Programme 2014-2020 (2014SE05M9OP001)

This case study reviews the implementation of ESF support to social inclusion through the National Operational Programme in Sweden (2014SE05M9OP001) during the 2014-2020 programming period. This case study covers the period from 2014 through 2019. This case study covers the period from 2014 through the end of 2019 although the time period of data sources varied - the fieldwork was completed by December 2019 while the analysis of ESF monitoring data encompasses outputs and results generated by the end of December 2018. The case study was prepared drawing on desk research and four interviews (the Managing Authority, the beneficiary and two partner organizations).

Section 1 presents an overview of the OP while Section 2 presents an in-depth analysis of a selected project within the OP - 'Employment through procurement'. The selected project was classified as a type 6 operation by the evaluation study. Type 6 operations focus on access influencing attitudes and systems (see Annex 2 for more information).

The case study presents key information about the OP and selected project (e.g. socio-economic indicators of the context, recorded values of financial and physical indicators, target groups and partnerships). It also presents an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU-added value of the OP and selected project as well as challenges and lessons learned.

The achievement rate was estimated as the level of specific outputs or results recorded in relation to the targets set for the end of the programming period. Success rates were estimated as the number of results generated as a share of the relevant number of participations. Annex 4 of the study provides more information on the methodological approach for the estimation of achievement rates and success rates.

### OP case study

Section	Description
Name of OP	<p><b>OP:</b> 2014SE05M9OP001 - "Investments in growth and employment"</p> <p><b>Regions covered:</b> More developed region (all of Sweden)</p> <p><b>Priority Axes:</b> Axis I: Supply of competence (TO10iii, TO10iv); Axis II: Increase transitions to work (TO8i, TO8ii, TO9i); Axis III: Youth employment initiative (TO8ii); Axis IV: Technical support</p> <p><b>IPs:</b> <b>IP9i</b> - Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination: Active inclusion, including promotion of equal opportunities and active participation and improving employability</p> <p><b>Mono Fund OP:</b> (ESF)</p>
OP implementation context	<p>Before the launch of ESF 2014-2020 Sweden was urged in an EU country specific recommendation to reinforce efforts to improve labour-market integration of low-skilled young people and people with migrant</p>

Section	Description
	<p>background, to improve employability and labour demand for these groups.<sup>903</sup></p> <p>The 2013 ex-ante evaluation found the measures of activities proposed in the OP to be generally well-suited but urged for indicators in activities and objectives to actively foster gender-equal effects.<sup>904</sup></p> <p>There are also national targets of improving the overall employment rate and specifically the female employment rate, to reduce prevailing gender gap and prepare for higher dependency ratios as population ages.<sup>905</sup></p> <p>A major re-structuring of <i>The Swedish Public Employment Service</i> has been initiated (the restructuring was announced in 2019 and it is currently scheduled to be completed by 2021), but no relevant changes have been made to the OP itself during the period.</p> <p>The operational program is managed by the Swedish ESF-council (Svenska ESF-rådet), an independent state authority connected to the Ministry of Employment (<i>Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet</i>). The Swedish ESF-council manages the ESF and FEAD and has eight regional offices throughout Sweden and 133 people employed at the beginning of 2019.</p>
ESF Priorities and actions	<p>The main priority is to improve the labour market status of individuals with diverse and multiple needs, typically long-term unemployment combined with difficulties due to either lack of work experience, social network, language constraints/barriers or health issues.</p> <p>Due to the diverse and multiple needs of individuals within the target group, the intervention encompassed a variety of actions and a close cooperation among various social actors/stakeholders. Key stakeholders are large organisations and social actors from all parts of society.</p> <p>Type of operations carried out under this OP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type 1: Actions with an employment objective</li> <li>• Type 4: Access to essential services</li> <li>• Type 6: Measures influencing attitudes and systems</li> </ul> <p>Specific activities include e.g. the following:</p>

<sup>903</sup>Country-specific recommendation CSR from the European council (2013), 10657/1/13.

<sup>904</sup>The Swedish Agency for Public Management (2013), *Förhandsutvärdering av nationellt program för Europeiska socialfonden 2014–2020*, 2013/34-5, Stockholm.

<sup>905</sup>The Swedish Government (2019), *Sweden’s National Reform Program 2019*, April 2019. Stockholm.

Section	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education, labour market training or employment, also rehabilitation or preventive measures such as validation of previous work life experience or competence;</li> <li>• Matching and job-search activities. Wage subsidies or internships to increase labour demand;</li> <li>• Efforts to raise entrepreneurial spirit/entrepreneurship and e.g. IT competence;</li> <li>• Efforts to support geographic and occupational mobility;</li> <li>• Development of systematic collaboration between social actors/stakeholders, that provide workers with more a more complete support in their transition to work;</li> <li>• The promotion of social companies and non-profit making organizations broadening labour market/employment opportunities and providing support for rehabilitation, work training and transition back to work;</li> <li>• Activities specifically targeted towards newly arrived female migrant;</li> <li>• Activities specifically directed towards former criminals or addicts;</li> <li>• Development of social inclusive, diverse workplaces, with decent physical and psychosocial work environment favouring anti-discriminative attitudes.</li> <li>• Funds were also used to implement, test or develop new methods to increase employment opportunities/employability or enrolment in education or participation in active labour market policy programmes.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<p>Men and women standing far from the labour market due to several interrelated and complex problems, such as unemployment in combination with severe health problems, work disabilities, language constraints/barriers or other social reasons.</p> <p>The actual participants reached match the target group, but two sub-groups have not been reached to the extent expected, namely individuals on long-term sickness and individuals with work disabilities eligible to subsidized work.</p>
Operations	<p>Total number of operations under TO9: 97. 70 are ongoing and 27 have closed.<sup>906</sup></p> <p>Many TO9-projects have been directed towards newly arrived migrants, for example to build specific labour market language skills.</p>

<sup>906</sup>Development in the national ESF-program for investments in growth and employment 2019:2

Section	Description																					
Partnerships	<p>There are eight Committees of regional structural partnership, all responsible for different geographical areas. The Swedish ESF-council is represented in the committees by its regional office.</p> <p>Other stakeholders represented are municipalities and county councils (Landsting) with in total half of the number of commissioners, but also trade organizations and worker unions, state authorities, non-profit organizations etc. These committees formulate calls and decide upon funding.</p>																					
Funding of the OP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial indicators by IP (sum of EU and National contributions)</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>IP</th> <th>Planned (a)</th> <th>Allocated (b)</th> <th>Spent</th> <th>Project Selection Rate (b/a)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>IP9i</td> <td>288,871,458</td> <td>210,910,164</td> <td>88,323,764</td> <td>73%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>288,871,458</td> <td>210,910,164</td> <td>88,323,764</td> <td>73%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Source:</i> SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019. <i>Note:</i> Planned amounts refer to the whole 2014-2020 programming period while allocated and spent amounts refer to the period up to the end of the 2018 calendar year (31 December 2018).</p> <p><b>Co-financing rate:</b> 50%</p> <p>There has been no major change to allocation of funds 2014-2018.</p> <p>No other EU funds are used to support IP9i-actions under the OP.</p>	IP	Planned (a)	Allocated (b)	Spent	Project Selection Rate (b/a)	IP9i	288,871,458	210,910,164	88,323,764	73%	Total	288,871,458	210,910,164	88,323,764	73%						
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Outputs and results (2014/2018)	<p>Total number of participants for TO9: 11,920, well in line with the target for the program period.</p> <p>The estimated output specific achievement rate (the recorded values in relation to targets set for the end of the programming period) for 81 registered operations was 61%, a number well in line with target so far for the program period.</p> <p>The corresponding estimated results specific achievement rate (the recorded values in relation to targets set for the end of the programming period) for 81 registered operations was 48%, also this a number well in line with target so far for the program period. MA data however shows gender-unequal effects in the long-term results for males (33% employed) compared to females (19% employed).</p> <p>Common output indicators</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Number</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CO01</td> <td>Unemployed, including long-term unemployed</td> <td>8,268</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO02</td> <td>Long-term unemployed</td> <td>5,104</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO03</td> <td>Inactive</td> <td>3,650</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO04</td> <td>Inactive, not in education or training</td> <td>3,033</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO05</td> <td>Employed, including self-employed</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CO07</td> <td>Above 54 years of age</td> <td>1,080</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Code	Indicator	Number	CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	8,268	CO02	Long-term unemployed	5,104	CO03	Inactive	3,650	CO04	Inactive, not in education or training	3,033	CO05	Employed, including self-employed	2	CO07	Above 54 years of age	1,080
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Section	Description		
	CO08	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	1,056
	CO09	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	7,289
	CO15	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	9,240
	CO16	Participants with disabilities	2,790
	CO17	Other disadvantaged	3,135
	CO18	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	-
	CO19	From rural areas	-
	CO23	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	-

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

#### Common result indicators

Code	Indicator	Number
CR01	Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	226
CR02	Participants in education/training upon leaving	832
CR03	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	484
CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	1,848
CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	2,945
CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	1,535
CR07	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	-
CR08	Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	90
CR09	Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	1,394

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2018, data extracted on December 10, 2019.

Section	Description															
Assessment of the OP	<p>The effectiveness is in line with targets, but results show a gender discrepancy, with male participants showing higher employment rates at the end of projects compared to females (especially, this is especially true for low and medium educated participants (primary and upper secondary education). Although the causes needs to be further investigated, studies have found that one possible reason could be that projects with a higher share of female participants typically fund a lower cost per participant, than projects with a higher share of male participants<sup>907</sup>.</p> <p>The estimated success rates of Type 1 and Type 4 operations are presented below (the recorded results as a share of the relevant recorded outputs)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Success rate for OP (type 1)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CR04</td> <td>Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR06</td> <td>Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving</td> <td>13%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Success rate for OP (type 4)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CR05</td> <td>Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving</td> <td>33%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Efficiency: Efficiency must be considered adequate. The cost per participation for operations under IP9i and could not be estimated.  Relevance: Relevance is high, but the qualitative assessment of the MA is that two sub-groups, individuals on long-term sickness and individuals with work disabilities eligible to subsidized work, have not been reached to the extent expected.  Coherence: Stakeholders have been involved in a timely and inclusive manner and program delivery is judged to be coherent, in line with recommendations and supportive to EU and member state strategies and targets.  EU Added value: The OP has provided added value in line with previous periods. For example, the OP has been able to support the group of</p>	Code	Indicator	Success rate for OP (type 1)	CR04	Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	16%	CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	13%	Code	Indicator	Success rate for OP (type 4)	CR05	Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	33%
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<sup>907</sup>Development in the national ESF-program for investments in growth and employment 2019:2

Section	Description
Challenges and lessons learned	<p>newly arrived migrants / refugees that have increased during the program period. The OP has also facilitated development of innovative services, such as the deployment of employment requirements in public contracting and new methods to help individuals on social assistance support by focusing on and supporting to creation of stable family pre-requisites, etc.</p> <p><i>There have been no major challenges during the program period.</i></p>
Summary of in-depth project/operation	<p>The objectives of the ESF-funded project <i>Employment Through Procurement</i> was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To develop a national model for deployment of employment requirement in public contracts</li> <li>- Make visible the potential socio-economic effects of such employment requirements, and (iii) spread the knowledge about the instrument itself.</li> </ul> <p>The project was funded as a transnational knowledge-sharing initiative<sup>908</sup>, and delivered by a method of agreed work packages divided among the ten partner organizations involved (seven from Sweden and three from Finland).</p> <p>The project activities included an elaborate communication plan to influence a diverse group of stakeholders such as policy and decision-makers, procurers, potentials suppliers, and private and public labour market actors.<sup>909</sup></p> <p>An external evaluation<sup>910</sup> shows that all project objectives have been met, but also concludes that more communication activities are required to ensure a broad deployment of the national model, and especially to avoid gender-unequal effects.<sup>911</sup></p>

## **In-depth analysis of selected project – Employment through procurement**

<sup>908</sup>The National Agency for Public Procurement report 2019:6, Slutrapport för ESF-projektet - Sysselsättning genom offentlig upphandling, p.14-15

<sup>909</sup>The National Agency for Public Procurement report 2019:6, Slutrapport för ESF-projektet - Sysselsättning genom offentlig upphandling, p.14-15, 19-20

<sup>910</sup>Ramboll Management Consulting 2019, Slututvärdering av projektet sysselsättningskrav i offentlig upphandling, p.5-6, 19

<sup>911</sup>Ramboll Management Consulting 2019, Slututvärdering av projektet sysselsättningskrav i offentlig upphandling, p.5-6, 21

Section	Description
Basic Facts Box	<p><b>OP:</b> 2014SE05M9OP001 – Investments in growth and employment; IPI – Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination</p> <p><b>Project:</b> Employment Through Procurement (Sysse<span>l</span>s<span>ä</span>ttninggenomoffentligupphandling)</p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Provide the pre-requisites for a socially responsible public procurement leading to increased employment rates among individuals standing far from the labour market.<sup>912</sup></p> <p><b>Beneficiary:</b> The Swedish National Agency for Public Procurement</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> March 2017 to December 2019</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Ten partner organizations have formed the project team, whereof seven from Sweden and three from Finland. The partner organizations from Sweden includes: National Agency for Public Procurement (project owner and project coordination), The Swedish Public Employment Service, Municipality of Botkyrka, City of Gothenburg, City of Helsingborg, City of Stockholm, The Swedish Transport Administration. The partner organizations in Finland include: The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, City of Helsinki and City of Vanda</p> <p><b>Target Groups:</b> The main target group in this project has been all public organizations conducting acts of public procurement. Other target groups considered important are policy- and decision makers such as politicians and public management, procurers, suppliers, public and private labour market actors involved in e.g. job matching.<sup>913</sup> People standing far from the labour market, e.g. newly arrived migrants, is a secondary target group</p> <p><b>Participants:</b> This project has not had participants in the ESF regular sense, because it was intended to bring change to a system. In the following ‘participants’ refers to the number of officials within this system that has been reached. There is no thorough quantitative data available regarding the number of participants involved, since communication activities have included diverse channels such as newspapers, seminars, internet and social media, conferences etc. For the eight external seminars which solely focused on increasing the knowledge among the primary target group, there is extensive survey data documenting outcomes for the</p>

<sup>912</sup>The National Agency for Public Procurement report 2019:6, Slutrapport för ESF-projektet - Sysselsättning genom offentlig upphandling, p.14

<sup>913</sup>The National Agency for Public Procurement report 2019:6, Slutrapport för ESF-projektet - Sysselsättning genom offentlig upphandling, p.19-20

Section	Description
	<p>participants. There have been approximately 550-600 participants in these communication activities arranged by the project. In addition, approximately 600 participants more have been informed about the new national model and its supportive tools, in activities which the project team have been specially invited to.<sup>914</sup></p> <p><b>Total Funding ESF: 9,197,579 SEK</b></p>
<p>Intervention logic of the project/operation</p>	<p><b>Rationale:</b> 2015-2016: Large migration to and slow integration on the Swedish labour market 2014-2016: Employment-related social care in public contracts was legally clarified in EU directives and national procurement acts as one strategic instrument to adress labour market challenges. 2016: Lack of national model believed to act as barrier for broad deployment of employment related care in public contracts</p> <p><b>Inputs:</b> ESF-funding of 9 197 579 SEK over three years. Ten partner organizations, seven from Sweden and three from Finland.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b> Main project activities include (some overlap): - 12 work packages - 4 transnational workshops. - 6 study tours in Europe - 8 external seminars e.g. regional dialogs etc - Other communication activities</p> <p><b>Outputs:</b> Developed a national model for applying employment requirements in public procurement -communicated this national model and delivered a socio-economic model to make visible the general effects of deploying employment requirements in public contracts.</p> <p><b>Outcomes and results:</b> The project has fulfilled objectives terms of : - developing a national model also with guidelines and toolboxes - communicated the model in several external activities as well as through other media - delivered a socio-economic model to show effects of deployment</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	<p>Integration on the Swedish labour market is known to take several years, on average more than 5 years and at the same time, employers continuously report skill shortages.<sup>915</sup> In the light of these facts and the 2015-2016 waves of migrants / refugees, the use of employment-related social care in Swedish public contracts was highlighted as one innovative instrument that could possibly be used to improve the situation for both these groups. Employment-related social care in public contracts refers to binding or non-binding clauses in contracts, aimed at providing employment opportunities for individuals standing far from the labour market.<sup>916</sup></p> <p>In 2016, its use and spread had been limited and restricted primarily to forerunners either officially appointed by the Swedish Government like <i>The Swedish Transport Administration</i><sup>917</sup>, or self-</p>

<sup>914</sup>Interview 2

<sup>915</sup>Interview 2e.

<sup>916</sup>Interview 2

<sup>917</sup>The Swedish Government (2015), Uppdrag till Trafikverket att ställa krav på sysselsättning i upphandlingar, Fi2015/3404, June 2015.

Section	Description
	<p>imposed, like in local organizations with especially engaged staff. The lack of a national model was believed to act as one key barrier for public procurers to start applying employment-related social clauses in their contracts nation-wide. In effect, the ESF-project <i>Employment through Procurement</i> was launched to address this problem.</p> <p>By the development and spread of a national model the adoption of employment-related social clauses in public contracts is assumed to multiply, providing better assistance for individuals from the target group of people in vulnerable conditions, e.g. newly arrived migrants, in making a move closer to the labour market as well as for employers in recruitment of required competence.<sup>918</sup> The project has been set-up as an international knowledge-sharing initiative, with transnational collaborative learning as a method, and was funded via a coordinated call for this kind of measure.<sup>919</sup></p>
Objectives	<p>The ESF-project <i>Employment through Procurement</i> is a strategic development project, with the objective of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- defining a national model for integrating employment-related social care into public contracts, along with the required supportive guidelines and toolboxes and</li> <li>- spread knowledge to procuring organization about the possibility of applying such employment-related social care</li> <li>- develop tools of evaluation that provide insight on the possible effects of adoption of employment-related social care e.g. in terms of costs, opportunities and risks.<sup>920</sup></li> </ul> <p>The general purpose of the project has been to: "...provide the prerequisites for a socially responsible public procurement leading to increased employment rates among individuals standing far from the labour market".<sup>921</sup></p>
Relevance and coherence/synergies	<p>The rationale for this project has been well in line with the regional / national strategies on social inclusion. The 2016 Swedish Public Procurement Act allows for such binding employment-related social</p>

<sup>918</sup>Interview 2.

<sup>919</sup>Interview 3.

<sup>920</sup>The National Agency for Public Procurement report 2019:6, Slutrapport för ESF-projektet - Sysselsättning genom offentlig upphandling, p.14-15

<sup>921</sup>The National Agency for Public Procurement report 2019:6, Slutrapport för ESF-projektet - Sysselsättning genom offentlig upphandling, p.14

Section	Description
	<p>clauses<sup>922</sup> and The Swedish <i>National Agency for Public Procurement</i> is instructed to ensure a socially responsible procurement.</p> <p>Bearing in mind that the main target group in this project has been all public organizations conducting acts of public procurement<sup>923</sup>, the objectives of the project must certainly be seen to address the needs of the target group.</p> <p>The projects objectives, if deployed in a rational way, should address the socio-economic needs of the secondary target group of people in vulnerable conditions standing far from the labour market, and hereby address socio-economic needs at regional as well as national level.</p>
Outputs	<p>The main target group is public organizations conducting acts of public procurement. Other important target groups are policy-makers, private companies as suppliers, job matching actors and labour market departments, non-profit social organizations.</p> <p>The communication plan also specifically mentions four key stakeholders as targets groups for the communication activities, namely: policy- and decision-makers, procurers, potential suppliers and public and private labour market actors.<sup>924</sup></p> <p>Project activities include twelve different work packages of which some have been transnational workshops. Some have also been conducted during six study tours in Europe, launched to learn from best practices in other European cities and regions.</p> <p>There have also been in total eight external communications activities, such as regional dialogs, to spread knowledge about the instrument of employment requirements in public contracting. Primarily, these external communication activities have been directed towards public officials like public management and procurers.<sup>925</sup></p> <p>There have been approximately 550-600 participants in these communication activities arranged by the project. In addition, approximately 600 participants more have been informed about the</p>

<sup>922</sup>SFS 2016:1145

<sup>923</sup>The National Agency for Public Procurement report 2019:6, Slutrapport för ESF-projektet - Sysselsättning genom offentlig upphandling, p.5

<sup>924</sup>The National Agency for Public Procurement report 2019:6, Slutrapport för ESF-projektet - Sysselsättning genom offentlig upphandling, p.19-20

<sup>925</sup>Ramboll Management Consulting 2019, Slututvärdering av projektet sysselsättningskrav i offentlig upphandling, p.10

Section	Description
	<p>new national model and its supportive tools, in communication activities which the project team have been specially invited to.<sup>926</sup></p> <p>Continuous survey data throughout the project's communication activities shows clearly positive effects<sup>927</sup> on the participants in these activities. There have been continuous surveys conducted after work packages, communication activities and transnational workshops etc, aimed at capturing hard and soft outcomes among the officials from the participants.<sup>928</sup></p> <p>However, it has been difficult to set up output targets for this project, since the activities have not been directly connected to individuals from the target group of people in vulnerable conditions, but indirectly and mediated via a change of a system, where individuals within this system have been the primary target group.<sup>929</sup></p>
Delivery method and partnerships	<p>The project's recruitment strategy was to build a new partnership for the project's execution which drew from national experience and knowledge. Thus, recruitment was partly made from already existing networks. The strategy to form a new partnership was due to several reasons, e.g. such as the ambition to collaborate internationally, the adoption of the specific project delivery method presented below, but also to facilitate the process of taking the next step by involving a more broad palette of knowledge.<sup>930</sup></p> <p>The strategy of forming a project team from already existing national / international networks of knowledge (and recruit partner organizations from these networks), implied a very strong project engagement and solid knowledge-based already from the start, and must be seen as one success factor for enabling a swift commencement in the project.</p> <p>The project delivery method chosen was based on agreed work packages with divided responsibilities among the partner organizations. These work packages were agreed and signed already at the project design phase.<sup>931</sup> This delivery method formed</p>

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<sup>926</sup>Interview 2

<sup>927</sup>Ramboll Management Consulting 2019, Slututvärdering av projektet sysselsättningskrav i offentlig upphandling, p.10-11

<sup>928</sup>Ramboll Management Consulting 2019, Slututvärdering av projektet sysselsättningskrav i offentlig upphandling, p.10

<sup>929</sup> Interview 3

<sup>930</sup>Interview 2

<sup>931</sup>Interview 2

Section	Description
	<p>clear expectations on what was to be delivered, ensuring a strong project involvement, and must be seen as a success factor for building an engaged team.</p> <p>A weakness of the project delivery method is that it is challenging to keep the different work packages integrated.<sup>932</sup> One should also ensure that the work packages are built to be time-independent of each other, so that a delay in one package does not result in a delay of all the others and thus risk delay the overall project. In summary, this project delivery method has the potential of nurturing a high level of involvement and engagement but is also believed to make the act of project leading more challenging.</p> <p>The new partnership comprised ten partner organizations, whereof seven from Sweden and three from Finland. The Swedish organizations include <i>National Agency for Public Procurement</i> as project owner and project coordination, <i>The Swedish Public Employment Service</i>, <i>Municipality of Botkyrka</i>, <i>City of Gothenburg</i>, <i>City of Helsingborg</i>, <i>City of Stockholm</i> and <i>The Swedish Transport Administration</i>. The Finnish partner organizations include <i>The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare</i>, <i>City of Helsinki</i> and <i>City of Vanda</i>.<sup>933</sup> The project team have included both representatives from procuring departments and labour market departments.<sup>934</sup> The representation from labour market departments has been considered somewhat weak however.<sup>935</sup> The labour market department at the <i>Swedish Public Employment Service</i> was not directly involved as a partner, which might be considered a weakness.<sup>936</sup></p> <p>Also, the fact that neither Regional organizations nor any smaller municipality was directly involved as partner in the project could show to be a weakness.</p> <p>As a complement to the project team there was also a separate steering group and reference group. Steering group included for example representatives from the <i>National ESF-Council</i> and the reference group included for example <i>social companies</i>.<sup>937</sup> For</p>

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<sup>932</sup>Interview 1,2 and 4

<sup>933</sup>The National Agency for Public Procurement report 2019:6, Slutrapport för ESF-projektet - Sysselsättning genom offentlig upphandling, p.14

<sup>934</sup>Interview 2

<sup>935</sup>Interview 1 and 4

<sup>936</sup>Ramboll Management Consulting 2019, Slututvärdering av projektet sysselsättningskrav i offentlig upphandling, p.19

<sup>937</sup>Interview 2

Section	Description
	<p>project evaluation there has been internal allocation at the project owning organization up to 2018, with continuous reporting. In 2019 <i>Ramboll Management Consulting</i> was assigned the task of project evaluation, publishing evaluation reports in June 2019 and November 2019.<sup>938</sup></p> <p><b>Story box</b>  <i>"There has been high speed, good focus on common goals. Partly I think because the project has been built on existing long-term relational networks and the long-term engagement of the individuals involved"</i><sup>939</sup></p> <p><i>"The Swedish Public Employment Service was mainly represented by their procuring department, not by their labour market / job matching department... we could have used more experts on the labour market, job matching and recruitment"</i><sup>940</sup></p>
<p>Funding efficiency and</p>	<p>The project has been set-up as an international knowledge-sharing initiative, with transnational collaborative learning as method, and was funded via a coordinated call for this kind of measure.<sup>941</sup> The level of funding was 9 197 579 SEK.<sup>942</sup> The project was not funded through any other funds.<sup>943</sup> The involved participant's organizations' objectives have generally been to develop their knowledge about how their public procurement could be used to improve the situation for citizens of their local community standings far from the labour market and the situation for private employers within their community, facing skill shortages.</p> <p>The organizational arrangements for coordination between beneficiary organisations and Managing Authority, including the procedures for reporting and monitoring, have mutually been considered efficient.<sup>944</sup> However, project owner organization would prefer quarterly reports to monthly reports, as well as the possibility</p>

<sup>938</sup>Ramboll Management Consulting 2019, Slututvärdering av projektet sysselsättningskrav i offentlig upphandling, p.4

<sup>939</sup>Interview 1

<sup>940</sup>Interview 4

<sup>941</sup>Interview 3

<sup>942</sup>Project evaluation

<sup>943</sup>Interview 3

<sup>944</sup>Interviews

Section	Description
	<p>of giving partner organizations in new ESF-projects a standard introductory course to reporting.<sup>945</sup></p> <p>The support from the <i>National ESF-council</i> in formal matters such as forming a steering group or an implementation plan, or general structuring of project activities etc has been deemed as one project success factor.<sup>946</sup> Furthermore, the level of funding has been sufficient to effectively achieve the project objectives. All evaluation data also consistently points to the view that this project would not have been implemented without the ESF funding.<sup>947</sup></p>
Effectiveness	<p>According to the external project evaluation, the project has fulfilled its objectives, i.e. it has developed a national model for deploying employment requirements in public contracts, along with the required supportive guidelines and toolboxes, communicated this national model in regional dialogs, conferences and public and private media with nationwide coverage, and delivered a socio-economic model to make visible the general effects of deploying such employment requirements in public contracts.<sup>948</sup> Continuous survey data throughout the projects communication activities shows clearly positive effects<sup>949</sup> on the participating organizations. One should note however, that more communication is required to spread the use of the model.</p> <p>Some unintended outcomes<sup>950</sup> have also been identified. One is the establishment of an international as well as national network for knowledge-sharing. A second one is a list of success factors for deployment of employment requirements in public procurement. A third one is a list of recommendations for policy-makers on how to further develop the deployment of employment requirements in public procurement, to make it an even better instrument for managing societal challenges.</p> <p>In terms of project effectiveness, it appears that the horizontal principles have been integrated in the project and that project outcomes overall will contribute to strengthen these principles.</p>

<sup>945</sup>Interview 2

<sup>946</sup>Interview 2

<sup>947</sup>Interviews

<sup>948</sup>Ramboll Management Consulting 2019, Slututvärdering av projektet sysselsättningskrav i offentlig upphandling, p.5-6

<sup>949</sup>Ramboll Management Consulting 2019, Slututvärdering av projektet sysselsättningskrav i offentlig upphandling, p.10-11

<sup>950</sup>Interview 2

Section	Description
	<p>However, the gender perspective could have been even better integrated by including a public employer from a female-based section of the work society.<sup>951</sup> One hindering factor which might have affected effectiveness is a major re-structuring of <i>The Swedish Public Employment Service</i> which was launched during the project. Enabling factors for improved efficiency has been to build on the available national experience, but also the project delivery method of agreed work packages forming clear expectations on what was to be delivered. Both these factors made it possible to produce a lot within a very limited amount of time.<sup>952</sup></p> <p><b>Story box</b>  <i>"The project management has performed brilliantly I would say. They have kept a clear focus on results. The methodology applied in the project, negotiated and agreed division of work packages with different drivers, have shown to be an excellent way to involve and engage the project team and have generated a highly effective coordination"</i><sup>953</sup>  <i>"Implementation will require that we reach more procurers, politicians and decision-makers – success will require more spread! Investments must be made and resources allocated at the procuring organizations, and for some, these resources are not available"</i><sup>954</sup></p>
Challenges and success factors	<p><b>Success Factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One success factor was the approach to collaboratively develop the national model with its to-be users (procurers). A second one was the solid support from the project owner and upper management within this organization.<sup>955</sup> The recruitment strategy of building a project team partly from already existing networks of knowledge ensured project engagement and a solid knowledge-based already from the start, and must thus be seen as one success factor. The same is true for a project delivery method based on agreed work packages with divided responsibilities among the partner organizations, forming clear expectations and ensuring a strong involvement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p>

<sup>951</sup>Ramboll Management Consulting 2019, Slututvärdering av projektet sysselsättningskrav i offentlig upphandling, p.6, 19

<sup>952</sup>Interview 1 and 4

<sup>953</sup>Interview 1

<sup>954</sup> Interview 2

<sup>955</sup>Interview 2

Section	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was challenging to keep the different work packages integrated.<sup>956</sup> The representation from labour market departments was considered by some to be somewhat weak.<sup>957</sup> The labour market department at the <i>Swedish Public Employment Service</i> was not directly involved as a partner, by some considered a weakness.<sup>958</sup> Also, the fact that neither any regional organizations, pre-dominantly female-based work sector nor any smaller municipality was directly involved as partner in the project could show out to be a weakness as the model is to be implemented.<sup>959</sup> However, the main challenge must be considered the difficulty in setting up and being able to relate to the output objectives, since the project have had a primary target group of entities rather than individuals in condition of vulnerability. In effect, there were no quantitative nor qualitative measures pre-defined in the project, to assess the overall project efficiency after project closure.</li> </ul> <p><b>Story box</b>  <i>"A success factor is the cooperation between individuals that share the same work field nationally and internationally, and that really want to make efforts for the same cause"</i><sup>960</sup></p> <p><i>"It would be valuable if all procurers got the chance to follow individuals the whole process to get inspired by success stories and learn from failures, and to see how their own contribution comes of effect"</i><sup>961</sup></p> <p><i>"It has been challenging for the project to grasp the target group duality. It is relatively complex to develop a model in comparison to applying methods and tools to support individuals in condition of vulnerability in making a move closer to the labour market. What is cost efficient when the project objective is to develop a model?"</i><sup>962</sup></p>
EU Added value	It is reasonable to believe that the lack of a national model acted as a barrier for broad deployment of employment-related social care in

<sup>956</sup>Interview 2

<sup>957</sup>Interview 1 and 4

<sup>958</sup>Ramboll Management Consulting 2019, Slututvärdering av projektet sysselsättningskrav i offentlig upphandling, p.19

<sup>959</sup>Interview 1 and 4

<sup>960</sup>Interview 1

<sup>961</sup>Interview 1

<sup>962</sup>Interview 3

Section	Description
	<p>public contracts. It is likewise reasonable to believe that the projects fulfilment of its objectives will improve deployment and contribute to the transformation of public procurement into a more strategic instrument for acts of social responsibility, increasing the likelihood of positive effects on the target group of people standing far from the labour market. The project has thus allowed for relevant activities to be undertaken in relation to groups that would not otherwise have been receiving support. It is also true that this project builds on available experiences and local and regional social innovations developed by forerunners and engaged officials in these communities. The project has thereby reinforced local and regional social innovations and taken it up to a national level.</p> <p>There is no available data providing clear evidence of the sustainability of the project effects post ESF funding. It is reasonable to believe that there exist such clear positive effects, but still there is no evidence to clear all doubts. However, continuous survey data throughout the projects external communication activities shows clearly positive effects<sup>963</sup> on the participating organizations. Qualitative data also indicates enhanced capacity among public services to deploy employment requirements in contracts, by means of e.g. a generally enhanced knowledge about success factors and challenges, extended network, availability of tools etc.<sup>964</sup></p>
<p>Elements transferability/ good practices</p>	<p>for</p> <p>The project rationale is likely shared by other Member States and thus transferable. The project delivery method of agreed work packages is undoubtedly an element of transferability, forming clear expectations on delivery and high partnership engagement.</p> <p>Building on existing networks is also an element of transferability, ensuring a swift project take off.</p> <p>The elaborate communication plan adopted in this project, adopted a diverse channels to reach target groups whose separate needs must all be understood and addressed, to ensure the sustainability of project effects in a project of this intervention logic, directed towards change of a system rather than directly towards individuals from the target group.</p>

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<sup>963</sup>Ramboll Management Consulting 2019, Slututvärdering av projektet sysselsättningskrav i offentlig upphandling, p.10-11

<sup>964</sup>Interview 1

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