

EN
ANNEX

2024 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

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 2024 as follows:

1.1. 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. Budget breakdown

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

1.3. Type of actions to be financed:

- for grants (implemented under direct management) (point 2): EUR 450 000
- for prizes (implemented under direct management) (point 3): N/A
- for procurement (implemented under direct management) (point 4): EUR 23 250 000
- for actions implemented under indirect management (point 5): N/A
- 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 300 000

1.4. Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming

The ESF+ promotes green skills and jobs and contributes to the green economy by: (a) supporting the labour force by enhancing knowledge and skills to develop, produce, use and apply new efficient and low-carbon technologies in a broad range of sectors and by matching

these skills to jobs; and (b) offering support to the labour force to alleviate any negative impact on employment as a result of shifting to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy, notably jobs cuts in energy-intensive industries.

All the actions under the technical assistance of the ESF+ aim to support the implementation of the shared management strand of the ESF+ Programme. They are expected to have a neutral impact on climate objective with a possibility of a positive contribution, which is, however, impossible to quantify.

2. Grants

The indicative global budgetary envelope reserved for grants under this work programme is set in point 1.3.

2.1. Events organised by the Presidency of the Council of the EU (2024)

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

The ESF Presidency conferences are meant to support ESF stakeholders on specific challenges of ESF implementation. The topics - defined by the Presidency in agreement with the Commission - contribute to defining and raising awareness on policy areas covered by the ESF+ such as employment, education and training, skills or social inclusion.

Type of applicants targeted by the direct award

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. 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

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

Description, including the objectives pursued and expected results

Euronews is specialised in reporting on EU affairs from a European perspective and on a multilingual basis. It thereby contributes to a sense of European identity.

The activities to be funded are the production of eight "Real Economy" episodes on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights through ESF/ESF+ funded projects. The magazine "Real Economy" is specialised in economic, social and employment related matters and is distributed on air, online and via social media. The action will allow the Commission to reach out to new audiences strengthening the visibility of the ESF+.

The planning of the episodes will be done in close cooperation with Euronews and DG ECFIN (Commission's coordinator of the cooperation with Euronews Real Economy). Due to its editorial independence, Euronews is free to adapt topics and target groups 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, 2.9 million video views and 18,500 comments 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.

Type of applicants targeted by the action

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 is set in point 1.3. IT development and procurement strategy choices will be subject to pre-approval by the European Commission Information Technology and Cybersecurity Board.

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 and meetings of the INFORM EU network. These activities will help to ensure sound financial management, contribute to 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 2024, 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, for example in relation to skills (including re/up-skilling), apprenticeships and persons with disability, in particular through support to 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 audit-related activities

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL and co-delegation to DG REGIO

4.2. Support services and communication in the area of skills

General description of the contracts envisaged

Support/secretariat services for the Pact for Skills at EU level, covering all logistical and communication activities, advisory on funding opportunities, exchange of best practices, advisory/capacity building support for the projects developing blueprints for sectoral cooperation on skills, as well as assistance for developing partnerships on upskilling and reskilling promoted through the Pact.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL

4.3. 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, as well as contribute to the organisation of meetings of the INFORM EU network. Organise Eurobarometer surveys within the framework of the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and the European Social Fund Plus. 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

4.4. Development and maintenance of IT tools

General description of the contracts envisaged

These procurement actions may 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); Europa platform, DMS, SFC and RDIS2 (support for financial management) to ensure appropriate management of the funds; synergies EURES/EUROPASS supporting the geographical and occupational mobility. 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-delegation DG DIGIT

4.5. Analysis, reports, evaluation, impact assessments

General description of the contracts envisaged

The procurement actions may include support for thematic analysis and studies to enhance results and improve the evidence-based management of ESF+ and for monitoring 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 methodological support.

Implementation

Directly by DG EMPL and co-delegation to DG REGIO

5. *Actions implemented under indirect management*

N/A

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 is set in point 1.3.

9.1. Analysis and evaluation

Description of the activities, including the objectives pursued and expected results

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 and contribute to ESF/ESF+ thematic evaluations. This involves notably promoting the use of counterfactual impact evaluation methods through community of practice meetings.

The Commission expects this to increase the uptake of more advanced evaluation methods across the Member States.

Implementation

Service level agreement with JRC