

EN
ANNEX

**2023 annual work programme for the operational technical assistance at the initiative of
the Commission in the framework of the European Social Fund Plus strand under
shared management**

Grants, Procurements and other actions

1. Introduction

On the basis of the objectives laid down in the Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), this work programme contains the actions to be financed and the budget breakdown for year 2023 as follows:

1.1. Budget breakdown

Budget Line	Amount
07.020200 - ESF+ shared management strand - Operational technical assistance	EUR 24 000 000
TOTAL	EUR 24 000 000

LEGAL BASIS

Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013, and in particular Article 39 thereof

1.2. Type of actions to be financed:

- for grants (implemented under direct management) (point 2): EUR 500 000
- for prizes (implemented under direct management) (point 3): N/A
- for procurement (implemented under direct management) (point 4): EUR 20 460 000
- for actions implemented under indirect management (point 5): EUR 2 500 000
- for contributions to trust funds (point 6): N/A
- for financial instruments (point 7): N/A
- for contributions to blending facilities (point 8): N/A
- for other actions or expenditure (point 9): EUR 540 000

2. Grants

The indicative global budgetary envelope reserved for grants under this work programme amounts to EUR 500 000.

2.1. Events organised by the Presidency of the Council of the EU (2023)

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

The ESF Presidency conferences are meant to support ESF stakeholders on specific challenges of ESF implementation. The topics are agreed to contribute to defining and raising awareness on our policy priorities and they are defined by the Presidency in agreement with the Commission.

Description of the activities to be funded

High level Conference organised by Presidencies on topics related to policy areas covered by the ESF+ such as employment, education or social inclusion.

Types of applicants targeted by the direct award of the grant

The Member State holding the Council Presidency is the beneficiary of the grant to be awarded without a call for proposals on the basis of Article 195(c) of Financial Regulation. These events, which are highly political in nature and which need representation at the highest level both from national authorities and European representatives, are to be organised exclusively by the Member State holding the Presidency. Given the unique role of the Presidency in the framework of EU activities, the Member State responsible for the organisation of the event is considered as a de jure monopoly.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL throughout the year

2.2. Direct grant to Euronews for reporting on ESF/ESF+ implementation

Priorities of the year, objectives pursued and expected results

The objective is to produce eight "Real Economy" episodes on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights through ESF/ESF+ funded projects. It will contribute to disseminating information about the role of the European Pillar to make social Europe a reality with the support of the ESF+. Topics to be determined; Euronews is free to adapt the topics provided by the Commission to the editorial concept of the Real Economy Magazine. The expected output is an estimated reach of 10 million Europeans on TV, 200,000 page views generating 10 million impressions on social media. The expected result is that TV viewers and social media followers have a better understanding of the European Pillar of Social Rights and ESF/ESF+ supported projects contributing to implement the Pillar on the ground. In the long run the action will contribute to enhance peoples' trust in the EU as an important social actor to make social Europe a reality.

Description of the activities to be funded

Euronews will be asked to produce and broadcast eight episodes in 2023-2024 on ESF/ESF+ implementation, raising awareness among the general public on the impact of ESF/ESF+ funding on the ground. The episodes are part of the established TV magazine "Real Economy", which is distributed on air, online and via social media. Euronews is specialised in reporting on EU affairs from a European perspective on a multilingual basis and contributes to a sense of European identity. Its magazine Real Economy is specialised in economic, social and employment related matters. The action will allow the Commission to reach out to new audiences strengthening the visibility of the ESF+. The planning of the episodes to be produced will be done in close cooperation with Euronews and DG ECFIN. The latter is the Commission's coordinator of the cooperation with Euronews Real Economy. Due to its

editorial independence, Euronews is free to adapt these objectives and target groups to the editorial concept of the Real Economy Magazine.

Types of applicants targeted by the direct award of the grant

According to Article 195(f) of the Financial Regulation, grants may be awarded without a call for proposals for actions with specific characteristics that require a particular type of body on account of its technical competence, its high degree of specialisation or its administrative power, on condition that the actions concerned do not fall within the scope of a call for proposals. Euronews, who will produce and broadcast the documentaries, fulfils these criteria.

Implementation

Through a co-delegation to ECFIN

3. Prizes

N/A

4. Procurement

The indicative global budgetary envelope reserved for procurement contracts under this work programme amounts to EUR 20 460 000.

Objectives pursued and expected results

The objective is a better implementation of the European Social Fund Plus through improved capacity of Member States and stakeholders, mutual learning, general communication and raising awareness among stakeholders, developing evidence basis, and supporting managing authorities and stakeholders, including through improved IT tools. Activities implemented through procurement contracts will help to ensure sound financial management, the European added value of the programme and will assist in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Subject matter of the contracts envisaged

In 2023, the Commission intends to undertake actions through contracts following public procurement (call for tenders and framework contracts) in the following areas:

4.1. Support to capacity building activities

General description of the contracts envisaged

Assist the Commission, Member States and stakeholders in programming, implementing and evaluating ESF+ as well as supporting related policies, notably in relation to skills, apprenticeships and persons with disability, in particular through support to set up the AccessibleEU resource centre. The activities under this section include conferences, meetings, events, trainings, mutual learning, supporting structural reforms through better use and dissemination of practical tools and best practices, networking, and audits.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL and co-delegation to DG REGIO

4.2. Communication

General description of the contracts envisaged

Development of ESF+ communication tools, including maintenance and update of ESF+ website, preparation of publications, media relations and audio-visual products and campaigns. The objective is to inform the general public about the goals and results of the ESF+ and communicate to stakeholders and the media about the functioning and achievements of the ESF+. It will also include the contribution to the corporate communication campaigns.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL and co-delegation to DG COMM

4.3. Development and maintenance of IT tools

General description of the contracts envisaged

These procurement actions will include the development and maintenance of various IT tools supporting the ESF+ implementation, such as a risk scoring tool ARACHNE for data mining and data enrichment, as well as MAPAR (field audit management tool), SFC and RDIS2 (support for financial management) to ensure appropriate management of the funds. It will also contribute to corporate IT and support the development of corporate IT tools such as Corporate Compass.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL and co-delegations to DG AGRI, DG DIGIT

4.4. Analysis, reports, evaluation, impact assessments

General description of the contracts envisaged

The procurement actions will include support for thematic analysis and studies to enhance results and improve the evidence-based management of ESF+ and for developing data collection systems, including in relation to Member States' reform efforts. These actions also include activities related to the promotion and implementation of impact evaluations and guidance.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL and co-delegation to DG REGIO

5. *Actions implemented under indirect management*

The overall budgetary allocation reserved for actions implemented under indirect management under this work programme in 2023 amounts to EUR 2 500 000.

5.1. Fi-compass advisory platform

Implementing entity

Entrusted implementation tasks and funds to European Investment Bank (EIB), on the basis of Articles 62(c)(iii) and 154 of the Financial Regulation.

Objectives pursued

The Action aims to develop the necessary knowledge base and to improve the administrative capacity of ESF+ bodies involved in the implementation of shared management financial instruments established in the 2021-2027 programming period. Namely to offer technical assistance and advisory services to the benefit of Member States, the Managing Authorities and other stakeholders, as well as to the Commission services involved.

ESF+ financial instruments are mainly developed to implement the EPSR principles such as job creation, social inclusion and lifelong learning.

Expected results

The support and advisory services will continue to be delivered in a coherent way via the common facility of fi-compass in order to increase the take up of ESF+ financial instruments.

Description of the activities to be funded

Fi-compass is an advisory platform on shared management financial instruments delivered by the EIB in partnership with the EC. It delivers horizontal advisory services by the EIB's Advisory Services department, supported, where appropriate, by other relevant EIB Group expertise and by external consultants, to build the capacity of managing authorities in the area of financial instruments under the ESF+.

Fi-compass will support ESF+ stakeholders and EC desk officers in the development of the necessary knowledge base and administrative capacity for the purposes of the implementation of Financial Instruments.

Implementation

Through a co-delegation to DG REGIO

6. Contributions to trust funds

N/A

7. Financial instruments

N/A

8. Contributions to blending facilities

N/A

9. Other actions or expenditure

The indicative global budgetary envelope reserved for other actions or expenditure under this work programme amounts to EUR 540 000.

Objectives pursued and expected results

Activities under this section aim to further develop the scientific expertise, methodological support and analysis to the Commission and Member States, to assess the impact of ESF/ESF+ funded interventions and contribute to ESF/ESF+ thematic evaluations. The Commission expects this to increase the uptake of more advanced evaluation methods across the Member States.

9.1. Analysis and evaluation

Description of the activities to be funded

The Centre for Research on impact evaluations (CRIE) within the JRC will provide scientific expertise and methodological support to the Commission and Member States for the evaluation of the impact of ESF/ESF+ funded interventions, notably further developing models such as Rhomolo. This involves mostly promoting the use of counterfactual impact evaluation methods through community of practice meetings with Member States and Quality Assurance Support on request of Member States to any query on applying this method.

Implementation

Service level agreement with JRC