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FINAL REPORT



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Social
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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

ESF Performance and Thematic Reports
(VC/2016/0064)

The ESF support to Social Innovation
Final Report

Directorate-General for Employment Social Affairs and Inclusion

Social
Europe

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List of acronyms

AIR	Annual implementation report (AIR2016 refers to the AIR published in 2017 and covering the implementation period up to 31 December 2016)
CLLD	Community Led Local Development
EaSI	EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
IP	Investment Priority
MA	Managing Authority
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NOP	National Operational Programme
OP	Operational Programme
Pax	Priority Axis/es
TNL	Transnational learning networks
RIS3	Research and Innovation Smart Specialisation Strategy
ROP	Regional Operational Programme
SI	Social Innovation
TO	Thematic Objective

Executive Summary

Aims and goals of the study

The aim of this report is to shed light on the contribution of the European Social Fund (ESF) to Social Innovation (SI) in the programming period. This includes how social innovation has been integrated into ESF programming and implemented. A second goal is to assess how SI contributes to the effective implementation of the policies in the ESF's scope.

The interest for social innovation is related to several socio-economic factors such as the economic and social crisis, the ageing of the population, fierce global competition, migration, and youth unemployment. Thus, as foreseen in the ESF regulation, testing and evaluating innovative solutions before scaling them up is instrumental in improving the efficiency of policies and thus justifies specific support from the ESF. Yet, despite that the relevance of social innovation in contemporary society is widely acknowledged, the conceptual boundaries of what constitutes Social innovation have not yet been fully defined.

This report contributes to a better understanding of SI by providing a conceptual framework for SI, based on the existing literature and the expertise and knowledge of a set of key actors consulted. This SI conceptual framework gathers a set of building blocks, dimensions and elements that should be present in SI initiatives to different degrees, depending on the more or less strict approach to SI adopted. To this end an operational matrix has been constructed on the basis of the conceptual framework that has allowed us to gauge the mapping of SI actions of the 187 ESF OPs as regards these dimensions and elements and their interactions.

The study has analysed **various complementary sources of information**: available quantitative indicators (financial and performance indicators), mapping of actions through the screening of Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs)/ Operational Programmes (OPs), semi-structured interviews with a selection of EC officials and an E-Survey of managing authorities have been conducted to gather more in-depth insights on programming choices and processes. Additionally, six case studies have been carried out in Belgium (Flanders), Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Sweden, ensuring both geographic and types of region coverage and adequate representativeness of the different level of "maturity" in SI and in managing the European Social Fund.

The study **gathered and systematized** these various sources of information so as to analyse to what extent and how do ESF OPs address SI, as defined in the conceptual framework. In so doing, different patterns of SI intervention have been identified; the financial resources and the intended and actual outcomes and results quantified; the success factors for SI activities pinpointed and a series of recommendations highlighted.

Patterns of SI promotion throughout the 187 ESF OPs

The result of this exercise demonstrates that:

- most of OPs plan and/or implement actions relevant to SI, in particular to Thematic Objective (TO) 9 Social Inclusion;
- there is a wide diversity of approaches to support SI. This is probably due to the fact that SI is a relatively new field within the ESF domain and that a wide array of loose definitions coexists with the stricter approach to SI of art 9 of ESF regulation. ESF requires SI initiatives that "test, evaluate and scale up innovative solutions";
- the majority of OPs follow a rather "loose" definition of SI (eg focused on the Novelty, Social mission and needs dimensions) and only a small share follows an experimental

methodology (testing, evaluating, upscaling) or adopts a systematic approach in terms of follow up, transnationality and multi-stage process;

The operational matrix has allowed to analyse the extent to which the dimensions and elements of the SI conceptual framework are present in the ESF OPs and the interactions and relationships among the ten identified dimensions. **Several patterns** of implementing SI actions have been observed. **Cluster analysis** was used to identify four broad categories of approaches to SI within OPs:

- **fully participative** implementation approach: these are OPs rely on a wide range of local agents for the identification of needs, the design of solutions and their implementation;
- **partially participative** implementation approach: OPs that rely on several local agents to a certain extent;
- **high accountability** implementation approach: OPs that stand out for their higher transparency and evaluation metrics and their experimental character, testing, evaluating, and up-scaling SI;
- **top-down** SI implementation approach: these are OPs focused on innovative social policies that are designed and implemented with a lower participation of local agents.

An additional categorisation of OPs has been identified through the analysis of the available documentation. This grouping is compatible with the typology obtained through the statistical clustering:

- **single thematic** approaches: these are OPs that focus SI actions on a concrete topic, (such as the socio-economic integration of refugees or access to employment for NEETs);
- promotion of SI as a tool to support **regional development** and innovation strategies (RIS3 strategies);
- **purely experimental** OPs, where pilot projects are carried out and their effects evaluated. These OPs represent a minority;
- OPs focused on **capacity building** of stakeholders in the field of SI;
- and OPs that support the **mainstreaming of SI**, for instance by allocating additional scores for the selection of operations that adopt a SI approach and justify it adequately.

SI and participation of stakeholders

A more concentrated SI model, with a few or larger scale actions, tends to involve less direct participation of the local community (if for example only one action is implemented at national level) and is linked with a top-down approach. In contrast, a more extended model, with many actions implemented at the local level, is more likely to count with more direct participation of the local community in the design and implementation of actions, thus linked with a bottom-up approach.

Both styles described (concentrated or extended) are somehow related with two different views of Social Innovation. One view considers SI as an end in itself. From this perspective it is essential to empower local communities to enable them to identify societal challenges and to participate in the design and implementation of solutions. The other perspective considers SI as a tool to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of social policies. In some cases, this is achieved through the implementation of technological innovations which enable for new ways of organization of social or employment policies. Both approaches are not necessarily related with the novelty of actions or their potential to address social needs. They relate with the way of understanding the organization of government and social policies.

These ideas can be summarized as follows:

Number of actions	Size or Scope of actions	SI resources	Decision model	Closer to a perspective of SI as
High	Small	Extended	Bottom-up	As an end on itself
Low	Large	Concentrated	Top-down	As a means

Source: Own elaboration.

Financial allocation

The **financial allocation** for SI in the ESF can be analysed in two ways: the first one through the allocations to dedicated Priority Axes (PAx); the second through social innovation earmarking through the ESF Secondary Theme allocations. A total amount of EUR 979.805.040 through dedicated PAx has been allocated for Social Innovation in the ESF 2014-2020; as of December 2016, eligible expenditure declared reached EUR 126.988.641, almost 13% of programmed funding. Eleven OPs from six MS have set financial allocation for social innovation through Priority Axes. Secondly, OPs from 22 MS have earmarked EUR 2.727 billion through secondary theme as SI. Six MS account for 74,2% of the SI budget earmarked through Secondary Themes (IT, AT, EE, PL, PT and DE).

Added value of ESF funded SI initiatives

Promoting Social innovation at EU level through the European Social Fund enables for **experimenting new ideas and approaches**, which is the main added value of ESF funded SI initiatives. Indeed, ESF support to SI is considered the "lab" of new policies at the national or the regional level.

The support of ESF to SI **complements national policies** and it can also promote the improvement of the quality of general policies and the participation of new entities. ESF supports the **creation of new partnerships** as well, which is a requirement of experimentation of new ideas and combination of different approaches which usually require the participation of diverse agents.

The ESF also brings added value to the national political strategies through the promotion of **social entrepreneurship and social innovation ecosystem**. Finally, ESF funded SI promotes **sharing knowledge and expertise**, through mutual learning activities at EU level.

Success factors

There is limited quantitative evidence on the degree to which ESF support to SI actions effectively help address societal challenges and reach out to its target groups. However, some success factors can be highlighted:

- **Partnerships play a key role in SI.** The participation of different actors is essential in SI to enable an open and bottom-up approach and develop multi-disciplinary solutions. Partnerships cover each other's weaknesses and strengths; they come to different solutions and can overcome obstacles that individual actors could not tackle on their own. Furthermore, **mutual learning activities linked to a partnership approach reduce the risks of trying new approaches while dropping experimentation costs**, as well as disseminating social innovation approaches that have been already successfully tested. Whereas official institutions are needed, the creativity and independency of third sector, non-governmental organisations are key. It is important to acknowledge that partnership building needs time to adapt different organizations to work together and to build mutual trust.

- **Top-down and bottom-up approaches** do not have necessarily to be mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they reinforce themselves and allow to develop synergies. Top-down political support, i.e., **political consensus**, has a sound potential to develop a friendly environment and capabilities that facilitate the development of smaller scale actions with a bottom-up perspective. This requires that policy makers acknowledge and are convinced of the need of changing the way policies are designed and implemented, hence of the need to innovate.
- **Highly trained, motivated and enthusiastic in-house staff** is a valuable condition to succeed in social innovation. Therefore, strong training policy specifically on social innovation for MA SI projects managers, technicians and potential partners and beneficiaries is important and should be pursued further.
- **Proper evaluation of SI allows to show the advantages of innovation**, which is key to engage stakeholders, particularly private investors and public policy makers. Successful SI initiatives are those that can demonstrate the effects of the innovation, can disseminate its impact and scale it up.
- **Communication of the SI initiatives**, intended impacts, actual achievements, across stakeholders, participants and beneficiaries are essential to achieve their social transformation potential. Communication needs to be undertaken at international, national, and local levels and focus on disseminating good practices, promoting a culture of social innovation and enhancing the social impact and investment in innovative social projects. In this context, a certain **centralisation of SI management** allows a consistent and comprehensive communication strategy, as well as the development of relevant networks, providing broad visibility to social innovation and social entrepreneurship.
- **Synergies with other initiatives:** Social Innovation is key to reduce the fragmentation of policies. The combination of ESF with other EU funds (ERDF, EAFRD, FEAD) enacts stricter coordination of different policy departments stakeholders. The complementarity between funds makes it easier to reach all funds' targets together in a more efficient way.

Recommendations for the next programming period

Clarify, agree and communicate on SI concept

There is a need for clarity and consensus on the concept and elements of SI in the context of ESF and its (lack of) coincidence with other frameworks (e.g. other EU programmes -H2020, Easi- or funds -ERDF, EAFRD, etc.). The conceptual framework presented in this report can be a basis for this clarity and consensus. One possibility could be to make SI based on evidence a compulsory task in the next period; or alternatively to establish different criteria for approval of various types of SI projects, more or less close to ESF Regulation art. 9 definition.

Increase SI capacity

Closely linked to the relative novelty and lack of conceptual clarity of SI, but also to the not so easy tasks related with promoting SI and the rather weak capacity of many actors to manage SI, **capacity building specifically on SI is a must**. Strong training policy specifically on social innovation for MA SI projects managers, technicians and potential partners and beneficiaries is highly recommendable. There is a clear particular need to increase the **capacity of SI promoters to properly address the testing, evaluating and up-scaling** requirement embedded in art 9 of ESF regulation, thus to monitor the social impact of SI.

In addition to training, other forms of support could be envisaged to increase capacity, such as mentoring support, collaborative networks of social innovation or collaboration with research and consultancy institutions.

Simplification and adaptation of ESF to SI experimental nature

The ESF administrative complexity and the low flexibility of programming was reported as creating administrative burdens, limiting the potential of ESF support for SI. Therefore, a more simplified administrative framework is recommended.

The experimental nature of SI, with an inherent failure risk, is a challenge within the ESF framework, designed to base its evaluation on results. It is therefore crucial that MA and SI promoters address this failure risk to minimize its potential negative impact. This should not be incompatible with ESF result orientation, if the risk is properly assessed when designing performance indicators and when setting target values.

Simplification and reinforcement of coordination with other instruments

There is potential for creating synergies with other ESIF funding instruments (ERDF, EAFRD, FEADER), as these share many horizontal principles with ESF. There is a challenge to improve the cooperation among them through simplifying the implementation of the programs, both for the authorities and for potential beneficiaries to achieve synergies and avoid overlaps at work, using the funds efficiently.

There is also scope for improving coordination between ESF SI and EaSI or H2020 actions, making better use of potential synergies. In the cases where ESF POs and EaSI or H2020 funded actions are managed by different actors in a country, this may lead to disparity of conceptual SI approaches in this country, eroding thus the unicity of the message and limiting the potential synergies.

Transnational cooperation and SI

More effort can be paid in the future to benefit from the advantages of transnational cooperation and mutual learning. The report evidences the missing link between SI and transnational cooperation. Yet, transnational cooperation is a valuable tool for encouraging social innovation.

The experience of the EQUAL initiative, in which the promotion of SI in a transnational context was required, is a proof of the positive relationship between SI and transnational cooperation and can serve as a reference. The EQUAL initiative is known by seven out of ten MA respondents to the E-survey. However, there is no consensus on whether its design is adequate to promote SI: one third of respondents agree but 38% do not consider EQUAL an adequate approach to promote SI.

Thus, **further reflection is needed** on how to better link SI and transnational cooperation. A combination of the approach adopted by EQUAL, linking both SI and transnational cooperation in one initiative, with separate SI and transnational approaches is a possibility. The debate discussed in the previous point on the advantages and disadvantages of a centralised or mainstreamed SI management should also be considered in this context.

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This thematic report has been prepared in the frame of the "ESF Performance and thematic reports" contract (VC/2016/0064).

The aim of this thematic report is to shed light on the contribution of the European Social Fund (ESF) 2014-2020 to Social Innovation (SI), including how social innovation has been integrated into ESF programming and how this was reflected in the first years of implementation. A second goal is to assess how SI contributes to the effective implementation of the policies in the ESF's scope.

1.2 Policy context

The social inclusion and sustainability of welfare systems are key issues for the attainment of EU2020 goals, especially at a time when welfare and social protection systems in Europe are subject to growing pressure due to increasing budgetary concerns and rapidly changing socio-demographic trends – especially in terms of a rapidly ageing population. It is in this context that the increasing importance and role of social innovation for EU funds and European Commission's initiatives is to be seen.

An important contribution to the promotion of social innovation comes from **the Social Investment Package (SIP)**, launched by the EC in 2013. The SIP puts forth the EC's renewed approach to social policy in response to the severe social consequences caused by the crisis and pursues the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The SIP is the EU's comprehensive framework "for redirecting Member States' policies, where needed, towards social investment throughout life, with a view to ensuring the adequacy and sustainability of budgets for social policies and for the government and private sector as a whole".¹ Amongst other things, it provides a reference for the European Semester and "builds on the regulatory framework proposed for the implementation of Cohesion policy in the next financial period 2014-2020 and in particular the scope of the European Social Fund (ESF) and the proposal to earmark at least 20% of the ESF in each Member State to promote social inclusion and confront poverty". The SIP contributes to the promotion of social innovation by recognising that **social innovation must be an integral part of necessary adjustments by testing new policy approaches and selecting the most effective ones**. Through the SIP, the EC also urges MS to make the most of the opportunities offered by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), and particularly to develop concrete strategies for social innovation, and take advantage of funding opportunities to scale up successful projects. The SIP also recommends that MS prioritise social innovation by taking remedy action to address the Country Specific Recommendations (CSR), as well as to report on this through the NRPs.

Importantly, the SIP clarifies the important role the ESF has to play in supporting SI. SIP makes specific reference to the Investment Priority on social entrepreneurship in the EU cohesion policy 2014-2020. The SIP anticipates that more guidance will be given to MS in the areas of social innovation, de-institutionalisation and health to make the most of social investments.

¹ European Commission, Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions, Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020 - COM(2013) 83 final, p. 5

Following the official proclamation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** it can easily be expected that social innovation will also play an important role in its realisation by providing innovative cross-cutting tools and approaches. As President Juncker noted at the New Era of Social Innovation conference in Lisbon that took place in November 2017², social innovation is essential to the future of a more resilient, social Europe. Following the official proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the time is ripe to explore how the goals and aspirations it sets out can be translated into real impact on the ground.

Such increasing interest has already been substantiated in a number of initiatives and programmes, starting from the ESF as we will see in the following section, but also including the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme, the Social Innovation Europe Initiative, the Social Business Initiative, and different projects funded under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and Horizon 2020.

1.3 Social Innovation in ESF

The SIP suggested that EaSI Funds should be leveraged by MS especially for **testing, evaluating and upscaling social innovation initiatives**. The rationale for this is made explicit in the EC's SWD on Social Investment through the ESF³, which states " [...] Social innovation will be part of ESF programmes in all Member States in areas that correspond to their specific needs. This means that social innovation will be organised in such a way as to increase the efficiency of specific social policy fields, defined by the relevant authorities."

Therefore, ESF and EaSI Funds in general are key elements for mainstreaming social innovation, not only as they provide key resources that can trigger innovation to address societal challenges, but also because their "contextualised" nature - deriving from the shared management - approach means that they operate closer to the local and regional economy and social tissue (which is a key feature of social innovation).

In the **2000-2006 programming period** the ESF developed mechanisms to accelerate the transfer of good ideas across Europe, in particular through the EQUAL initiative, which stimulated an active culture of transnational working. This has been continued in this period with ESF Learning Networks which involve Managing Authorities on more than a dozen themes.

In the **2007-2013 programming period** the ESF has developed mechanisms to accelerate the transfer of good ideas across Europe, in particular through the EQUAL Community Initiative programme (financed by the ESF), which stimulated an active culture of transnational working. This has been continued through ESF Transnational Learning Networks (TLN) which involve Managing Authorities on more than a dozen themes.

Although Social innovation is not an entirely new concept to the ESF, **the current 2014-2020 programming period** has introduced a number of important provisions concerning the introduction of the principle of social innovation in ESF programming. This principle shall be either mainstreamed across Priority Axes⁴ or dealt with through dedicated Priority Axes covering different investment priorities from different thematic objectives (TOs).

² <http://ec.europa.eu/research/conferences/2017/era/index.cfm>

³ European Commission, Social Investment Package: Commission Staff Working Document, Social investment through the European Social Fund, Brussels, 20.2.2013 SWD(2013) 44 final.

⁴ This means that all parts of the OP have to demonstrate how social innovation is promoted and how that contributes to the specific objectives and the main objective of the programme.

More in detail, **the current ESF regulation** specifies in its preamble that “Support for social innovation contributes to making policies more responsive to social change. The ESF should encourage and support social enterprises and entrepreneurs as well as innovative projects taken on by non-governmental organisations and other actors within the social economy. In particular, testing and evaluating innovative solutions before scaling them up is instrumental in improving the efficiency of policies and thus justifies specific support from the ESF. Innovative solutions could include, provided they prove to be effective, the development of social metrics such as, for example, social labelling”.

This introduction is then substantiated by the **all-important Article 9**, which states, amongst others, that:

social innovation shall be promoted across all TOs – thus aligning Social innovation to an horizontal principle of ESF according to a mainstreaming approach with the aim of testing, evaluating and scaling up innovative solutions;

this can be undertaken at national, regional and local level;

partnerships, especially with social partners, should be promoted to address social needs.

Art. 9 sets out that MS should define areas where social innovation better matches the specific needs of MS, either in their Operational Programmes or at a later stage during the implementation of the ESF. It is important to highlight that it also mandates that the EC should support mutual learning, establishing networks, and disseminating and promoting good practices and methodologies.

Under art. 11(2) the ESF regulation grants an additional 10% of maximum co-financing to dedicated priority axes on social innovation. Importantly, it then provides that “operational programmes shall also set out the contribution of planned ESF-supported actions to [...] social innovation and transnational cooperation [...] where they are not covered by a dedicated priority axis”.

ESF Operational Programmes (OPs) should thus clearly identify their contribution to social innovation - either through a dedicated axis or, otherwise, as a transversal theme across the different PAX under Section 2.A.7 of the OP. Furthermore, ESF OPs, may indicate, in table 11 - present under each Priority Axis - the earmarking of investments in the Social Innovation theme. The earmarking of secondary themes is monitored through the AIRs, in table 7.

Finally, Article 14(4)(f) provides that Managing Authorities (MAs), in the Annual Implementation Report 2017 and 2019 “may, subject to the content and objectives of each cooperation programme, set out information on and assess [...] progress in the implementation of actions in the field of social innovation”. A specific section – Section on “Additional Information which may be added depending on the content and objectives of the Operational Programme” -of the 2016 and 2018 Annual Implementation Reports (AIR) is thus devoted to reporting on Progress in the implementation of actions in the field of social innovation, where appropriate (Section 14.5).

1.4 Overview of the methodological approach

In order to build the analytical framework of the study, **a conceptual model has been developed** based on the relevant literature. This conceptual model, described in detail in Chapter 2, is a systematic representation of Social Innovation made of a combination of concepts (a set of building blocks, dimensions and elements) characterising Social Innovation. It represents the meaning that, both in data collection and data analysis, is assigned to the various elements of Social Innovation.

Among all the dimensions of the conceptual model, some dimensions were assessed by the research team to represent the minimal features of Social Innovation. The selection of dimensions has been included in an **operational matrix** (see Table 3) that has been used to **map the approaches to Social Innovation pursued by ESF** on the basis of the information reported by MAs in the AIRs 2016. For those OPs that did not include information in the AIR 2016, the section 2.A.7 of the OP has been reviewed.

A **quantitative analysis** (financial endowment, indicators on results and outputs) has been carried out (Chapter 3). In order to provide an idea of the choices of MAs vis à vis their programming approaches towards SI, a screening of Priority Axis (PAX) has been performed. Among all PAX of all OPs a selection was made of the PAX specifically dedicated to social innovation. This exercise was made on section 2.A.7 of the OP of each PAX ("Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7"). Additionally, the investment earmarked in each OP to the secondary theme Social Innovation (in table 11 of the OP - present under each Priority Axis) has also been analysed and monitored through the AIRs.

Field work was undertaken in order to gather further evidence for answering the research questions. An **e-survey** to managing authorities (presented in Chapter 3.3) and **semi-structured interviews** to a selection of EC officials (scoping interviews) have been conducted. Additionally, six **case studies** have been carried out in Germany, Sweden, Poland, Belgium (Flanders), Italy and Portugal, ensuring both geographic, regional and representative coverage of the different levels of "maturity" in Social Innovation and in managing the European Social Fund. In-depth analysis has been carried out through **interviews to Managing Authorities** which are key stakeholders as they are in charge of the programming, implementation (including project selection) and evaluation of the OPs. Where relevant, interviews with beneficiaries (organisations receiving ESF funds for interventions related to SI), Ministries and agencies responsible for the promotion of Social Innovation at the national or regional level or national experts in the field of Social Innovation have been also conducted.

1.5 Structure of the report

After this introductory chapter, the report is organised in 4 chapters as follows:

- **Chapter 2** presents the conceptual framework for SI developed in this report which is based on a set of building blocks that gather several dimensions of SI which are in turn further developed in a series of elements. An operational matrix for SI has been designed to assess the SI content of all ESF PO.
- **Chapter 3** maps SI across ESF OPs. It focuses firstly on the quantitative analysis of the financial allocation to SI, its implementation and the results and outputs; secondly a systematic overview is presented of how the OPs address the different dimensions and elements of SI, as defined in Chapter 2, combining quantitative and qualitative information; finally, the result of a statistical cluster analysis is described, that groups the 187 ESF OP in 5 different categories according to their approach to SI; this statistical analysis is complemented with a qualitative grouping according to additional criteria detected.
- **Chapter 4** presents six case studies in a selection of countries.
- **Chapter 5** focuses on the main conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.

2 Towards a model for social innovation: conceptual framework

2.1 Background

Recently, social innovation has received much attention both in research and policy circles (e.g., Cajaiba-Santana, 2014; European Union, 2013a, 2013b; Lawrence et al., 2014; TEPSIE, 2012). This spur in interest for social innovation is related to several socio-economic factors such as the economic and social crisis, the ageing of the population, fierce global competition, migration, and youth unemployment (European Union, 2013a). Such conditions nurture the growing attractiveness of social innovation as a policy tool to be used to address social changes and provide answers to different communities' needs (TEPSIE, 2012).

Despite that the relevance of social innovation in contemporary society is widely acknowledged, the boundaries of definition have not yet been completely defined. Indeed, social innovation can be conceived as an umbrella concept that broadly covers "the creation and implementation of new solutions to social problems, with the benefits of these solutions shared beyond the confines of the innovators" (Tracey and Stott, 2017; p.51). Such a generic definition underpins the issues related to its definition. Social innovation, in fact, is a concept marked by ambiguities, in which linguistic nuances and different social, economic, cultural and administrative traditions play a role. Thus, many debates and publications have been spurred at both operational and theoretical level, bringing a wide array of definitions. Examples of definitions include the following:

- "Innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and that are predominantly developed and diffused through organisations whose primary purposes are social." (Mulgan, 2006; p. 146)
- "New ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words, they are innovations that are both good for society and enhance society's capacity to act" (Murray et al., 2010; p. 2).
- "The development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. It represents new responses to pressing social demands, which affect the process of social interactions. It is aimed at improving human well-being. Social innovations are innovations that are social in both their ends and means." (European Union, 2013a; p. 6).
- Article 9 of ESF regulation shares many of the elements behind these definitions, although restricts social innovation to "the aim of testing, evaluating and scaling up innovative solutions, including at the local or regional level, in order to address social needs in partnership with the relevant partners and, in particular, social partners". It focuses on an objective, rather than subjective perception of social innovation and on the effectiveness or efficiency gains, on potential systemic changes.

Given such a variety of definitions and its overarching nature, the first goal of the present report is to review current debate on social innovation and to propose a model that encompasses different defining features. In doing so, beyond these generic definitions, the goals, key features, approaches, processes and stakeholders of social innovation have been identified for the definition of the model. Indeed, social innovation represents a complex phenomenon that incorporates a range of individual, organisational and inter-organisational activities aimed at addressing social needs.

2.2 Methodology

In order to produce the conceptual model of Social Innovation three scientifically rigorous processes have been employed which involve data collection, data analysis, and the synthesis of findings into a conceptual model. First, the conceptual categories underlying the definitions of social innovation have been identified, drawing from reports, guides and articles published by policy-makers, practitioners and scholars. The aim of this exercise is to identify the main elements that characterise Social innovation and pave the way for an operational definition of this multi-dimensional concepts. Given the growing complexity and ambiguity characterising social innovation, the aim was to gather some of the most authoritative and influential sources at both practical and theoretical levels. Sources are documents produced by the European Union's authorities and agencies and by the most impactful NGOs, foundations and research bodies in the field of social innovation (e.g. NESTA, The Young Foundation and the Oxford Saïd Business School).

Secondly, the analytical process was guided by the following questions:

- At what level of analysis does this publication examine social innovation?
- What are the main defining features this publication outlines?
- On which studies does the source build and what contribution does it provide?

This preliminary stage revealed the differences and similarities characterising the many definitions of social innovation. After this preliminary stage, the analytical process foresaw the identification of key aspects regarding social innovation from the selected sources. This led, finally, to the identification of a series of conceptual categories ("building blocks") as representative of social innovation, these can be: "key features", "goals", "approach", "process", "players" and "background conditions".

The conceptual model brings together the conceptual categories emerged from the definitions of social innovation provided by our sources. The conceptual categories represent the building blocks which social innovation consists of. Building blocks are composed of SI dimensions and SI elements. The result of this research is the creation of an analytical framework, which guides the mapping of SI actions and presented next.

2.3 The SI conceptual model

The model (see Figure 1 and Table 1) brings together the six conceptual categories which emerged from the definitions of social innovation provided by the reviewed literature. The conceptual categories represent the building blocks which social innovation consists of.

The first building block of the model refers to the **key features of social innovation**. They distinguish the concept of social innovation from other similar notions and lay the foundation for any social innovation initiative. Social innovation is characterised by being addressed to a wide variety of social needs expressed by most vulnerable social groups (e.g. youth, women, migrants, and elderly people). Another key feature of social innovation is the novelty of the outputs, relationships and processes put forward to tackle unresolved social needs. In fact, social innovation can refer to new services, ideas, processes or forms of collaboration that give an answer to specific social issues.

A second building block that emerged from the analysis regards the **goals of social innovation**. Social innovation critically relates to its objectives: they are one of the main aspects distinguishing social innovation from other more traditional types of innovation. A peculiar driver of social innovation concerns its social mission. The pursuit of a social mission can be fostered by individual or social inspired motives and must rely on the involvement and empowerment of different actors, with a particular focus on citizens. Social innovation also aims at having a

significant, positive and long-lasting impact on societal challenges and systemic changes occurring in the society. Therefore social innovation intends to test the effective social impact on existing issues in order to facilitate up-scaling and economic sustainability. There are many methods in use for testing social impact: two examples are studying iteration processes and relying on real-life settings.

The approach put in place in order to meet social needs, to develop new socially impactful outputs and to mobilise different actors is another defining block of social innovation. The analysis of the collected data helped to identify two specific dimensions that characterise this building block: the first regards developing a methodology that encourages an open rather than closed process that relies on the inventiveness of all key actors, on cross-fertilisation, on multi-disciplines, and on an integrated bottom-up and participatory rather than top-down approach. The second dimension refers to the obligation of all those actors involved in social innovation to account for their activities in the most transparent way possible and to keep track of their performance and results by setting specific metrics of evaluation.

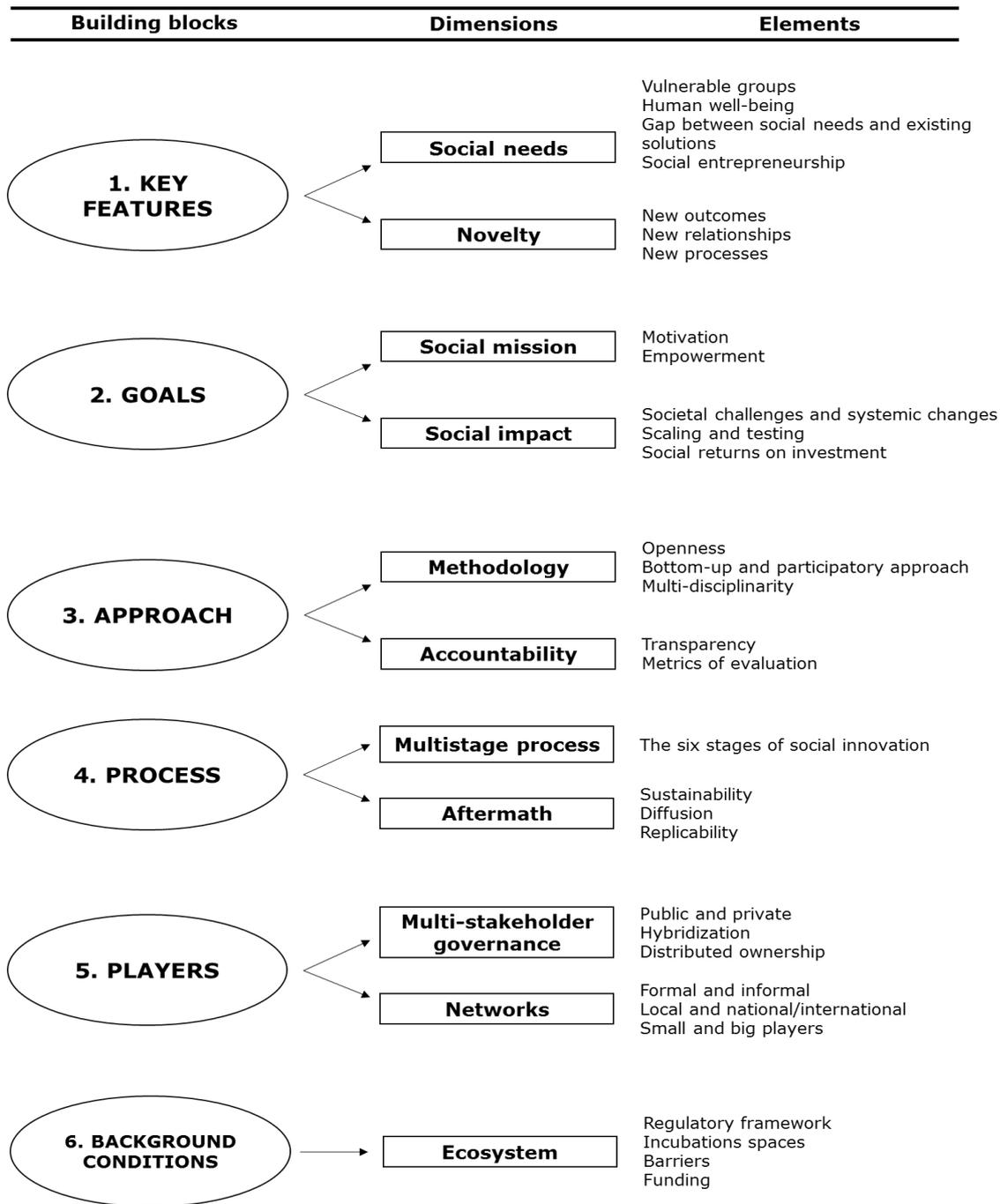
The fourth building block emerged from the gathered definitions concerns **the process that underlies social innovation**. New solutions to existing social issues often result from a complex set of activities and steps. For this reason, it is important to understand and support the process of social innovation: discovering and delivering new effective solutions highly depends on the process and on its features. Firstly, it is important to underline that the process of social innovation is a multistage one. For instance, Murray and colleagues (2010) identified six stages that take prompts and ideas from their first inception to an effective social impact. These stages are not always sequential and there are feedback loops between them. These stages deliver an important framework for thinking about the different kinds of support that social innovations (and social innovators) need in order to scale and become self-sufficient. One more aspect concerns what follows the implementation of these stages: finding the right streams of sustainability, diffusing and replicating the new solutions is of vital importance.

The analysis has highlighted how social innovation relies on the inventiveness of different players, such as citizens, civil society organisations, local communities, businesses and public servants and services. This is why defining an **effective multi-stakeholder governance** has grown in importance over time. In fact, social innovation can branch-out thanks to partnerships between public authorities and businesses or formal and informal players. It is also important to facilitate the cross-fertilisation of different approaches to social problems. In addition, as opposed to what happens for other types of innovation, in the social field the initiative is more likely to come from networks of players (e.g., formal and informal networks, local and national/international networks, interrelations between civil society and keystone organisations).

The sixth and last building block concerns the **economic, legal and social background conditions** which generate the co-creation of new solutions to social issues. These background conditions define the milieu for social innovation to emerge, grow and thrive. The challenge of creating and spreading social innovation is linked to the overall ecosystem in which it takes place (European Union, 2013b). The notion of ecosystem has been borrowed from biology through management science to describes the situational contingencies that effect the success of social innovation activities (Casasnovas and Bruno, 2013; European Union, 2013b). The development and sustainment of a supportive ecosystem passes through the definition of an enabling regulatory framework, the presence of incubation spaces, the overcoming of contingent barriers to social innovation and the diffusion of specific forms of funding.

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Figure 1. Building blocks, dimensions and elements of the SI conceptual model



Source: Elaborated by the authors

Table 1. Building blocks, dimensions and elements of the SI conceptual model

Building blocks	Dimensions	Elements
Key features	Social Needs	<p>Vulnerable groups: One of the main issues of social innovation is to attenuate the risks faced by most vulnerable groups of society (e.g. youth, migrants, elderly people)</p> <p>Human well-being: Social innovation must also be aimed at improving human well-being by attenuating the divide among the society and potential inequities between different groups of people (e.g. by targeting poor housing conditions or low levels of education affecting specific groups of people)</p> <p>Gap between social needs and existing solutions: Social innovation aims at reducing the gap between social needs and existing services through the mobilisation of individuals and civil society organisations</p> <p>Social entrepreneurship: Social innovation could be conceived as a base for social entrepreneurship, social enterprises and social entrepreneurs</p>
	Novelty	<p>New outcomes: Social innovation refers to a wide array of new ideas and services that work in meeting social goals</p> <p>New relationships: Novelty regards both the development of new relationships with new partners and the implementation of new forms of cooperation and collaboration with already existing partners</p> <p>New processes: Novelty regards also the way of tackling unsolved social issues (e.g. new organisational models) or to promote social activities (e.g. new communication activities)</p>
Goal	Social mission	<p>Motivation: Social innovation is critically driven by peculiar motivational drivers related to individual motives and social inspired goals</p> <p>Empowerment: Citizens are at the core of the mission of social innovation. This is why social innovation must rely on the engagement and commitment of different actors in order to achieve its social mission successfully</p>
	Social impact	<p>Societal challenges and systemic changes: Social innovation consists of finding an answer to societal challenges (e.g. to challenges set down by the new demographic trends) and to social changes (e.g. to the effects of economic and social crisis)</p> <p>Scaling and testing: One main goal of social innovation is to scale the scope or magnitude of the expected social impact. It is crucial to have as big of an impact as possible on social problems. Another important goal regards testing the effective social impact of the new ideas and services</p> <p>Social returns on investment: Having a high social impact is particularly important for two main reasons: firstly, because donors and supporters are hungry to achieve high social returns on their investments; secondly, because social innovation must focus on developing and providing high quality social services in the most cost-effective way possible. This last motivation can be pursued through a</p>

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		multi-stakeholder governance and a de-institutionalisation of the process of social innovation
Approach	Methodology	<p>Openness: A way for social innovation to pursue social means is being open to the local territorial and cultural specificities (e.g. adopting an open process which relies on the inventiveness of local civil society organisations, communities, businesses and public servants)</p> <p>Bottom-up and participatory approach: Social innovation arises from an integrated bottom-up and participative approach rather than a more traditional top-down approach</p> <p>Multi-disciplinary: Social innovation can emerge from multiple sources. Thus, adopting a multidisciplinary approach makes it possible to draw in experiences and insights from a wide range of sources</p>
	Accountability	<p>Transparency: As social innovation gains in importance and accorded awareness, there is a push towards transparency. This comes from a rising demand to compare and evaluate the goals, processes, actions and achieved results of social innovation programmes, initiatives or policies. This is especially true for potential funders and investors</p> <p>Metrics of evaluation: It is also important to set specific metrics to evaluate the performance and results of social innovations with a view to informing the development and upscaling of policies. Some examples of metrics are: number of applications to programmes, number of ventures supported, follow-on investment raised by ventures, survival rate of ventures, number of employees of ventures, gender balance of applicants and supported founders, etc.</p>
Process	Multistage process	<p>The process of social innovation consists of six stages: The first stage involves diagnosing the problem and framing the question of how to tackle the root causes of that issue; the second one regards idea generation and all the methods used to support it; the third stage refers to prototyping, piloting and refining the idea in order to test it in practice; the fourth step involves sharpening the idea and ensuring long-term sustainability; the fifth one regards scaling and spreading the innovation in order to bring it to the public; the last stage is achieving systemic change, which is the ultimate goal of social innovation</p>
	Follow-up	<p>Sustainability: Once a social innovation has been developed, finding the right streams of sustainability. i.e. the effective implementation of the social innovation without support, is a key aspect for a long-term social impact</p> <p>Diffusion: Social innovation should spread through an “S-form” curve; it is critical to achieve the tipping point in order to increase the number of potential users</p> <p>Replicability: Potential use of newly created solutions in other contexts</p> <p>Policy take-up: When the innovation is taken at the policy level, the innovation becomes a publicly acknowledged way of achieving the specific social goals.</p>

Players	Multi-stakeholder governance	<p>Public and private: Social innovation could be fostered by partnerships between public and private actors. This interrelation can be carried out at different levels (e.g. at the financial, operational or strategic level)</p> <p>Hybridisation: Social innovation requires hybridization and matching of different goals, interests, experiences and mindsets creates breeding grounds for cross-fertilisation processes and, therefore, for social innovation</p> <p>Distributed ownership: Social innovation is a common good</p>
	Networks	<p>Formal and informal: Partnerships could take the form of both formal and informal collaboration</p> <p>Local and national/international: Partnerships could involve actors operating at both local and national/international level</p> <p>Small and big: Social innovation could be achieved through alliances and interrelations between local communities (e.g. individuals and civil society organisations) and keystone organisations (e.g. governments, businesses, NGOs). Communities have new ideas and a higher capability to cross-pollinate; keystone organisations are generally better at implanting new ideas and have the resilience and scale to make things happen</p>
Background conditions	Ecosystem	<p>Regulatory framework: Public authorities and policy-makers should create the breeding ground conditions to sustain social innovation initiatives</p> <p>Incubation spaces: They support scaling processes of social ventures and the development of the social entrepreneurship sector in general</p> <p>Barriers: One key point concerns overcoming contingent barriers to social innovation (e.g. tightly monopolised power, absence of free communication, difficulties in finding independent sources of money)</p> <p>Funding: Another key aspect regards the development and implementation of specific forms of funding (e.g. social venture capital, grant funding, EU funds, national funds)</p>

Source: elaborated by the authors

The question is which of these dimensions and elements are needed in order to consider a project / programme / policy as socially innovative. According to a broader understanding of social innovation, (“innovative activities” “new ideas, products or services”, “innovations that are both good for society and enhance society’s capacity to act” etc., as presented in the previous section), an intervention which respects a combination of some of the above elements could be considered innovative⁵. The risk of this approach however is that the meaning of social innovation is “diluted” and loses some significance and specificity.

According to a “stricter” definition of social innovation as provided in article 9 of ESF regulation in addition to addressing social needs through innovative solutions, social innovation should also

⁵ E.g. if it addresses the dimensions of “social needs” (thus with any of the four elements included in this dimension) and adopts a novelty approach (new outcomes, relationships and/or processes of the “novelty” dimension).

respect the principle of co-creation and involvement of relevant partners. More relevant is the requirement of art 9 that the initiative “tests, evaluates and scales up innovative solutions”. This requirement is included in the “social impact” dimension and implies that metrics of evaluation are defined and implemented (included in the “accountability” dimension). It also involves several steps of the multistage process.

Further research and conceptual analysis is needed so as to understand and gather consensus on how the elements of different dimensions are intertwined and about the many (or may be not so many) different possible combinations.

The extent to which these dimensions and elements are present in the ESF OP will be analysed in Chapter 3. The interactions and relationships among the ten dimensions will also be examined, grouping the OP by considering, with the available data, the extent to which the OP respond to the different combinations of dimensions.

2.4 The Operational Matrix for SI in ESF

Among the dimensions of the Social Innovation Model, ten dimensions and 25 elements which define the minimum features of Social Innovation have been selected. These features will serve to gauge the level of compliance of the OP with the key SI dimensions. The screening of the ESF Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) 2016 (section 14.5) and of the OPs (section 2A7, when the AIR 2016 does not report information) will help to identify these features in the OP. The dimensions and elements of the operational matrix applied for the mapping of SI are presented below:

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Table 2. Dimensions and elements of the Operational Matrix of the Social Innovation model

1. Needs	1. Vulnerable Groups
	2. Human Wellbeing
	3. Gap social needs - existing solutions
	4. Social Entrepreneurship
2. Novelty	5. New outcomes
	6. New relationships
	7. New processes
3. Social Impact	8. Societal challenges and systemic changes
	9. Scaling and testing
	10. Social returns on investment
4. Social Mission	11. Motivation
	12. Empowerment
5. Methodology	13. Openness
	14. Bottom-up participatory approach
	15. Multi-disciplinarily
6. Accountability	16. Transparency
	17. Metrics of evaluation
7. Aftermath	18. Sustainability
	19. Diffusion
	20. Replicability
8. Partnerships and multi-stakeholder governance	21. Public and private partnerships
	22. Hybridisation
	23. Distributed ownership
9. Multi-Stage Process	24. Multi-Stage Process
10. Networks	25. International Networks

Source: elaborated by the authors

The mapping of social innovation across the ESF is performed through **qualitative and quantitative analysis** of the dimensions and elements of the operational matrix shown above. The qualitative analysis captures detailed information about the dimensions and elements present in each OP and/or AIR 2016. The quantitative analysis maps social innovation through a binary scoring method that reviews all the 25 elements and assigns the score 1 to an element if actions concerning that element are present in the OP and 0 if no information on that element appears in the OP or if the report explicitly states that no action has been carried out.

It should be noted that, this binary scoring exercise does not take into account the detail provided, the complexity of the design of the programmes, or any other programme-relevant features such as the implementation performance. For example, if one AIR reports about social innovation actions designed to tackle long-term unemployment, the score of the OP in the element of vulnerable groups would be 1. Another AIR that reports about social innovation actions directed to various vulnerable groups (long-term unemployed plus early school leavers, refugees, homeless and drug addicts) would be scored in that element 1 as well. If another AIR reports no information regarding vulnerable groups, its score in that element would be 0. Hence, scores are assigned only by considering if relevant information regarding each element is present in the section 14.5 of 2016 AIR or in the section 2.A.7 of OPs. In those cases where relevant information is not explicitly stated but implicitly present in the text, the element is also scored

as 1 (for example social innovation actions are stated to be in line with Europe 2020 objectives, which involves working to reduce poverty and thus it concerns the element of vulnerable groups).

It is important to take into account that the operational matrix guiding the mapping of social innovation has been designed for this report and therefore did not exist when drafting the AIRs and the OPs. Hence, these sections were not instructed to provide information on the areas included in the operational matrix. So, it is possible that the social innovation approach taken by some OPs pays attention to areas included in the social innovation matrix but that this was not reported in the sources of information available for this mapping (AIRs and OPs) because the authors were not requested to provide this information.

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Table 3. Operational matrix

M S	O P	T O S	Approach to promoting Social Innovation									
			Key features		Goals		Approach		Process		Players	
			Needs	Novelty	Social Impact	Social Mission	Methodology	Accountability	Aftermath	Multi-Stage Process	Partnerships and multi-stakeholder governance	Networks
			Does the OP address social needs (Human well-being, vulnerable groups, gap between social needs and existing solutions, need of enhancing social entrepreneurship)?	Does it refer to new services, ideas, processes or forms of collaboration that give an answer to specific social needs? The involvement of IT solutions is also covered.	Does the AIR/OP report on testing/scaling-up services or products?	Does SI rely on the engagement and commitment of different actors in order to achieve its social mission?	Does the ESF approach encourage openness, bottom-up approach and multi-disciplinarily?	Is the performance and results of SI evaluated using adequate metrics (i.e. number of applications, survival rate of ventures, gender balance of supported individuals, etc.)?	Does the AIR indicate any streams of sustainability, diffusion or replication?	Does the process of SI consist of (some of) the six stages identified?	Does SI supported by the OP rely on effective partnerships (horizontal and vertical) and on multilevel governance?	Is SI achieved through alliances and interrelations between local communities (e.g. individuals and civil society organizations) and keystone organisations
			Assessment (0-1)*	Assessment (0-1)*	Assessment (0-1)*	Assessment (0-1)*	Assessment (0-1)*	Assessment (0-1)*	Assessment (0-1)*	Assessment (0-1)*	Assessment (0-1)*	Assessment (0-1)*
			Short narrative	Short narrative	Short narrative	Short narrative	Short narrative	Short narrative	Short narrative	Short narrative	Short narrative	Short narrative

Source: elaborated by the authors

*Each Social Innovation dimension (i.e. Needs) has a number of items (i.e. Human well-being, vulnerable groups, gap between social needs and existing solutions, need of enhancing social entrepreneurship). Each Social Innovation dimension (i.e. Needs) will be assigned a maximum score depending on the score of its items, regardless the number of elements the dimension has. For each item, the possible scores are "0" if the item is not reported in the AIR and "1" if the item is reported in the AIR. Afterwards, per each dimension (i.e. needs) the average has been calculated that will be a value between 0 and 1. This will imply that, if there are four elements in one dimension, three are rated as "1" and the remaining one as "0", that dimension of the OP would be rated as "0,75".

3 Mapping of Social innovation across the ESF

This chapter provides a general mapping of social innovation actions planned or in implementation in the ESF 2014-2020. Mapping has been carried out through three methods, which shape the three sections that compose this chapter. First, quantitative indicators of SI are presented, considering financial allocation and performance indicators, when possible. Second, SI actions of OPs are mapped through the operational matrix presented in Chapter 2. Third, main findings from the E-Survey directed to MAs are reported.

3.1 Analysis of SI quantitative indicators

In this section, the SI approach is analysed through selected quantitative indicators, mainly financial indicators and results/output indicators.

3.1.1 Financial Indicators

The significance of SI in ESF financial terms can be approached through two means. Countries may choose to allocate one priority axes (PAX) specifically to SI and/or transnational cooperation, so that the funds allocated to this PAX is counted as SI. Another approach is to capture ESF contribution to SI through the possibility that countries have to select the sectoral and transversal theme/s that better reflect their operations, what is called secondary themes. There are 7 secondary themes, out of which, one is "Social Innovation"⁶. Since there is a possibility to select several ESF secondary themes for one operation, total ESF secondary themes does not have to add up and that the total can exceed 100%.

Financial Indicators by Priority Axes

PAX dedicated to Social innovation were identified based on section 2.A.1 of the OPs. It should be noted that some of these Axes do not refer exclusively to Social innovation but also to Transnational cooperation (TC), while PAX exclusively dedicated to TC were excluded. The table below shows the result of this screening and the financial allocation of the PAX dedicated to Social Innovation and, in some instances, also to TC⁷. It does not include PAX that, according to section 2.A.7 ("Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7"), are specifically referred only to Transnational Cooperation⁸. 11 OPs from 6 MS have set financial allocation for social innovation through Priority Axes. A total amount of EUR 979.805.040 has been allocated to specific SI (and TC) PAX in these 11 OPs in 2014-2020, corresponding to 0,8% of total ESF 2014-2020 allocations.

This information has been complemented with the total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the MA extracted from the AIRs 2016 from SFC. As per the end of 2016, eligible expenditure declared reached **EUR 126.988.641**, almost **13%** of programmed funding. This is

⁶ The other six secondary themes are: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation; Supporting the shift to a low-carbon, resource efficient economy; Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs; Enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies; Non-discrimination; Gender equality.

⁷ TC is covered together with SI for instance in of OP Flanders in Belgium, OP Employment in Czeck Rep., OP HR Development in Hungary and OP Knowledge, education and development in Poland. The transnational component is particularly important in the case of Poland, covering approximately 75% of PAX allocation

⁸ The selection of PAX dedicated exclusively to SI is thus an estimate, as some of the PAX might also include Transnational cooperation actions.

a positive performance compared with the average ESF expenditure rate of approximately 5%⁹ and which might point to a more effective and efficient implementation of Social innovation interventions. This statement should be taken with caution and deserves further exploration as the expenditure rate is mainly driven by two “big spenders” in absolute terms, Germany and Spain.

In fact, implementation rates differ widely across the MS shown in the table. OPs of Germany and Poland have the highest implementation rate for the moment. Belgium and the Czech Republic are in the very beginning of their implementation while Spain and Hungary have not started certifying expenditure linked to SI yet. These figures show an overall early stage in the implementation of SI actions which is in line with other sources of the report (section 14.5 of AIRs or E-Survey).

⁹ SFC2014, AIRs 2016 extraction provided by DG EMPL at 6 September 2017.

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Table 4. List of OPs with PAX dedicated to Social Innovation and Transnational cooperation

MS	CCI	PA	CATEGORY OF REGION	TOTAL FUNDING (EU + national)	CO-FINANCING RATE	TOTAL ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE DECLARED BY BENEFICIARIES TO THE MA	AS % OF TOTAL FUNDING	
BE	2014BE05SFOP002 – OP Flanders*	5	Innovation and transnationality	More developed	58.749.358	55,00%	2.531.995,64	4,31%
CZ	2014CZ05M9OP001 – OP Employment*	3 3	Social innovation and transnational cooperation	Less developed	41.119.628	95,00%	3.153.835,73	7,67%
				More developed	5.511.840	60,00%	422.752,79	7,67%
DE	2014DE05SFOP006 – OP Brandenburg	E	Soziale Innovation	Transition	7.777.778	90,00%	0,00	0,00%
DE	2014DE05SFOP015 – OP Rheinland Pfalz	B	Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and all forms of discrimination	More developed	69.795.820	50,00%	17.311.379,96	24,80%
DE	2014DE16M2OP001 – OP Niedersachsen	7	Promote employment and regional social service innovation	More developed	11.610.365	60,00%	401.060,97	3,45%
		7		Transition	9.752.800	60,00%	602.325,19	6,18%
ES	2014ES05SFOP002 – OP Employment, training and education	6A	Social innovation	More developed	913.528	50,00%	0,00	0,00%
		6B		More developed	714.678	80,00%	0,00	0,00%
		6C		Transition	6.346.093	80,00%	0,00	0,00%
		6D		Less developed	1.118.275	80,00%	0,00	0,00%
ES	2014ES05SFOP003 – OP Murcia	6C	Social innovation	Transition	6.320.000	90,00%	0,00	0,00%
ES	2014ES05SFOP011 – OP Basque Country	6A	Social innovation	More developed	2.963.370	60,00%	0,00	0,00%
ES	2014ES05SFOP012 – OP Social inclusion and social economy	6A	Social innovation	More developed	1.861.850	60,00%	0,00	0,00%
		6B		More developed	1.487.624	90,00%	0,00	0,00%
		6C		Transition	5.513.128	90,00%	0,00	0,00%
		6D		Less developed	866.525	90,00%	0,00	0,00%
HU	2014HU05M2OP001 – OP HR Development*	5.	Social cooperation and social innovation and transnational cooperation	Less developed	35.981.989	95,00%	0,00	0,00%
PL	2014PL05M9OP001 – OP Knowledge, education, development*	IV	Social innovation and transnational cooperation	Less developed	610.114.712	95,00%	87.962.550,12	14,42%
				More developed	101.285.679	90,00%	14.602.740,43	14,42%
TOTAL					979.805.040		126.988.641	12,96%

Source: SFC2014, ESF OPs AIRs, including multi-fund OPs

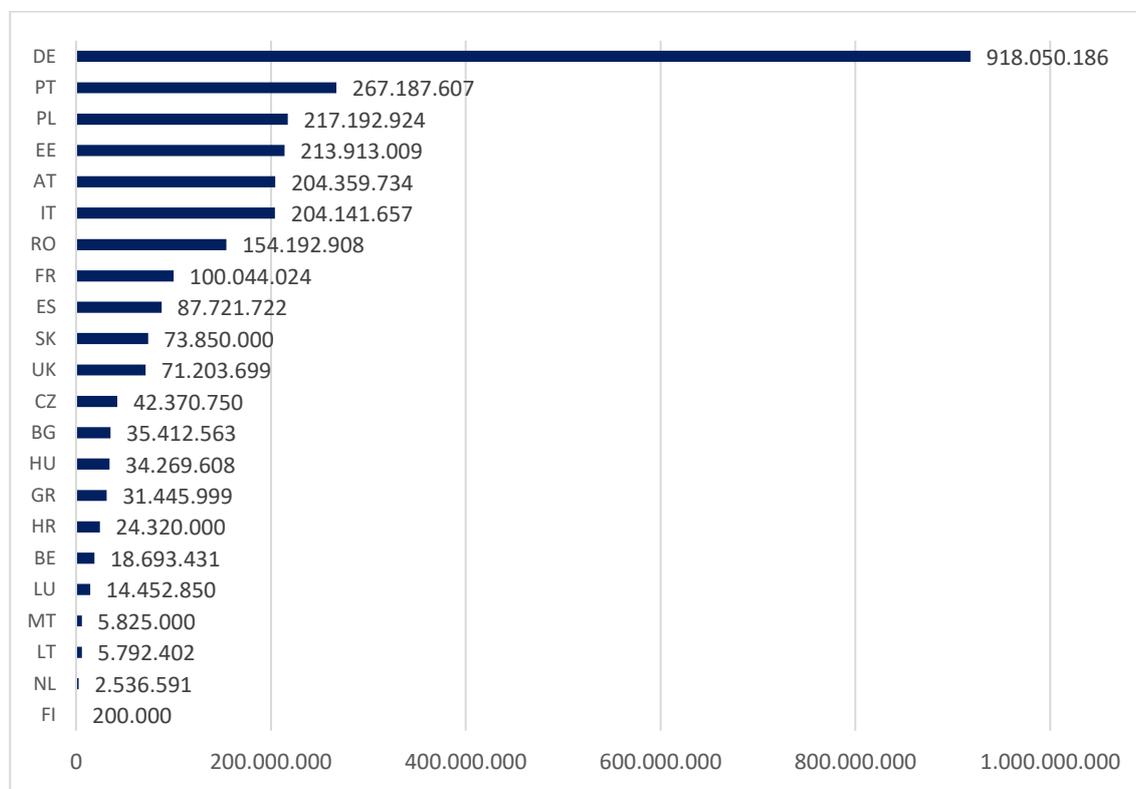
* Also includes funds for Transnational cooperation

Financial Indicators by Secondary Themes

As mentioned above, MAs need to select the secondary theme or themes that better fit their operations. The aim is to capture ESF contribution to these transversal themes, in this case to “Social innovation”. Thus, in addition to specifically allocated PAX, OPs from 22 MS have chosen the secondary theme “Social Innovation” in a number of operations that “add” a total allocation of EUR 2.727 billion. This amount represents 2,3% of total ESF 2014-2020 funding. However, note that, since one operation can be selected as relevant for several secondary themes, it is not possible to isolate this funding, nor to add it to the quantity allocated to specific PAX.

Six MS account for 74,2% of the SI budget earmarked through Secondary Themes (IT, AT, EE, PL, PT and DE). Among them the financial allocation of Germany is outstanding as it can be seen in Graph 1, gathering 33,7% of all ESF 2014-2020 financial allocation for SI.

Graph 1. Financial allocation for Social Innovation under Secondary Theme, by MS.



Source: Operational Programmes ESF 2014-2020. Table 11.

The differences between mapping through the operational matrix and through financial indicators should be highlighted. The mapping through the operational matrix focused on the availability of information regarding a set of 25 elements considered as relevant for the SI definition. There is not a direct relationship between the availability of information for these elements and the amount of financial resources earmarked. First, the availability of information criteria does not take into account the scope of the actions or the size of the geographical regions where the actions are implemented. Second, several SI elements rely at the institutional field and do not necessarily involve a significant use of financial resources.

The comparison of both methodologies highlights an interesting conclusion: higher expenditure in SI does not necessarily mean a better SI approach from the SI definition perspective. Thus, in addition to ensuring adequate financial resources it is important to pay attention to qualitative issues which have a sound effect on the final quality of SI actions. These issues point to several of the elements considered, such as an open, bottom-up and a multidisciplinary approach. Interestingly, testing SI ideas through prior piloting on a small scale can involve a lower expenditure than directly implementing the SI idea on a large scale. Thus, avoiding the testing of a new SI idea could paradoxically reduce SI scoring while involving a higher expenditure.

3.1.2 Output and result indicators

This section presents the output and result indicators of SI activities developed, as they are monitored in the relevant OPs. Two important remarks need to be made to properly interpret these data: first, these indicators are only available by PAX, therefore only for the 11 OPs of 6 countries that have dedicated a specific PAX for Social Innovation (as per Table 4); second, and most important, these indicators do not measure social innovation as such, i.e. the novelty of the processes or projects, if a project has incorporated a bottom-up and/or top-down approach or adopted some (of all) of the six stages of SI. Instead, they inform on the activities developed and the result of these in terms of the improvement of employability or access to jobs of participants.

Altogether, the indicators report on 363 SI projects developed in three countries (BE, DE and CZ), the majority of which (252) is fully or partially implemented by social partners and/or non-governmental organisations. The number of projects targeting public administrations or public services amounts to 21. 4 projects aim at sustainable integration of women in the labour market. Further, 3.994 participants have been recorded (63% women), 3.420 participants have gained a qualification or 601 participants have acquired a job. The weight put on reaching out to disadvantaged participants is proved by the 3.394 participants recorded.

Output Indicators

At country level, three countries report values on the number of projects implemented: BE reports 129 projects, of which 21 target the public administration or public services at national, regional or local level and 26 are fully or partially implemented by social partners (SSPP) or NGOs; DE counts 102 projects, of which 100 are implemented by SSPP or NGOs and 2 are dedicated at sustainable participation and progress of women in employment; CZ reports on 132 projects, most of them (126) implemented by social partners or NGOs, 2 target the public administration and 4 address participation of women in employment.

Regarding the number of participants, out of a target of 2.204, the CZ reports 94 participants (no disaggregation by sex is provided) until 2016; DE would have already met 55% of the initial participation target of 7.000, with 3.881 unemployed participants (2.449 men and 1.432 women), of which 3.651 have a primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary (ISCED 2) education level; ES seems to lag behind, with only 19 participants reported (11 men and 8 women), out of a target of 3.762.

Result Indicators

A total number of 603 common result indicators and 153 specific result indicators has been programmed for the PAX dedicated to SI. The elevate number of indicators corresponds as well to features, variations or type of regions of the indicators. Among these, 24 common result indicators and 4 specific result indicators that report advancement in their cumulative values to 2016 have been selected. This number point as well at the early stage of implementation of SI actions in the ESF 2014-2020 programming period.

Altogether, the results reported are: 83 inactive participants (31 men and 52 women) engaged in job searching upon leaving (4 in DE and 79 in CZ); 404 participants (185 men and 219 women) in education/training upon leaving (316 in PL, 86 in DE and 2 in ES); 3.420 participants (2.034 men and 1.386 women) gaining a qualification upon leaving (2,671 in DE, 743 in PL and 6 in ES); 601 participants (383 men and 218 women) in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving (DE 569, ES 18 and PL 14). Regarding disadvantaged participants engaged in job

searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving, DE stands out with 3.034 persons (1.869 men and 1.165 women), followed by PL with 360 participants.

Additionally, DE reports on a specific result indicator, namely "Participants with a development plan for whom a significant increase in employability has been demonstrated at the time of the withdrawal": with a target value for 2023 of 65%, in 2016 57% had been achieved. In PL, the "Number of people who acquired professional or key competences after leaving the program" is a specific indicator with 11.900 persons achievement.

3.2 Mapping through the Operational Matrix

As explained in section 2.2, this section maps SI actions of the 187 ESF OPs through the information found on the AIR of 2016 (section 14.5) and on the OPs (section 2.A.7). **Most of OPs plan and/or implement actions relevant to Social Innovation**, although progress on these actions might be reported or not in the AIR 2016: only 41,7% of AIR contain SI relevant information. All in all, only 16% OPs do not contain relevant information nor do their AIR report on SI.

Table 5. ESF Operational Programmes covered by type of content.

Sources of Information	Number	%
AIR Content (section 14.5)	78	41,7%
OP Content (section 2.A.7)	79	42,2%
No Content in AIR / OP sections	30	16,0%
Total	187	100%

Source: Operational Programmes ESF 2014-2020 and AIRs 2016.

There is a wide variety in the approaches to Social Innovation across the ESF OP. The fact that SI is a relatively new field within the ESF (at least in terms of how it is approached and how it has to be accounted for and reported) can explain this diversity of approaches. Most of OPs simply **include actions** with an intended relevance for Social Innovation within a wider set of general ESF actions. Others choose to **concentrate ESF resources on Social Innovation**. An example of this latter approach case is the OP of Baden Württemberg (DE), where ESF has the primary task of enabling and testing new, innovative solutions in addition to existing systems for regulating work and education. In a different way, there are OPs which have opted for **mainstreaming social innovation** across all OP actions. One example is Malta OP, which states that "projects fulfilling the ESF Principles of Social Innovation and Transnational and Interregional Co-operation will gain additional marks in the selection process"¹⁰. However, these cases are not frequent.

In contrast, **some OPs opt not to fund Social Innovation actions through the ESF**. For example, Navarre OP (ES) acknowledges the importance of SI but opts to fund SI actions through

¹⁰ For this, the OP states that as a minimum, for a social innovation project to qualify for additional points within the selection process, it must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. It must contribute towards the specific objectives of the investment priority under which the project is submitted;
2. Incorporates the development and implementation of innovative solutions addressing social needs;
3. It is implemented in partnership with at least another interested stakeholder.

the Employment and Social Innovation Program (EaSI). In other cases, the OPs state that no Social Innovation actions are planned without an alternative funding strategy. Other OPs, in contrast, state that no actions are planned in the field of Social Innovation, although the actions reported are relevant from the social innovation perspective. In that sense, it seems important to improve the quality of reporting by disseminating a clear concept of what is considered as social innovation within ESF framework.

A deeper analysis of the information available gives some indication of the variety of **approaches adopted in the OPs to implement Social Innovation** actions. Firstly, a broad analysis of OPs by dimensions of social innovation and by MS will be presented. Then, each dimension will be analysed in detail with a description of its constituent elements (section 3.2.1). Thirdly, a cluster analysis will identify types or styles of OPs when addressing SI through statistical clustering based on the quantitative data obtained from binary scoring and through qualitative observation (section 3.2.2).

3.2.1 Dimensions and Elements of Social Innovation

This section describes the 10 dimensions and 25 elements of SI as defined in chapter 2. Thus, the share of OP that have reported any relevant information on the 10 dimensions and 25 elements, -these have thus been scored with 1-, is analysed.

The first observation is that, as it can be seen in Graph 2, **there is an unbalanced attention paid to the different SI dimensions across the OPs analysed**. While most of them provide relevant information about the novelty of the actions, few of them offer relevant information regarding some dimensions such as the aftermath (finding the right streams of sustainability, diffusing and replicating the new solutions), or accountability (comparing and evaluating the goals, processes, action and achieved results of social innovation programmes, initiatives or policies through transparent methods, which requires adequate metrics of evaluation).

Graph 2. Share of OPs that provide relevant information for each of SI dimensions.

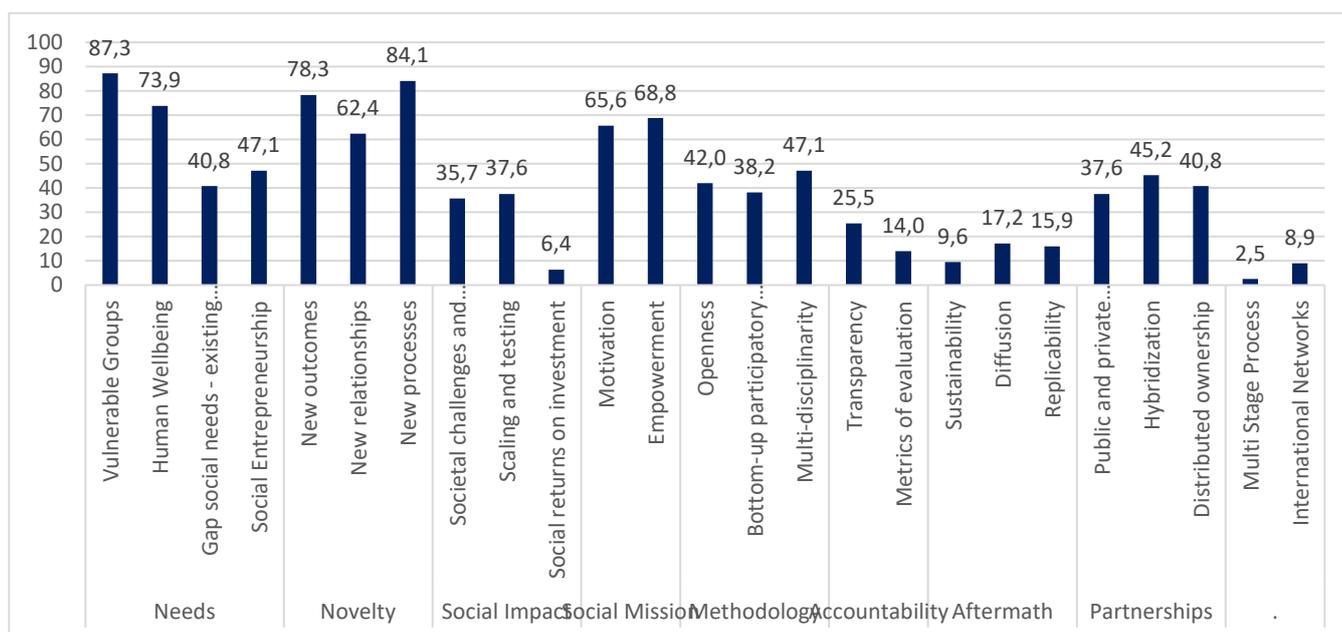


Source: AIRs 2016 (section 14.5), OPs (section 2.A.7). For more details see section 2.4. The operational matrix for SI in ESF.

This unbalanced attention paid to the 10 different SI dimensions is reflected as well on the information gathered on the 25 SI elements considered (Graph 3). For example, within the dimension of "social needs", whereas most OPs (87,3%) include measures towards the most vulnerable -they have thus been scored with 1 in this element-, only 40,8% address the gap between social needs and existing solutions; as regards the dimension of "social impact", scaling and testing is present in 37% of OPs, but "social return on investment" only in 16,4%.

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Graph 3. Share of OPs that provide relevant information by elements and dimensions.



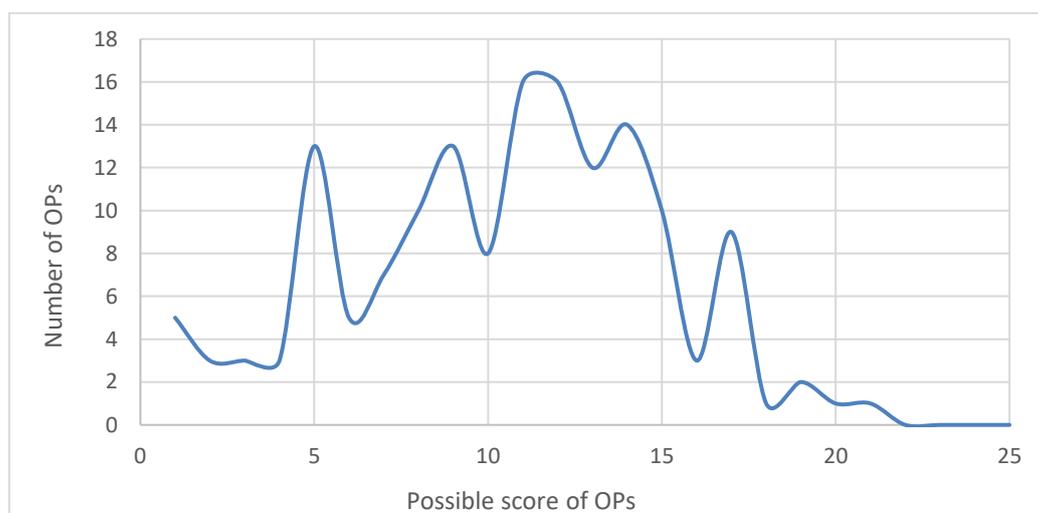
Source: AIRs 2016 (section 14.5), OPs (section 2.A.7). For more details see section 2.4. The operational matrix for SI in ESF.

It should be taken into account that the analysis of the OPs is based on the AIRs (2016) and the OPs (drafted at the beginning of the 2014-2020 period). Thus, it is possible that the OPs strengthen some of the dimensions and elements in the years to come during the current programming period. However, certain dimensions are defined from the beginning and are difficult to change afterwards: for example, if the methodology already designed encourages an open rather than closed process; if it relies on multi-disciplinary level and on a bottom-up rather than on a top-down approach, etc.

Distribution of OPs across all dimensions

Following the previously discussed criteria for binary scoring, each element is assigned the score 0 or 1 depending on the provision of related information. Given that there are 25 elements, the range of possible cumulative score for each OP is between 0 (if all elements are scored as 0) and 25 (if all elements are scored as 1). The distribution of all OPs across the range of possible scores is shown next.

Graph 4. Distribution of OPs that provide relevant information for each element (range 0-25).



Source: AIRs 2016 (section 14.5), OPs (section 2.A.7). For more details see section 2.4. The operational matrix for SI in ESF.

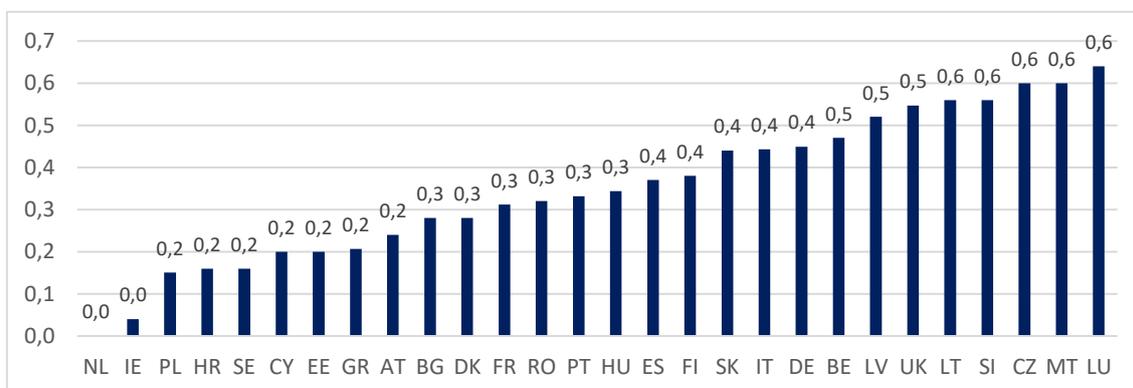
Note: 32 OPs with no relevant information or no activity reported (0 score) are excluded from this graph.

The distribution of OPs across the range of scores approximates a normal distribution. Most frequent scores (32 OPs) are found in the middle range, with scores of 11 and 12 out of 25, meaning that relevant related information to SI is provided in 11 or 12 elements. The frequency of OPs descends towards both upper and bottom extremes. These results suggest that on average further dissemination of SI definition and encouragement are needed for MS in order to improve the average scoring in the future. Best scored OPs (among 187 OPs) have been: Operational Programme Employment (CZ), OPs England, East Wales and West Wales and the Valleys (UK) and OP Hessen (DE).

Comparison by MS

Quantitative scoring also allows for cross-country comparison. The average of binary scores of all OPs is calculated for each MS, providing an average score by element for each MS. Then, the average of all elements within each MS is used to calculate an average score for each MS. Thus, each MS is scored between 0 (no information about any of the 25 elements of any OP was provided) and 1 (relevant information was provided for each element of each of the OPs of the MS). The results are presented in the graph below.

Graph 5. Average score of OPs by MS

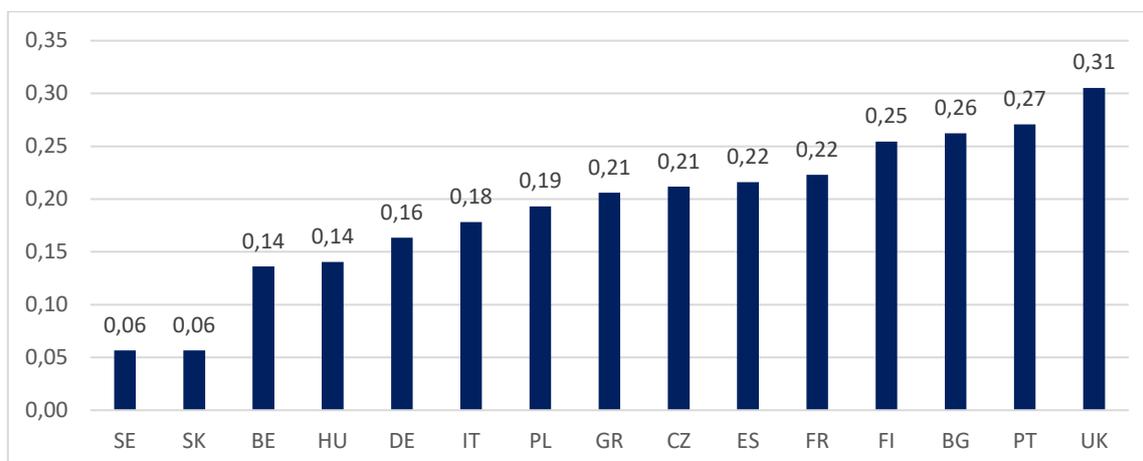


Source: AIRs 2016 (section 14.5), OPs (section 2.A.7). For more details see section 2.4. The operational matrix for SI in ESF.

It should be noted that in some MS there is a wide diversity among OPs, -meaning that some OPs score high in SI and others score lower- while in other MS no diversity exists at all (single

OP countries). High standard deviation values are found in countries such a UK, Portugal or Belgium.

Graph 6. Standard deviation to average score of OPs by MS.



Source: AIRs 2016 (section 14.5), OPs (section 2.A.7). For more details see section 2.4. The operational matrix for SI in ESF. Note: MS with a standard deviation equal to 0 have not been included in the graph.

This score just accounts for the availability of information in the AIRs 2016 (section 14.5) or in the OPs (section 2.A.7). It should be noted that this score does not take into account information published in other sources or the detail provided on the sources mapped, the complexity of the design of the programmes, or any other programme-relevant features such as the implementation performance. Finally, it should also be noted that the absence of SI relevant information for one OP in both sources receives a 0 score for the OP, which obviously reduces the average score for the MS. The results presented in Graph 6 are limited to these two sources of information without considering other sources, which, however, are taken into account in other sections of this report (financial indicators, E-Survey analysis and case studies).

Description of elements characterising each dimension:

Needs

“Social needs” is a key dimension within SI. Social innovation actions must respond to social needs. Most of the social innovation actions described in the OPs or in the AIRs consider the social needs dimension somehow. Actions aimed to improve the situation of **vulnerable groups** are especially frequent (87,3% of OPs). Vulnerable groups can be mentioned directly, such as long-term unemployed or persons at-risk-of poverty, or indirectly, by stating that social innovation actions should be in line with EU2020 objectives. Some OPs do not focus on specific vulnerable groups, while other OPs concentrate on specific groups: **refugees** are one concrete vulnerable group that has received important attention by some OPs, mostly in Germany; **NEETs** are another group that has received special consideration by several OPs, through the efforts to develop SI within the YEI framework. Other OPs focus on different vulnerable groups, such as the OP for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy (SI), that targets (among other groups) prisoners about to leave the prison, drug addicts under treatment and persons with mental health problems.

Human well-being is also considered by the majority of OPs when planning SI actions (73,9% of OPs). This often involves actions to improve the quality of **education**. These actions are usually geared towards improving the match between the skills demanded by the labour market and those taught by the education system, or towards reducing early school leaving. There is a close connection between the vulnerable groups and the human wellbeing elements: for

example, actions aimed at improving the quality of education facilitate labour market insertion and contribute to poverty reduction in the long-term. **Health** is another frequently addressed field regarding the human wellbeing: a number of OPs rely on technology-based SI approaches to improve the quality of the health care sector. More concretely, several OPs develop comprehensive actions to respond to the needs of the ageing population, where health care services play an important role.

In this context, some OPs concentrate their SI actions on the field of **work life balance**. Social innovation can play a role in this field, for example, by developing new products or services. Some examples are found in Italy, such as the "Voucher Woman and Family Friendly" developed by Abruzzo OP or the Welflex Plans for companies, created by Sardegna OP. Work-life balance actions are often multidisciplinary, involving the coordination of several agents (companies, public services and care services, for example). In addition, work-life balance actions can also respond to other social needs through an impact on employment creation. For example, the Economic Development and Innovation Operational Programme OP (HU) plans to facilitate flexible organisation of work within companies to improve work-life balance and to contribute to employment redistribution and creation.

As it can be seen in Graph 3, almost half of OPs (47,1%) provide relevant information on **social entrepreneurship**. Some OPs include social entrepreneurship within a wide set of SI actions, while other OPs just rely on social entrepreneurs to develop their SI agenda. Social entrepreneurship is often related to the participation of the local community in the identification of social needs, in the design of ad-hoc solutions to address them and in their final implementation. This element has intrinsic linkages to the "Social mission" and "Methodology" dimensions, as will be seen below. Social entrepreneurship is underpinned by different strategies. Some OPs offer direct support to concrete social entrepreneurship projects that fulfil certain eligibility criteria. Other OPs opt to focus their efforts on developing a friendly environment for social entrepreneurship, or they support it by means of new norms. The close connection of SI with social entrepreneurship is exemplified by the recent approval (October 2016) of the "Law 4430 of Social and Solidarity economy and development agencies and other provisions" in Greece. This new law defines social innovation as the production of goods and provision of services that aim to meet social needs, reconcile production and consumption, harmonise the laws of supply and demand and form a new type of social relations based on common good rather than on competition.

The **gaps between social needs and existing solutions** are less frequently mentioned within the needs dimension (40,8% of OPs). Actions within the scope of this element often have the aim of improving the outreach of already existing policies.

Novelty

Novelty is at the heart of social innovation, it is a defining feature. However, it should be noted that novelty is context-dependent as well: a measure that is not innovative in one MS or region can be new in another context. The most frequent type of novelty is about **new processes** (84,1% of OPs). One example is the adoption of multi-disciplinary approaches in the process of social inclusion guided by social services.

In many cases, new features are added to social policies developed by public administrations, while the promotion of innovation can also take place within companies' management. That is the case of OP Flanders (BE). In other cases (62,4% of OP), novelty is based on **new**

relationships, involving the participation of new partners, such as NGOs or private entities. In many OPs, novelty is understood as the development of new skills through the **adaptation of training programmes**, in order to better respond to demands of a changing labour market, often shaped by technological change. Thus, in these cases social innovation is regarded as the adaptation of social and labour policies to the possibilities and challenges created by technological innovation. This approach often goes in line with **regional development strategies**.

Indeed, **technological innovation** is a key factor for social innovation, through two mechanisms: on the one hand, it has an impact on the economic structure, shaping the growth and decline of sectors, changing the skills demanded by the labour market, creating chances for the creation of new jobs and destroying obsolete occupations. On the other hand, technological innovation opens up new opportunities for social policy reforms in terms of organisation, delivery or relationships among involved actors. The National Operational Programme on Research and Innovation OP (IT) mentions several examples on the social potential of several concrete emerging technologies¹¹.

In many OPs, however, the information regarding the type of novelty (if it focuses on new relationships, outcomes or processes) is blurred or not even defined. Some OPs just mention their support to innovative actions, without specifying where the novelty relies on.

Social Impact

The "Social impact" dimension is composed of several elements. One of them clearly characterises social innovation, as included in article 9 of ESF regulation: **testing and scaling**. Small scale allows for experimentation of new ideas which can be afterwards implemented on a large scale if successful. Several OPs consider the testing of new ideas, but the degree of experimentation differs: while some OPs vaguely mention among other actions that new ideas should be tested, other OPs develop complete experimentation systems which are at the core of the OP. One example is the OP of West Wales and the Valleys (UK), which is entirely focused on testing. Similarly, the OP of Baden Wurttemberg (DE), is mainly focused on enabling and testing innovative solutions for regulating work and education. The OPs of Crete and Ionian Islands (GR) include social experimentation applied on small scale conditions that ensure that the effects can be measured before scaling-up, if the results prove conclusive. The effects are measured comparing a sample of population with a "control group" with similar socioeconomic characteristics. The OP of Employment (CZ) tests and scales new projects, such as the "Pilot Testing for Rapid Re-Housing", which aims to end the homelessness of 50 families with children in residential need with assertive social work.

Box 1: EQUAL, roots of SI in the ESF

Several OPs develop their SI agenda based on the outcomes achieved through EQUAL during previous ESF programming periods. EQUAL focused on supporting innovative and transnational projects, created to generate and test new ideas with the aim of finding new ways of fighting all forms of discrimination and inequality within and beyond the labour market. One example is ERDF-ESF OP of Guadeloupe et St

¹¹ For example, nanotechnologies can play a key role in sectors with social impact (health care, energy saving, security, etc.).

Martin Etat (FR), which focuses on the qualitative transformation of services and on a further implementation of the innovations developed under EQUAL. In other cases, EQUAL has played an important role in developing networks in the past, which nowadays serve to articulate SI actions through a partnership-based approach. For example, Castilla y León OP (ES) highlights that contacts between the administration and NGOs created by the partnerships of EQUAL projects facilitate the integration of inclusion itineraries, enabling the provision of customised services. Indeed, the European Conference: Investing in people – the way forward (15-16 February 2018, Sofia) includes a workshop “The EQUAL experience: from experimentation to social innovation”. This workshop considers how the learning from EQUAL concerning the key principles of innovation, partnership and transnationality has been translated in a comprehensive way into the ESF and EaSI in the current programming

Several OPs focus their social innovation efforts on **societal challenges and systemic changes** (35,7% of OPs). The most common challenges concern the adaptation to technological change, population ageing or territorial unbalances. They often consider Europe 2020 Strategy objectives as well. Finally, the share of OPs that provide information about the **social returns on investment** is low (6,4%). This may be due to the delays that many OPs faced in the beginning of their implementation. In addition, the source of information about this dimension of almost half of the OPs was just the OP, as the section 14.5 of the AIR of 2016 was empty.

Social Mission

Around two thirds of the OPs (67,2%) provide information related to social mission and the elements comprised in it. A similar same share of OPs (65,6%) link their actions with **motivations** that already exist among local communities, as well as with programme actions that **empower** local actors and count on them in the implementation of solutions (68,8%). The actors that participate differ, from local councils or NGOs, to the close environment of vulnerable persons. For example, Lombardia OP (IT) promotes a partnership between local public authorities and third sector organisations for the modernisation of social policies and the design of tailored interventions. In addition, particular attention is paid to the involvement of the family of the vulnerable person both in the formulation phase and in the implementation of the intervention.

Methodology

The “Methodology” dimension includes the elements of **bottom-up approach (38,2% of OPs) and openness (42%)**. Indeed, many OPs rely on the participation of a wide variety of actors from local communities, who play a role in the identification of needs, in the design of solutions and in its final implementation. Still, the degree of participation of local entities varies across OPs that follow a participative approach. Some OPs open calls for social innovative projects which should focus on very concrete themes while other OPs allow for a wider scope of possible topics.

Box 2. Participation and scale of actions

There is a relationship between the number and the scope of the actions on the one hand and the degree of participation of diverse local agents in SI actions on the other. Some OPs concentrate on a very reduced number of actions, which tend to be larger in scope, such as national scale actions (the development of a new legal framework or the implementation of a new strategy for social services at the national level). In contrast, other OPs opt for a wider number of actions, which tend to be smaller and are usually designed and implemented by local communities.

Both styles (concentrated or extended) have implications for the degree of participation of civil society and local communities in the design of the actions. A more concentrated model, with a few actions or larger scale actions, tends to involve a less direct participation of the local community (if for example only one action is implemented at the national level). In contrast, a more extended model, with many actions implemented at the local level, is more likely to count with a more direct participation of the local community in the design and in the implementation of actions. However, this association should not invite to discard large scale projects, as these often respond to those needs that can only be addressed through large projects at the regional or national level. Both styles (concentrated and extended) of OPs can be found in the same MS.

The "Methodology" dimension also includes the **multi-disciplinary approach** as an element. This element is the most common across OPs within this dimension (47,1% of OPs). Indeed, the combination of disciplines and of already existing services is a natural way of creativity and innovation. This element also is frequently tied with other, since multi-disciplinary approaches usually require the participation of different bodies and organisations, involving new relationships, which in turn need new processes to be put into action. In addition, this usually requires the articulation of partnerships and of a multi-stakeholder governance. Examples about the adoption of multi-disciplinary approaches to design SI solutions across ESF are abundant. One example is found in Lazio OP (IT), which promotes sport as an innovative social inclusion tool for children in situation or at-risk-of poverty and social exclusion, combined with support, training and job search guidance for the families of the children. Another example is the integration of public employment, social and health services promoted by Emilia Romagna (IT). A last example is found in Basse Normandie OP (FR), where the response to the needs of an ageing population involves several sectors: health and digital (in connection with "e-health"), tourism, agro-food, building (home automation, safe housing), automotive and electronics. Through this multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary strategy, the region promotes economic development and job creation combined with higher quality well-being services for the elderly.

Accountability

Accountability elements are not well defined in most of OPs, which present scarce information. The OPs that state that an evaluation is planned are more frequent than the OPs that mention concrete metrics of evaluation. Examples of metrics of evaluation are: surveys to participants (Flanders OP, BE); number of vulnerable workers employed by social companies (Prague – Growth Pole OP, CZ); participants in several actions, such as training (Nordrhein-Westfalen OP, DE); number of social and solidarity economy projects (Ile-de-France et Seine OP, FR); or number of secondary schools that participate in an integrated digital learning programme (Lazio OP, IT).

Follow-up

The information on the elements of the follow up dimension is also scarce. OPs that have sound content about testing and scaling usually provide information about the **replicability** and scaling-up of projects.

Several OPs include actions to promote the **diffusion** of successful SI projects and good practices (17,2% of OPs). Diffusion plays a key role in SI, as it can spread the main findings of pilot projects which can be applied in other regions, reducing experimentation costs and inspiring further experimentation. Moreover, diffusion also facilitates the creation of **networks**. For example, Martinique Conseil Régional OP (FR) disseminates good social innovation practices, as well as new solutions, promoting exchanges between social innovation actors. Réunion Etat OP (FR) includes support to companies and employees to transfer methodology and disseminate of good practices in work organisation, skills management, occupational health and social dialogue. The OP for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy (SI) included the elaboration of a documentary.

Finally, OPs that pay attention to the development of social entrepreneurship sometimes include information regarding the **sustainability** of projects. However, sustainability is taken into account in other type of projects as well. For example, Research, Development and Education OP (CZ) aims to maintain the teachers' networks that are created during the implementation of projects after its completion.

Partnerships and multi-stakeholder governance

Partnerships and multi-stakeholder governance become often a requirement for the implementation of multi-disciplinary and participative approaches, as they set up the needed structure of collaboration that brings separate agents to work together on a societal challenge. Multi-stakeholder governance is often put into action through mixing organisations of different natures, as well as setting up partnerships between public and private agents. For example, the England OP (UK) works with partners from the private, public and VCSE (voluntary, community and social enterprise) sectors with the aim of addressing societal challenges. The OP for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy (SI) promotes the participation of local companies to facilitate labour market insertion of early school leavers while organising activities in cooperation with associations from the local environment.

Public-private partnerships are often developed in line with regional development strategies and in some cases they are part of the strategies to promote social entrepreneurship. Interestingly, in some cases the collaboration between multiple agents is fostered through the provision of ad-hoc physical spaces. One example of this can be found in the Bremen OP (DE), where local support centres have been established, that gather various labour market service providers with local responsibility to approach multiple problem situations of long-term unemployed. In other cases, international networks are created, as it is described in the section below.

Multi-Stage Process and International Networks

The dimensions of both Multi-Stage Process and International Networks score very low quantitatively, showing that most of the OPs do not offer relevant information regarding these dimensions. The score of the Multi-Stage Process dimension is particularly low (2,5% of OPs): although some OPs might take into account several of the steps defined in the multi-stage process very few are truly structured through all the six steps of this process.

The share of OPs that set up or plan to set up international networks is reduced as well (8,9%). **International networks** are a great chance to disseminate social innovation approaches that have been already successfully tested. Moreover, international networks can reduce the risks of trying new approaches while dropping experimentation costs. One example is found at Murcia OP (ES), which works in establishing a European network of entities that support the labour market access of people with mental illness and/or drug addiction. The network gathers members from Italy, Slovenia and Spain. Another example is the Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur OP (FR), which plans to share information about the experimental devices created through social innovation actions, as it considers that they might be relevant for other MS. In the opposite direction, Niedersachsen OP (DE) established regional offices for social innovation to bring ideas from other countries to Lower Saxony (as well as for supporting the preparation and dissemination of already tested approaches).

Nevertheless, it should be also considered that international networks are often developed under the transnational cooperation priority, which enables MS to share good practices and lessons that can be learnt through the experimentation or implementation of social innovation approaches, among others.

3.2.2 Clustering

Beyond the analysis of concrete dimensions, it is interesting to identify different styles or patterns that have emerged in the implementation of SI across ESF. The previous section analysed how many, which of the dimensions and elements of the SI conceptual framework do ESF OP include and how, giving examples found. This section provides an answer to the question of how these dimensions interact with each other in the OP.

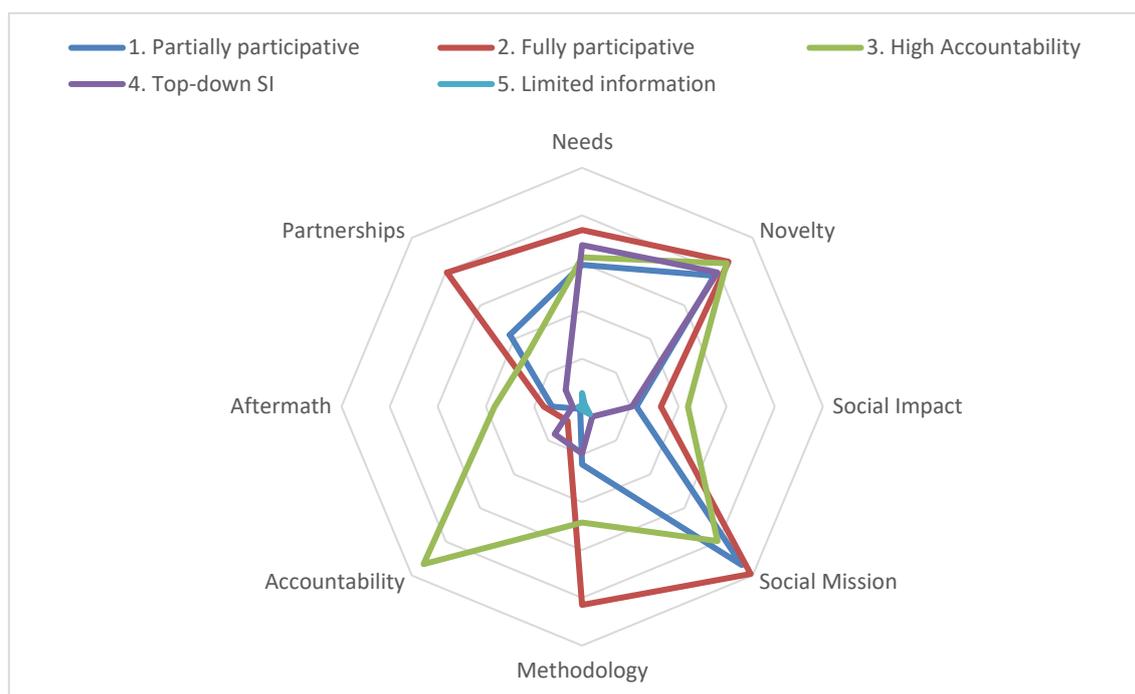
For this purpose, two complementary methodologies have been applied. First, a statistical cluster analysis has been conducted using the data from the binary scoring of OPs. Second, relevant qualitative information that cannot be directly collected through the elements included in the Operational Matrix has served to identify patterns of addressing SI as well.

Statistical Cluster

A statistical cluster analysis has been carried out using the K-means technique applied to the binary scoring made for each OP¹². The number of clusters has been set to 5. The results of the cluster analysis are shown next.

¹² "**K-means** is an analytical technique that, for a chosen value of k, identifies k clusters of objects based on the objects' proximity to the centre of the k groups. The centre is determined as the arithmetic average (mean) of each cluster's n-dimensional vector of attributes. This section describes the algorithm to determine the k means as well as how best to apply this technique to several use cases". EMC Education Services. Data Science and Big Data Analytics. Chapter 4. From, J. MacQueen, "Some Methods for Classification and Analysis of Multivariate Observations," in *Proceedings of the Fifth Berkeley Symposium on Mathematical Statistics and Probability*, Berkeley, CA, 1967.

Graph 7. Clustering of OPs by SI dimensions



Source: Own elaboration with data from the quantitative mapping.

The cluster analysis shows 5 differentiated groups of OP. Most of them score highly in terms of needs and novelty. Thus, almost all OPs adjust to a loose definition of social innovation and therefore the other dimensions are those that shape the differences among clusters. Each group has been labelled with a name to highlight its most unique attributes:

1. **Partially participative:** The OPs of this first cluster score relatively high in terms of the dimensions Needs, Novelty and Social mission. The role of partnerships can be considered close to average. In contrast, the score for the Methodology dimension of this group is relatively low. These two attributes point to OPs where partnerships would play a role in implementation but the elements that shape the methodology dimension (openness, bottom-up approach or multi-disciplinarily) are rather absent. The values of both dimensions, combined with a high score on the social mission dimension, shape a style of SI characterised by a top-down design which however takes into account local communities and diverse agents in terms of motivation and implementation. This group is considerably numerous, gathering 40 OPs out of a total number of 187.
2. **Fully participative:** This group outscores the first group in most of the dimensions, so it can be regarded as an improved version of it. Its main differentiating features are a very high score in the Methodology dimension, which shows that the identification of needs and the design of actions have been carried out through open and/or bottom-up approaches, which has usually brought up multi-disciplinary solutions. Probably because of this participative approach (in the identification of problems and the design of solutions), as well as of the wider diversity of agents involved (due to the multi-disciplinary element within the Methodology dimension), the score of this group in the Partnership and multi-stake holder governance dimension is also very high. Therefore, this group of OPs can be labelled as “fully participative”. This group scores the highest in almost all dimensions and is the most numerous, gathering 47 OPs out of 187.
3. **High Accountability:** The OPs of this cluster are featured by a high score in the Accountability dimension compared with the rest of OPs. The OPs of this group also score

relatively highly in the dimensions of Social mission, Social impact, Aftermath, Novelty and Needs. However, the score of the dimensions of Partnerships and Methodology of this group is not that outstanding. Together with the second group, the OPs of this group reach the highest combined score among all dimensions. Thus, clusters 2 and 3 are the closest to the definition of social innovation as included in the conceptual framework used.

4. **Top-down SI:** This group gathers OPs with relevant content in terms of Needs and Novelty, but with lower scores regarding the remaining SI dimensions. These correspond to innovative social policies which are usually top-down designed and implemented, without involving local community or other agents as other groups do. This group gathers 34 OPs.
5. **Limited information:** OPs with very limited information about most of dimensions or with no activity reported. 44 OPs are included in this group.

The detailed values of each of the 5 clusters are shown in the table below. The table also displays the combined score of all the dimensions (first column on the right) as well as the number of OPs that have been included in each cluster (second column on the left).

Table 6. Clustering analysis results of OPs.

Cluster No.	N° OPs	Needs	Novelty	Social Impact	Social Mission	Methodology	Accountability	After math	Partner ships	Average
1. Partially participative	40	0,59	0,78	0,22	0,94	0,24	0,01	0,13	0,43	0,42
2. Fully participative	47	0,74	0,86	0,33	0,99	0,83	0,09	0,16	0,79	0,60
3. High Accountability	22	0,63	0,85	0,44	0,80	0,48	0,93	0,36	0,32	0,60
4. Top-down SI	34	0,68	0,79	0,21	0,06	0,20	0,16	0,04	0,10	0,28
5. Limited information	44	0,06	0,02	0,02	0,05	0,02	0,01	0,02	0,00	0,02

Source: elaborated by the authors with data from the quantitative mapping.

The cluster of OPs closer to the definition contained in article 9 of ESF regulation would be the third one named as "High accountability". Indeed, this is the one scoring highest in the "social impact" dimension (that includes testing, evaluating and scaling), and, by far, the one that scores highest in the "accountability" dimension (that includes evaluation metrics and transparency elements). However, as reported in the table above, only 22 OPs belong to this category.

Observed grouping

As shown above, relevant qualitative information has been observed in the OPs which cannot be easily included in the binary scoring of the elements. These observations serve to describe further groups or styles of addressing SI across ESF. The main groups identified from this perspective are described next.

1. **Thematic approaches:** Several OPs focus SI efforts on addressing one concrete topic which is considered as a priority. One example of thematic SI approaches can be found in Germany, where many OPs focused mainly or exclusively on responding to the **refugee** crisis. Some examples of this are the Hesse OP or the Federal Germany OP. Another example of OPs concentrated on one group are those focused on the implementation of the **Youth Guarantee**. In other MS there are OPs which target one specific priority at the national level. One example can be found in Italy with the National Operational

Programme on Legality. This OP prepares public sector with new techniques to face organized crime or shadow economy challenges.

- 2. Strategies for regional development and technological innovation:** Many OPs develop their SI actions with the main purpose of supporting their regional development agendas or **RIS3** (research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation). These agendas have a clear sectoral perspective which is supported from the SI field through actions to identify concrete **skills** that are demanded by strategic sectors and to provide the training/education needed. From this perspective, the development of the regional economy is a requirement for the creation of jobs, which facilitates the participation in the labour market of vulnerable persons and thus contributes to reduce poverty. Several examples can be found. Podlaskie Voivodeship OP (PL) pays attention to improving skills matching. Aragon OP (ES) aims to stimulate the competitiveness of regional productive fabrics to achieve the dynamism of economic activity and, ultimately, to resume the path of job creation. France also has several examples: the Basse Normandie OP pays attention to the adaptation of training content to the skills demanded by the supply of new services; the Haute Normandie OP has a clear sectoral development perspective of the regional economy; the Martinique OP makes a good use of regional climate and natural resources to develop high quality services for the elderly, thus combining employment creation with well-being objectives. The OP of Employment Austria (AT) pays attention to improving the skills and qualifications of regional staff and adapting vocational training programmes to the needs of the region's economy, especially in the area of intelligent specialisation of the region.

Technological change often plays a guiding role for these OPs. **Technologic innovations** shape the opportunities for regional development as well as the skills that are needed. Thus, a higher or lower degree of future technologic perspective can be found across these OPs. The Limousin OP (FR) aims to increase the number of innovative projects developed by companies within a strategy of supporting the regional ecosystem of innovation. The Bayern OP (DE) pays attention to the adaptation of skilled workers to the labour market of the future, as well as to Work 4.0¹³. The País Vasco OP (ES) focuses on the development of high-tech local companies through the labour market insertion of qualified professionals to enhance local development. Pays de la Loire OP (FR) organises an immersive and experiential exhibition "# 2038" on the evolution of trades in society, which serves to advice workers to develop a training and a professional project.

In order to promote regional development, social innovation is also applied to develop new solutions that promote inclusive employment, work-life balance or new partnerships among agents in order to facilitate knowledge exchange (networks between universities and R&D departments in companies, for example). Moreover, in some OPs these strategies are combined with actions for the development of **entrepreneurship** and social economy, in some cases through a technological based approach. Castilla-La Mancha OP (ES) promotes entrepreneurship and self-employment in emerging sectors, such as those related to the environment, renewable energy and R&D, in close cooperation with the RIS3.

¹³ More information about Work 4.0 in Germany can be found at: <http://www.bmas.de/EN/Services/Publications/a883-white-paper.html>

3. **Participative and Open:** Another group of OP focuses on providing local communities the chance to identify needs, design solutions and implement projects. This approach is close to the second group identified through the cluster analysis. These OPs usually involve third sector or other local community organisations, developing often partnerships. For example, in Italy, the Abruzzo OP develops a new programming mode with the adoption of a participatory approach and a new way of managing social policies through social districts, who have also the possibility of experimenting new actions.
4. **Experimental:** Several OPs consider SI as purely experimental. Thus, pilot projects are carried out and their effects evaluated. Already mentioned examples of this type of OP can be found in the Baden Württemberg OP (DE) or in the West Wales and the Valleys and East Wales OPs (UK), where the SI approach of the OP is totally based on testing and scaling-up.
5. **Top-Down Social Innovation:** Several OPs focus on the implementation of innovative solutions that effectively respond to social needs, but the information regarding the participation of local communities or other agents in the definition of priorities or the design or implementation of solutions tends to be scarce. Thus, this approach should be observed carefully: no OP or AIR has explicitly stated to follow a top-down approach; it is rather the lack of information regarding the agents involved in the definition, design and implementation of actions that characterises this group.

This group is similar to the fourth group identified through the quantitative cluster analysis presented above. However, the defining feature of this group, top-down approach, is not exclusive and can indeed be found in other types of OPs. Several OPs that focus on the adaptation of training programmes to the needs shaped by regional development strategies do not state that their focus is the consequence of a participative and bottom-up approach. Several OPs that work on the strategies for regional development and technological innovation do not provide information regarding a participative approach to define the needs, design the actions or implement them. Examples can be found in France and Spain. Another example is the OP of Employment Austria (AT), already mentioned in group 2. Top-down approach does not necessarily mean lack of novelty or of social content of the actions. For example, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern OP (DE), promotes occupational mobility of women and men with child-raising or nursing tasks, family coaching projects and supports the inclusion in schools through training identified by teachers. Saarland OP (DE) conceived a Welcome Center for refugees and included actions about geriatric nursing education, with an expected impact especially for migrants. However, the available information does not suggest that these actions have been defined with a participative approach.

6. **Capacity building:** This group of OPs focuses its efforts on improving and developing the capabilities of local communities, public organisations, private companies and NGOs in the field of social innovation. These OPs invest in the possibility of developing more participative approaches in the future. The Germany Niedersachsen OP establishes regional offices for social innovation with the role to bring ideas from other countries and to support the preparation and dissemination of tested approaches. In Portugal, the Portuguese Social Innovation initiative aims to promote entrepreneurship and social innovation, as a way of generating solutions, in a logic complementary to the traditional answers, for the resolution of important societal problems. In Romania, Human Capital OP develops innovative ways of actively involving community members in actions, including ways to overcome moral, societal and ethical barriers. In Bulgaria, the OP of Good Governance supports the digitalisation of the public administration with the purpose

of facilitating the participation of citizens and the organisation of e-learning solutions for public service workers. In Italy, Bolzano OP includes actions for skills training to develop innovative design ideas, in particular, in emerging sectors such as the green economy, strengthening the innovative capacities of stakeholders. In some cases, capacity building is put into action through the support of social entrepreneurship. An example is the OP of Growth and Employment in Latvia, where a partnership was created to support the capacities of social entrepreneurs. In other cases, capacity building actions are combined with concrete social innovation projects. An example of this mixed approach is the Knowledge Education Growth OP (PL).

- 7. Transversal approach:** Finally, a last type of OP identified are those which implement SI transversally in all OP actions. One example of this are the OPs of Malta and Luxembourg, where additional points are given to projects of all OP actions that take into account a social innovation approach and justify it adequately.

3.3 Analysis of E-Survey

An E-Survey has been carried out to complement the analysis of quantitative indicators and the mapping of SI actions through the OPs and the AIRs. The purpose of the E-Survey is to collect relevant information that might not be present in these sources. The E-Survey has been sent to all MAs to be responded for each OP of the ESF 2014-2020. Competent Managing Authorities of 30 OPs from 15 MS have responded to it. The following table shows which Member States have responded to the E-Survey and the number of OPs covered by the responses given.

Table 7. Countries that have responded to the e-survey and number of OPs covered

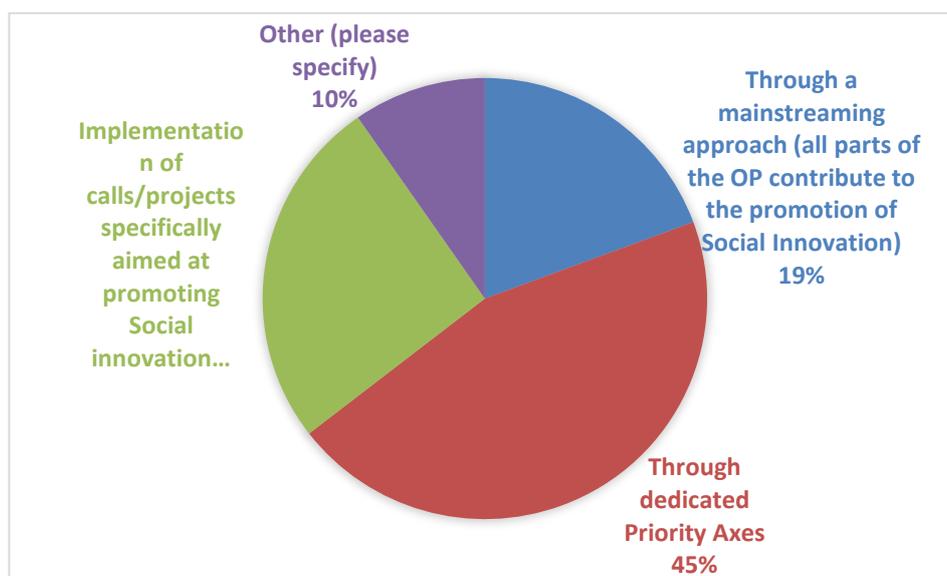
MS	Nr. of OPs
Germany	5
Portugal	4
Hungary	3
Poland	3
Spain	3
Italia	2
Finland	2
Austria	1
Bulgaria	1
Cyprus	1
Denmark	1
France	1
Latvia	1
Luxembourg	1
Sweden	1
Total	30

Source: E-Survey.

As it has been mentioned throughout this report, that there are several ways to implement SI actions within the ESF context. The main approach adopted among the responding OPs is that of dedicated PAX; this means that these OPs are over represented among respondents. However, the remaining categories account for a relevant share of responses (see Graph 8). This illustrates the diversity of the approaches adopted to promote SI within the ESF, a factor which enhances its complexity.

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Graph 8. E-Survey Question "What is the approach adopted to promote Social Innovation?"



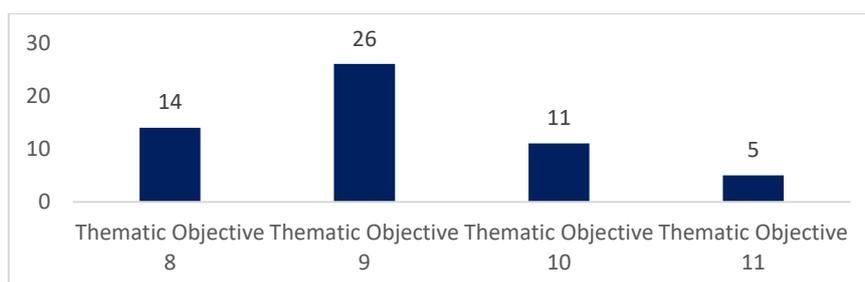
Source: E-Survey. Other categories refer to the fact that Social Innovation is not directly promoted but elements of social innovations are developed in some projects, or that the mainstreaming approach is limited to some parts of the OP, rather than to all parts of the OP.

E-Survey responses are analysed following the structure of the conceptual framework. Thus, the sections similar to the dimensions of the Operative Matrix (Needs, Novelty, Partnerships, etc.) serve to shape the E-Survey analysis.

Needs

Thematic Objectives of the ESF have a sound relevance in terms of social needs. Most of the OPs (93,1%) included in the E-Survey include SI actions that are relevant for at least one Thematic Objective. Indeed, almost half of the OPs (48,3%) targeted more than one Thematic Objective. Among all OPs the most frequently targeted TO has been TO9, about Social Inclusion.

Graph 9. E-Survey Question "Which are the main Thematic Objectives targeted by Social innovation?". Number of OPs that target the following TO. Total answers 29 OPs. OPs targeting at least one TO: 27.

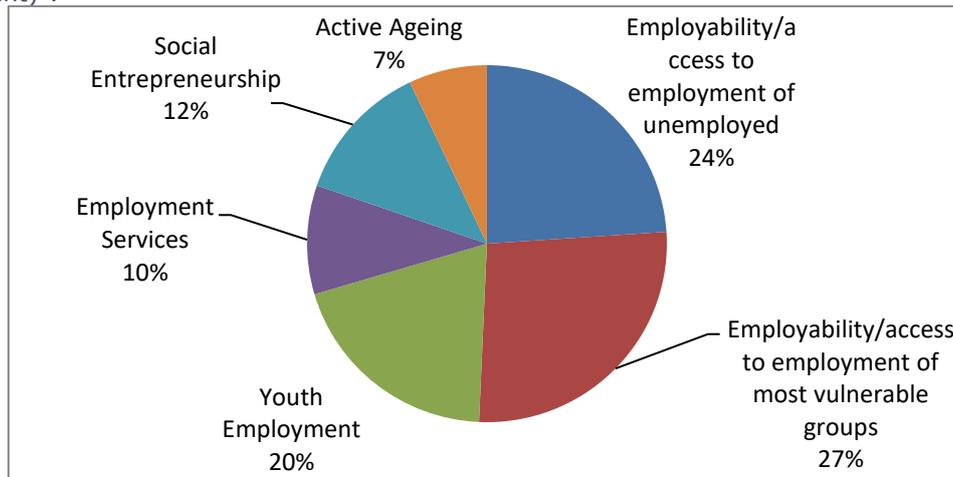


Source: E-Survey. Note: All the OPs that targeted TO11 also targeted TO8, TO9 or TO10.

Beyond the TOs, most of the OPs (82,8%) address needs related to Employability/Access to Employment through their Social innovation initiatives. Among these a wide diversity of needs has been addressed. The most frequently targeted are employability and access to employment of most vulnerable groups (27%) and of unemployed (24%).

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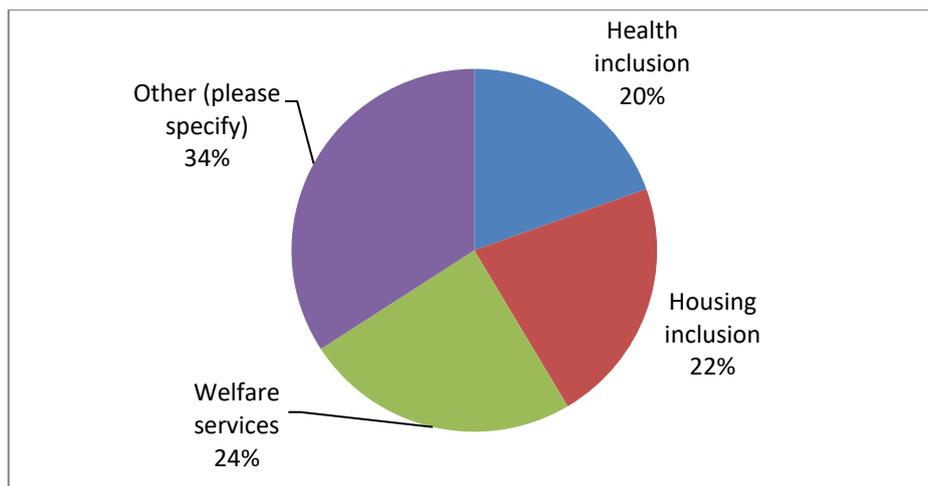
Graph 10. E-Survey Question "What specific needs are addressed? (Needs related to Employability/Access to Employment)".



Source: E-Survey.

Similarly, most of the OPs address needs related to Social Inclusion (89,7% of OPs) within their SI actions. Among the concrete needs addressed, a balanced distribution can be observed.

Graph 11. E-Survey Question "What specific needs are addressed? (Needs related to Social Inclusion)".

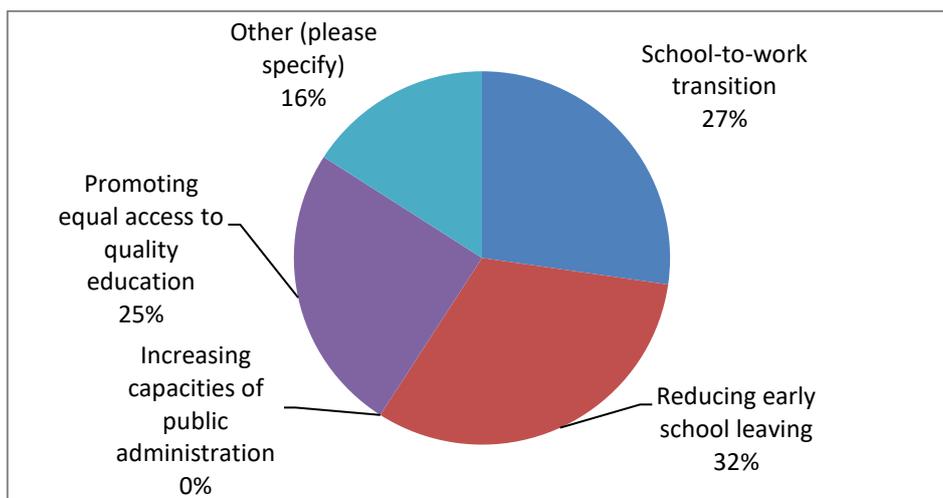


Source: E-Survey.

Finally, most of OPs address needs related to Education and Training (72,4% of OPs), although to a lesser extent than the previous two groups. Among the concrete needs of this group, the reduction of early school leaving is the most frequent one, followed by school-to-work transition (27%) and promoting equal access to quality education (25%).

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Graph 12. E-Survey Question "What specific needs are addressed? (Needs related to Education and Training)".

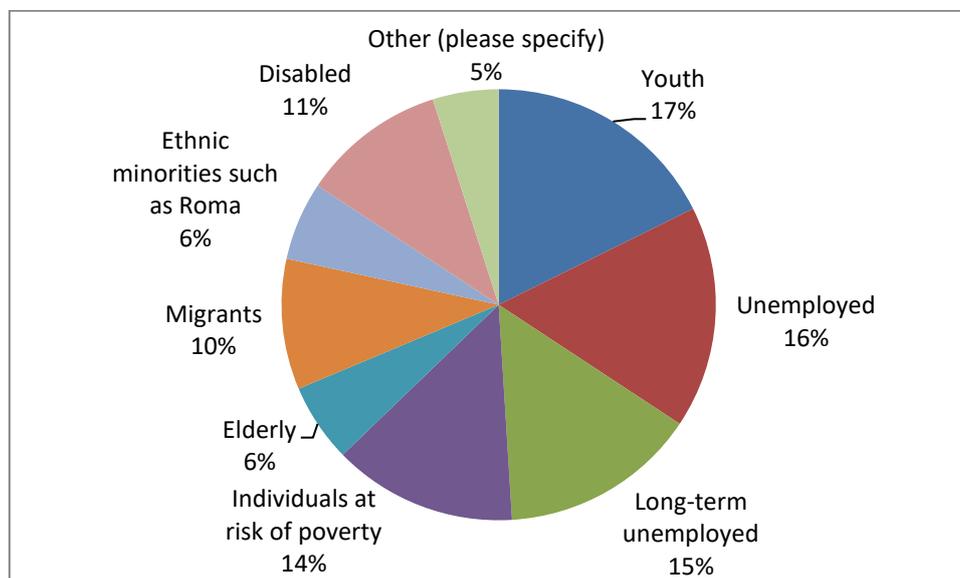


Source: E-Survey.

Finally, just 24,1% of the OPs address needs related to increasing capacities of public administration through their SI actions (E-Survey question).

E-Survey also provides information about the focus on specific **vulnerable groups**. In this sense a clear choice cannot be observed. Instead, SI actions are not targeted to one concrete vulnerable group, but they seem rather to be diversified into many.

Graph 13. E-Survey Question "Which are the main target groups covered by Social innovation initiatives in the OP?".



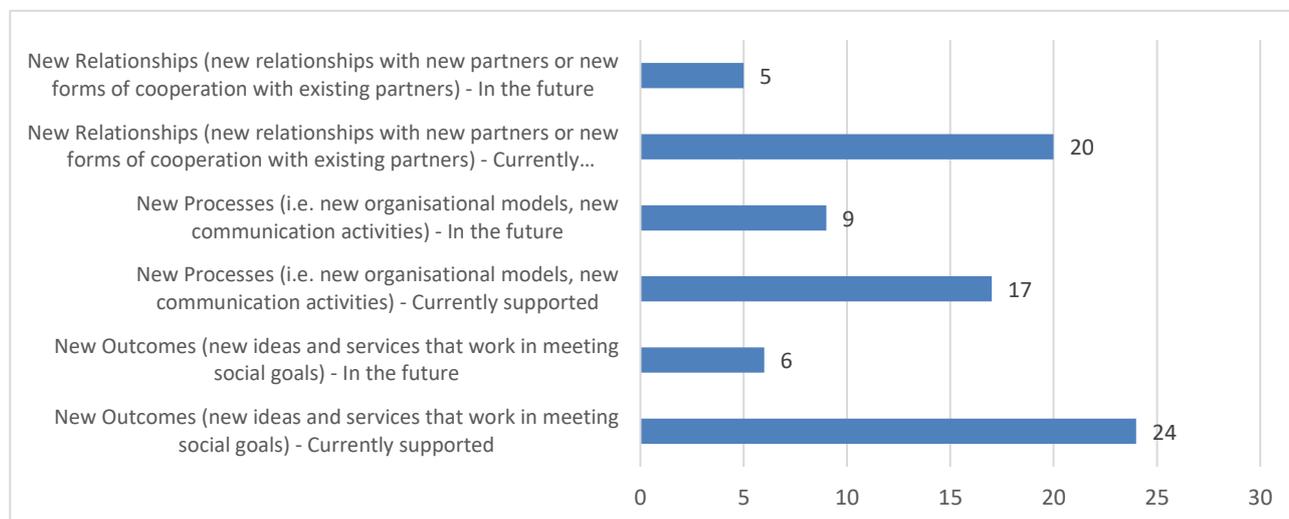
Source: E-Survey. The category "Other" includes to: women; pupils; homeless persons; and disadvantaged people living in less developed regions.

Novelty

Novelty is an essential feature of SI. It can be applied to several fields (relationships, processes, outcomes). Most of the OPs focus their SI actions on developing new outcomes. To a less extent novelty of SI actions is based on new relationships with new partners or new forms of cooperation with existing partners, or on new processes. However, E-Survey results point that new processes will be the type of novelty more developed in the future.

Moreover, most of OPs combine at least two types of novelty in their SI actions. Concretely, 26,9% of the OPs develop one novelty, 23,1% of them two novelties and 50% three novelties.

Graph 14. E-Survey Question "Which of the following innovations is the ESF OP supporting or planning to support in relation to Social Innovation, if any?".



Source: E-Survey.

The **main novelties** planned or developed by the OPs, as described by respondents to the E-Survey, are presented next:

Employment and Employability:

- **Building of partnerships** among local stakeholders, elaborating new organisational models in favour of supporting long term employment of unemployed people (HU).
- **New ways of reaching out to unemployed persons, NEETs and migrants** (FI).
- Increasing the employability of the designated target groups on a **case-by-case basis**, by reducing individual barriers to employment. Thus, in addition to professional qualification and experience, personal and environmental factors are also taken into account (DE).
- **Assisted employment** as a new tool for integrating long-term unemployed into the labour market (DE).
- Support the development of **social entrepreneurship** to identify and test the optimal solutions to social enterprise creation and to improve the employability of people at risk of social exclusion (LV).
- Support initiatives of **Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship** that: focus on a social mission, seeking to solve important and neglected problems of society; are innovative because they are pioneers at a global or national level; have a model that can be systematised and replicated in a broader context, given the nature of the problem they address and the solution they propose; seek to measure and validate their impact in order to continually improve performance and mobilise more resources; adopt implementation strategies with mechanisms that promote economic sustainability, through efficient resource mobilisation, revenue generation, or savings in public expenditure (PT).
- A Comprehensive **Active Aging Strategy for Longer and Better Working Lives** (LV).
- **Innovative methodologies and pilot projects, to facilitate the labour insertion** of NEETs or long-term unemployed in rural areas and strategic sectors (ES).
- **Collective and alternative model of integrated itineraries** for employment (ES).
- Bring marginalised unemployed persons closer to the labour market by providing **flexible, alternative job offers**, either as lasting jobs or as skills-enhancement processes, such as on-the-job training (DK).

Some examples of actions focused on work-life balance:

- New forms of provision and **flexible use of services for early childhood** (family nests, play areas, etc.), also in reference to opening hours and periods (IT).
- Implementation of **service vouchers**, designed to favour work-life balance. Greater access to the network of socio-educational services, home health and day-care services, and increase of the quality of the services provided (IT).

Social Inclusion:

- Systematic use of **multi-professional take-back models** for the social-working inclusion of people with disabilities / vulnerable people (assessment of the person in different dimensions, personalized design for the activation of inclusive routes) (IT).
- Develop and **pilot innovative solutions to the local needs** by identifying problems in local society, compensating the disadvantages of the population's social situation and territorial features. Due attention is paid to innovative solutions in the field of social care systems (HU).
- Development of **pilot projects for local development**, involving the agents relevant to the socio - economic and labour integration of marginal communities, such as Roma (ES).
- Improve the social and labour insertion of people at risk of exclusion through the **experimentation of new methodologies of socio-labour itineraries** linked to the labour market in the digital era (ES).
- Promote the **labour market integration of victims of domestic violence or vulnerable women in shelters** (DE).

Education:

- **Several innovations** in educational actions for social inclusion: principle of positive discrimination, holistic approach, partnerships, supporting, individual and social skills development, afternoon creative work and remedial teaching programmes, Information and Psychosocial Support Centres (CY).
- Create a **nursery innovation network** that will help to coordinate better nursery activities and share knowledge between institutions involved in disadvantaged children (HU).
- Develop a **pilot project to serve people with dual pathologies (mental illness and or drug addiction)** to train them and orient them towards a socio-labour insertion (ES).
- **Build a partnership** between local authorities, schools and families to promote school success (PT).
- **Pupil and parent mentors** support to students and their parents in schools in districts with special development needs (DE).
- Support to schools to set up structures to **enable young people with disabilities to participate** in the overall school-to-work transition system (DE).

Partnerships and engagement of different actors.

The participation of different actors is an essential feature of SI that enables an open and bottom-up approach and develops the social mission and methodology dimensions (see methodology section). The participation of several actors often requires the creation of partnerships and a multi-stakeholder governance. All E-Survey respondents answered that their SI actions rely on the engagement and commitment of different actors in order to achieve the social mission.

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Table 8. E-Survey Question "Does Social innovation promoted by your OP rely on the engagement and commitment of different actors in order to achieve its social mission?".

Answers	Percentage
Yes, to a large extent	35,7%
Yes, to some extent	64,3%
Only to a small extent	0,0%
Don't know	0,0%
Total	0,0%

Source: E-Survey.

At the same time, the participation of new actors is in some cases a form of novelty itself, while in others it is a requirement to set up a new process. In other words, SI in the ESF is also a way of creating new relationships. Almost 3 out of 4 E-Survey respondents answered that the ESF OP succeeded in promoting/fostering new relationships.

Table 9. E-Survey Question "In your view, has the ESF OP for which you are managing authority succeeded in promoting/fostering new relationships (establishment of cooperation between labour market actors/involvement of stakeholders in the design of services, public-private cooperation)?".

Answers	Percentage
Yes, to a large extent	21,4%
Yes, to some extent	57,1%
Only to a small extent	10,7%
Don't know	7,1%
Other (please specify)	3,6%
Total	100,0%

Source: E-Survey.

Testing and Accountability

Testing is at the core of social innovation. SI involves experimenting new approaches that should be tested to assess its results before the innovations are scaled-up. As discussed above, this element is very close to the accountability dimension, in particular with the element "metrics of evaluation". All E-Survey respondents answered that they evaluate or plan to evaluate the ESF OP activities relevant to Social Innovation.

Table 10. E-Survey Question "Did you evaluate or do you plan to evaluate the ESF OP activities relevant to Social Innovation?".

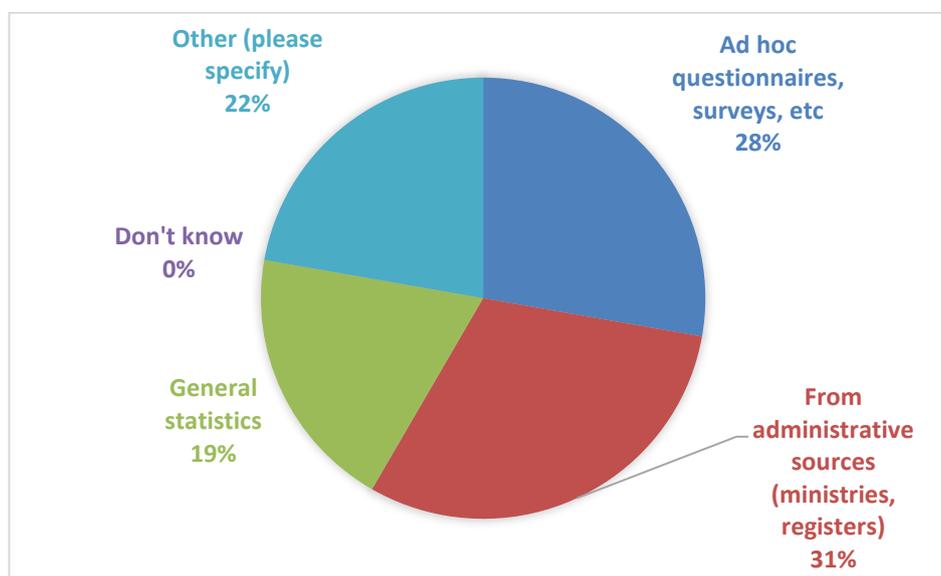
Answers	Percentage
Yes	75,0%
Don't know	25,0%
No	0,0%
Total	100,0%

Source: E-Survey.

According to E-Survey respondents, a wide variety of sources is used to monitor or evaluate ESF OP activities relevant to Social Innovation. Ad hoc questionnaires, surveys and administrative sources are the most frequent sources of evaluation. Other sources include interviews or ESF

common indicators. In some cases, the collection of data for the monitoring and evaluation of the activities is performed in a continuous basis.

Graph 15. E-Survey Question "What data sources are you using, in addition to ESF mandatory data, in order to monitor and/or evaluate ESF OP activities relevant to Social Innovation?".



Source: E-Survey.

The performance and results of Social Innovation is evaluated using adequate metrics according to half of the E-Survey respondents. However, at the same time half of them report the opposite or a lack of certainty about this issue. Indeed, the mapping of OPs and AIRs (see section above) showed that the accountability dimension was weaker than other dimensions.

Table 11. E-Survey Question "A key feature of Social Innovation is testing innovative solutions and evaluating them in view of upscaling them. Is the performance and results of Social Innovation evaluated using adequate metrics (i.e. number of applications, survival rate of ventures, gender balance of supported individuals, etc.)?".

Answers	Percentage
Yes	46,4%
Don't know	35,7%
No	17,9%
Total	100,0%

Source: E-Survey.

Regarding the metrics used, the E-Survey respondents provided some examples.

- Number of participants who have a job, even self-employed, within six months after the end of their participation in the intervention (IT)
- Success rate of integration into the labour market of Long term unemployed and young people; number of apprenticeships for young people; number of people integrated into the labour market (DE).
- Number of projects for social innovation and transnational cooperation; six months after the end of the programme, the number of active co-operations between organisations; number of innovations for methods and tools; specialists trained in the project for adaptation of the innovation methodology; number of workshops targeting innovation; number of contact service meetings with target group members; or number of children involved in innovation activity (HU).

- Number of participants in situation or risk of exclusion; number of entities that will participate in the development of protocols / instruments / methodologies for participatory local development (ES)
- Number of participants at risk of exclusion who have been integrated into the training / education systems, have obtained a job or obtain a qualification after their participation; Entities that have adopted innovative methodologies, tools or devices will be computed (ES)
- Number of social economy creation projects (ES), number of social economy entities that work for the social and labour integration of groups at risk of inclusion have been created (ES).
- Jobs created that remain 12 months after the end of support, reduction of retention and dropout rate in the schools involved (PT), reduction of the percentage of students with negative levels (PT).
- When beneficiaries apply to the ESF they shall provide information on how they will measure the operation impact and validate such impact (PT).

Follow up

The sustainability of actions is not that developed as other dimensions. Only 14,3% of respondents answered that Social Innovation actions funded by their OP will be continued after the end of the ESF contribution to a large extent while around half of them answered that to some extent. These results are similar to the findings already described in the mapping section above.

Table 12. E-Survey Question "To what extent Social Innovation actions funded by your OP will be continued after the end of the ESF contribution?".

Answers	Percentage
Yes, to a large extent	14,3%
Yes, to some extent	53,6%
Only to a small extent	7,1%
Don't know	25,0%
Total	100,0%

Source: E-Survey.

Diffusion of actions can be considered as more developed, although with scope for improvement. According to E-Survey respondents, most of the OPs (around two thirds) implement or plan to implement activities of visibility and communication of Social Innovation actions. The following examples of visibility and communication actions have been reported by E-Survey respondents:

- Organisation of seminars and presentations, workshops and participation in forums, (IT, ES, PT, DE, HU).
- Descriptions of projects on the website of the MA and IBs or through social media (FI, ES, PT, HU).
- Presentation of the results of interventions and / or individual projects that contribute to the development of social innovation processes (IT).
- A specific information campaign with flyers and posters in offices about the home healthcare services for non self-sufficient elderly (IT).
- Publicity campaigns to raise public awareness concerning social entrepreneurship (LV).

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Table 13. E-Survey Question "Do you implement/plan to implement activities of visibility and communication of Social Innovation actions?".

Answers	Percentage
Yes	67,9%
Don't know	17,9%
No	14,3%
Total	100,0%

Source: E-Survey.

EQUAL roots

As mentioned above, there is a connection between the former EQUAL Initiative and SI. Most of the E-Survey respondents are aware of the functioning and objectives of the EQUAL Initiative. At the same time, there is no consensus among respondents as to whether EQUAL was better designed for promoting Social innovation, compared to ESF in the current programming period.

Table 14. E-Survey Question "Are you aware of the functioning and objectives of the EQUAL Initiative?".

Answers	Percentage
Yes	66,7%
Don't know	13,3%
No	20,0%
Total	100,0%

Source: E-Survey.

Table 15. E-Survey Question "Do you think that EQUAL was better designed for promoting Social innovation, compared to ESF in the current programming period?"

Answers	Percentage
Yes	33,3%
Don't know	28,6%
No	38,1%
Total	100,0%

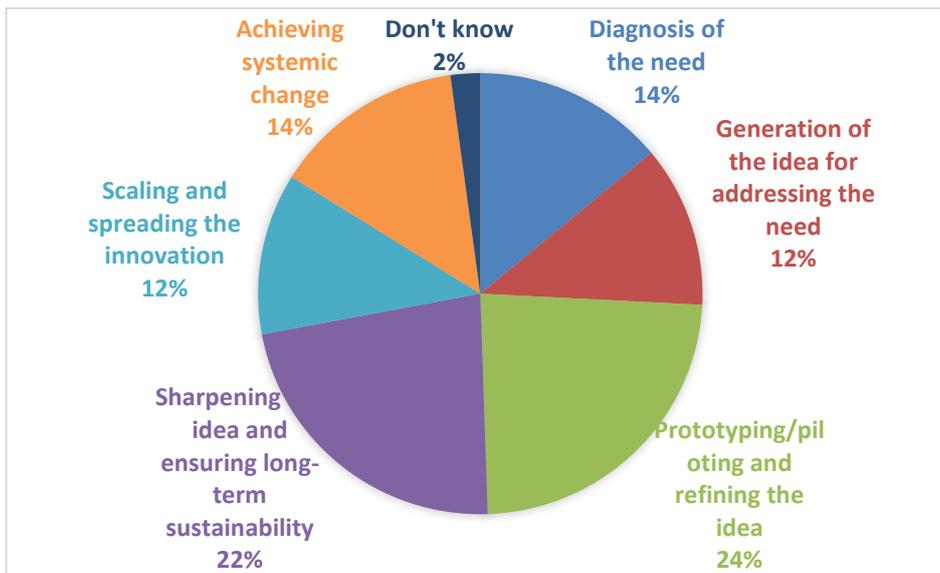
Source: E-Survey.

Multi-Stage Process

In the Methodology presented in Chapter 2, SI dimensions were synthesised into a Multi-Stage Process, composed by six steps. These steps are shown in the graph below together with the share of respondents who affirm that their respective OPs follow one or several steps. As it can be seen, the steps of "Prototyping/piloting and refining the idea" and "Sharpening the idea and ensuring long-term sustainability" are the most commonly mentioned, gathering 46% of the responses.

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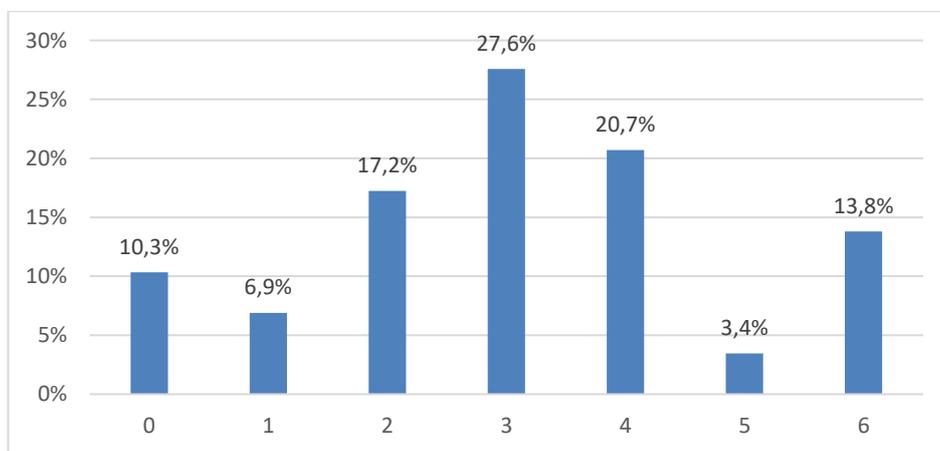
Graph 16. E-Survey Question "Which of the following stages of Social Innovation is supported through the ESF OP you are responding for?".



Source: E-Survey.

However, the whole multi-stage process is only followed by a minority. The share of respondents that follow 5 or 6 stages does not reach 20%. In contrast, the majority of OPs lay between the 2-4 stages range.

Graph 17. From the E-Survey Question "Which of the following stages of Social Innovation is supported through the ESF OP you are responding for?", percentage of respondents by number of stages responded.



Source: E-Survey.

4 Case studies

In order to provide a more in-depth and concrete analysis of how Social innovation is programmed and implemented across the MS a series of case studies have been carried out. The selection of Member States has been made applying the following two criteria:

- Ensuring geographic and types of region coverage,
- Ensuring adequate representativeness of the different level of “maturity” in Social Innovation and in managing the European Social Fund.

The selection of Member States ensures an adequate geographic coverage:

- Northern Europe is represented by Sweden,
- Central Europe is represented by Germany,
- Western Europe is represented by Belgium-Flanders,
- Central-Eastern Europe is represented by Poland,
- Southern Europe is represented by Italy,
- South-West Europe is represented by Portugal.

As explained below, the sample ensures the coverage in terms of level of maturity and approaches to Social Innovation.

Belgium -Flanders, has interesting experiences in Social Innovation despite initiatives being fragmented. As a matter of fact there are several initiatives, especially in Flanders, that promote, guide and support social and societal innovative concepts through networking organisations.¹⁴

Germany has a long-standing experience in the field of Social Innovation in general and within ESF. Over time Social Innovation acquired a high political relevance; as a matter of fact, in 2013 Social Innovation was incorporated in the coalition agreement between the two governing parties. Social innovation is a way to systematically develop solutions to social problems with the perspective of social changes with the involvement of welfare organisations and social enterprises. Germany is considered, among practitioners and academics¹⁵, the leader of the technology based social innovation as the focus of start-up funding in Germany lies in “innovative technology-based ideas”. It is also worth noting that the ESF significantly contributes to the further development of Social Innovation: for the ESF programming period 2014-2020, funding of around EUR 800 million is earmarked in the 17 German Operational Programmes for Social Innovation (total budget for Germany: EUR 7,5 billion).

Italy can provide an interesting example for assessing integration of SI within the ESF: its social welfare system historically relies on the active participation of the third sector in providing social services; and is characterised by obstacles related to the lack of private finance and, more broadly, in the lack of a national, innovative approach due to the long and rooted Italian tradition of limiting social problems within specific and conventionally shaped boundaries.¹⁶

¹⁴ Information on the potential of Social Innovation in Belgium can be found at: https://www.siceurope.eu/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/social_innovation_in_belgium_2016_0.pdf.

¹⁵ See: i) Tuyet Ngo and Norbert Kunz, Social Innovation in Germany, available at https://www.siceurope.eu/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/social_innovation_in_germany_2016.pdf ii) Dennis Hoenig-Ohnsorg, Germany Named #1 Country for Social Innovation, 2017. iii) Information on the potential of Social Innovation in Germany can be found at: <https://www.siceurope.eu/countries/germany>.

¹⁶ Information on the potential of Social Innovation in Italy can be found at: https://www.siceurope.eu/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Social%20Innovation%20in%20Italy%20%282011%29_0.pdf.

Poland became a full member of the EU in 2004, it is thus relatively new to ESF implementation yet showing a dynamic and innovative approach to its implementation. Since 2009 the Polish government has recognised the important role of social entrepreneurship in the reduction of unemployment and in sustainable development. As a result, this sphere of activity has gained support within national and regional structural programmes financed by the European Social Fund.¹⁷

Portugal has a long standing tradition in developing Social Innovation approaches. In 2010, the sector included 50.000 organisations (associations, cooperatives, foundations and mutual funds) and represented 200.000 jobs. Social Innovation is characterised by many exchanges and collaborations and a large variety of actors (public institutions, associations, companies, foundations, patrons, educators etc).¹⁸

Sweden is adopting a social innovation perspective in innovation policy and research has the potential to open up for more inclusive policies, processes, networks, and innovation research. Sweden's long tradition of analysing gender patterns in society and organizations can easily become a frontrunner in the discipline. Furthermore, the national Swedish OPs adopts the CLLD approach and it would provide an interesting example of how such approach can be conducive to Social innovation.¹⁹

The exact OPs to be covered by case studies/interviews have been selected on the basis of the mapping exercise and in agreement with DG EMPL²⁰.

MS	Operational Programme(s)
BE	ROP Flanders
DE	NOP at the federal level, ROP Lower Saxony, ROP Bavaria, ROP Brandenburg
IT	NOP Metropolitan Cities, ROP Piedmont
PL	NOP Knowledge, Education and Growth
PT	NOP Social Inclusion and Employment, NOP Human Capital
SE	NOP ESF for investments in growth and employment 2014 – 2020, OP ESF/ERDF Community-led local development programme

In the following sections we present the main findings derived from the Case studies, while in Annex 6.2 we present a more detailed overview of analysed interventions.

4.1 Belgium-Flanders: the Flanders ESF OP

4.1.1 Introduction to the case study

The Flemish ESF OP aims to complement the existing Flemish employment and social inclusion initiatives and encourage innovative social measures and transnational cooperation. It focuses on TO8 - Employment and labour market, TO9 - Social inclusion and TO10 - Education and training and supports a number of focused actions that target entrepreneurship, the social

¹⁷ Information on the potential of Social Innovation in Poland can be found at: <https://www.siceurope.eu/countries/poland/profile>

¹⁸ Information on the potential of Social Innovation in Portugal can be found at: <https://www.siceurope.eu/countries/portugal>

¹⁹ Information on the potential of Social Innovation in Sweden can be found at: <https://www.siceurope.eu/countries/sweden>

²⁰ As pointed out in the introduction section, field research activities (namely interviews with MAs and stakeholders for case studies) are still being finalised. Consequently, the case study analysis presents a first substantive body of information that will be complemented, triangulated and finalised in the Final report.

economy, poorly-skilled young people and the Roma population. The programme is endowed with EUR 1.024.665.509 in total with total EU contribution equal to EUR 398.502.847.

There are several priorities in the ESF OP for Flanders:

- Promoting projects for sustainable, high-quality jobs and worker mobility; and investing in education, training and lifelong learning. These areas attract some 60% of total funding and complement the Flemish career management policy which seeks a more effective labour market.
- Some 20% of funding supports social inclusion, equality and anti-poverty projects. Projects target the pathways into work and society for the most at-risk groups, such as Roma people.
- Structural measures to encourage older people to continue working, or take up a new job, are promoted at Federal and Flemish levels. ESF projects for 'active ageing' complement these, helping companies create attractive environments for older workers.

In addition, the ESF drives existing efforts for transnational cooperation and innovation – further developing and professionalising these priority activities.

4.1.2 Overview of selected ESF OP and how SI is programmed in the OP

The approach of the Flanders ESF OP to social innovation is twofold: on the one hand, it dedicates a specific PAX 5 to "Social innovation and transnationality", endowed with EUR 58,8 million, which makes 4,7% of total OP budget. 5/9 of the PAX budget is allocated to SI activities and the remaining 4/9 to transnational activities. Additionally, on the other hand, it invests in people entrepreneurship, with activities that involve as well social innovation, changes in companies' labour organisation addressing the need that Human Resources departments have to evolve to strategic thinking, etc.

4.1.3 Short description of the SI PAX foreseen/funded

Within the double approach described above, social innovation projects are promoted under 4 types of calls, with an expected amount of 80 projects funded during the current programming period:

1. **"Innovation through experimentation"**, where organisations in a **first phase** are given the opportunity to investigate a social challenge, which today does not have an appropriate answer to, and to define a response to this challenge that needs to **be based on a partnership**. Final beneficiaries are asked to develop within 9 months an innovative concept and are supported and trained by ESF OP on how to address social innovation. After these 9 months, a set of experts formed by peers, university, PES or education experts validate this innovative concept or not. In the cases where the concept is validated, then in a second phase further funding and assistance are allocated to piloting the concept for 15 months. After these 15 months, a final validation exercise is facilitated by the OP and additional budget is granted for transferring and disseminating the knowledge acquired.
2. **"Innovation through adaptation"**, where organisations depart from an already developed concept of service. In the second phase, the innovative solution in the form of a new service is being developed and iteratively tested by means of prototypes.
3. **"Organise differently"**, with the aim to improve the workability of jobs in Flanders by encouraging organisations to organise work in a different way. Profit or not-for-profit organisations with more than 20 employees that opt for this call shall aim to set up a different structure of division of labour that gives employees more autonomy, gives them a look at the larger picture, gives less stress and at the same time makes the organisation

more agile. A project starts by carrying out a process analysis to map the current structure of labour division and the resulting workability problems. On the basis of this analysis, a redesign will be drawn up together with the employees and possibly an external consultant. In carrying out the process analysis and in drawing up the redesign, the principles of innovative labour organisation and self-management must be taken into account. The redesign is then (possibly partly or as a pilot) implemented in the organisation. Parallel to this process, a system is developed to support the front-line managers in this new situation. In a final phase of the project, efforts can be made to fine tuning the structure and the team design.

Under this call, both an organisations' surveys and an employees' surveys are organised. These surveys are carried out each time within 3 months of the start (measurement) and after the project ends.

4. **"Integrated strategic and sustainable career policy"**, projects within this call aim to improve the workability of jobs on the Flemish labour market by introducing a sustainable career policy at the organisational level. A sustainable career policy can lead to a win-win situation for both employee and organisation. On the one hand, this policy creates meaningful and workable careers for employees so that they can continue to work longer and more motivated. On the other hand, the policy is aimed at ensuring the continuity of the organisation. Organisations are therefore encouraged to implement policy instruments and systems that benefit the sustainability of careers for both employees and organisations, so that the highest possible level of employment can be achieved in Flanders²¹. An organisations' monitoring survey is organised by ESF OP.

The monitoring indicators for the projects under the calls for "Innovation through experimentation" and "Innovation through adaptation" are the number of projects validated (with a target of 80 over the programming period) and the success rate, measured as the number of projects that are validated after the first research phase of 9 months and/or after the second piloting phase of 15 months (with a target set at 25%).

The assessment mechanisms for the projects under the calls "Organise differently" and "Integrated strategic and sustainable career policy" take the form of organisations' and employees' surveys in the organisations that have developed the project. There is a maximum subsidy of EUR 80.000 per project. The total call budget for the calls 'Integrated strategic and Sustainable career policy' and 'Organise differently' is EUR 10.000.000.

4.1.4 Main findings

The mission of ESF understood by ESF MA is to promote and reinforce innovation and to update the labour market and employment policy constantly with the longer-term vision put in 5 to 10 years and helping now people who live in the EU and across borders on employment issues. Experimentation and cooperation are crucial aspects of the ESF mission.

Main success factors identified:

1. **Political support:** Parallel with a bottom-up approach, allowing and promoting participation and co-creation, political will and support is also needed for sound social innovation programmes to be designed and implemented. This requires that policy makers acknowledge and are convinced of the need of changing the way policies are made, thus the need to innovate.

²¹ <https://www.esf-vlaanderen.be/project/oproepen>

2. Closely related with the first success factor is **the need to show the advantages of innovation**. Great efforts are needed to systematically and rigorously assess and show the results of participation co-creation and joint delivery of policies, the results of social innovation.
3. **Good partnerships**: as stated by the interviewee, innovation is a partnership issue. It needs to be accepted that solving some problems cannot be done alone. Partnerships cover each other's weaknesses and strengths; they come to different solutions and can overcome obstacles that sole actors cannot. Whereas official institutions are needed, the creativity and independency of NGOs are also a must.

Developing and working in partnerships takes time and needs a culture of dialogue to be able to work on consensus basis and to find compromises. When building partnerships with potential final beneficiaries, the need to build mutual trust is high, since beneficiaries are in the majority of the cases those implementing the work in ESF funded projects.
4. **Highly trained, motivated** and enthusiastic in-house staff are also a valuable condition to succeed in social innovation. **Strong training policy** specifically on social innovation for MA SI projects managers as well as for beneficiaries is highly recommendable. Additionally, external experts may also be needed in many fields for which specialised knowledge is required.
5. Sufficient **financial resources**.
6. **Simple procedures** to simplify the lives of the beneficiaries (simplified costs)

Main risks and difficulties to face:

1. Social innovation implies new activities, processes and/or governance, it implies also experimentation and a risk that the expected results are not achieved. There is indeed a risk of disillusion when final beneficiaries have too high expectations and these are not fulfilled
2. Difficulty to find experts that support the MA work in the many fields where they are needed. They need to be motivated and available.
3. Difficulties in the piloting and implementation of very good theoretical concepts: there may be very good conceptual projects but whose piloting has not resulted in a similarly good practice and cannot therefore be scaled-up.
4. Partnership building takes time to talk and get to know to each other's different cultures and languages, which is inherent to social innovation processes and partnerships.
5. Social innovation faces both the risk of lack of creativity of many potential participants and faces also the risk of lack of persistence.

4.2 Germany: National and regional approach to Social Innovation

4.2.1 Introduction to the case study

The case study covers the Federal ESF OP as well as three regional OPs of Bavaria, Brandenburg and Lower Saxony. The latter three were selected on the basis of a mapping exercise.

In the 2014-2020 funding period, ESF funds totalling EUR 2.689.319.893 are available to the federal government, distributed as follows: More developed regions (72,2%) and Transition regions (27,8%). Compared to the funding period 2007-2013, the federal government now has a total of approx. 23% less ESF funds available.

For the Regional Operational Programmes a total of 297.878.586 euros of ESF funds are available to the Free State of Bavaria as a result of the federal-state negotiations. A total of 362,42 million euros are available for Brandenburg from ESF. This means a reduction of ESF funds to 58,4% compared to the 2007-2013 funding period. The focus of the Brandenburg ESF funding is placed on the TO 10 "Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning". This objective will absorb 57% of ESF funding. The financial envelope of Lower Saxony multi-fund Operational Programme for the ERDF and the ESF amounts to EUR 978,31 million EU funds. Of these, EUR 690,79 million are earmarked for the ERDF and EUR 287,52 million for the ESF. It is the only multi-fund programme in Germany.²²

4.2.2 Federal ESF OP – Short description of PAX/measures under which SI interventions are foreseen/funded

Total funding for social innovation is around 628 million euros. Social Innovation is foreseen in Priority Axes A "Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility", B „Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and all forms of discrimination" and C „Investment in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning".

Under PAX A "Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility": The Operational Programme contributes greatly to social innovation in the area of labour market and employment policy. The main goal is the testing of new innovative approaches in practice and the review of a possible integration into the rule support. In priority A, this is particularly evident in the innovative SME financing and in the partnership initiatives.

Under Priority Axis B, "Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and all forms of discrimination", the planned measures for particularly disadvantaged young people and young adults can be classified in a process of social innovation.

Priority Axis C "Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning": A particular contribution to social innovation is provided by the promotion of pilot projects that provide paid and adult-trained training for career changers or improve existing ones.

4.2.3 Operational Programme ESF Bayern 2014-2020 Overview of selected ESF OPs and how SI is programmed in the OP

For social innovation, 5% of the funding per Priority Axis (except technical assistance) is planned. Accordingly, social innovation is of particular importance in the context of the Operational Programme.

Social innovations according to Article 9 of the ESF Regulation has an important role to play in Priority Axis A on the promotion of sustainable and quality employment and support for labour mobility. Within Priority Axis B "Promoting Social Inclusion and Combating Poverty and All Discrimination", new solutions to reduce long-term unemployment will be developed. Priority Axis C "Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning" aims to plan and implement socially innovative measures that help to reduce early school leaving or improve access to education and training.

²² OP Niedersachsen EFRE-ESF 2014-2020

4.2.3.1 Short description of the SI PAX/measure(s) under which SI interventions are foreseen/funded

Since the beginning of the funding period and until the end of 2016, three calls for expressions of interest on various topics have been launched. The first call was launched on February 25, 2015. Topics of the first call were:

- Improving the vocational training of young people (Prio A)
- Skilled labour, adaptation, labour market of the future (Prio A)
- Combating poverty - opportunities for the long-term unemployed (Prio B)

The second call was launched on January 14, 2016 on the topics:

- Work 4.0 (Prio A)
- Labour market integration of long-term unemployed parents or single parents (Prio B)

The third call was launched on December 15, 2016, dedicated to the topic

- Work 4.0 (Prio A)

The selection of innovative measures was carried out by the Innovation Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Monitoring Committee. In Priority Axis A, a total of 11 projects with a total budget of around 6,2 million euros were approved by 2016. This corresponds to a share of 6,3% of the total authorized amount in Priority Axis A and 2,0% of the indicative funds planning for the entire funding period. In total, priority A promoted 3.109 participants in socially innovative projects.

Priority Axis B approved eight projects worth EUR 2,8 million. Measured by the total appropriations approved in the Priority Axis B up to 2016, this represents a share of 10,8%. This corresponds to a share of 1,8% in the indicative funds planning for the entire funding period. In total, Priority Axis B supported 413 participants. Priority C has not yet implemented social innovation projects.

The AIR, however, does not specify the actual projects it considers as social innovation projects. In annex some projects are listed that might qualify as social innovation according to the criteria mentioned in the AIR.²³

4.2.4 Operational Programme Brandenburg

4.2.4.1 Overview of selected ESF OPs and how SI is programmed in the OP

Brandenburg has a new status in the 2014-2020 EU funding period: formerly classified as Convergence region, the country is now a transition region. Therefore, EU funding for the country has decreased compared to the 2007-2013 funding period. A total of MEUR 362.42 are available for the ESF. That means a cut in ESF funding to 58%.

In the funding period 2014-2020, social innovations involving the economic and social partners shall be tested in order to initiate particularly innovative qualification and employment measures.

²³ <http://www.esf.bayern.de/projektbeispiele/index.php>

4.2.4.2 Description of the SI PAx/measure(s) under which SI interventions are foreseen/funded

In accordance with the provisions of the OP, measures to promote social innovation are bundled in Priority Axis E. Social Innovation. As an exception to the general structure of the OP, two investment priorities are dedicated to social innovation, one of which is assigned to Priority Axis A and the other to Priority Axis B:

- Adapting the workforce, companies and entrepreneurs to change, as well as
- Active inclusion, not least through the promotion of equal opportunities and active participation, and improved employability.

In 2016, the respective administrative preparations (funding directive) have been completed with the intention to start funding in 2017. According to interviews with competent people from other Federal States, Brandenburg can be considered as the second pioneer State regarding social innovation after Lower Saxony. While Lower Saxony focuses more on social services, the focus in Brandenburg is mostly on labour and employment.

4.2.5 Operational Programme Lower Saxony ERDF-ESF 2014-2020

4.2.5.1 Overview of selected ESF OP and how SI is programmed in the OP

The Lower Saxony programme integrates the objectives and priorities for ERDF and ESF and is therefore referred to as a multi-fund programme. The financial resources amount to MEUR 978.31 of EU funds. Of these, MEUR 690.79 are earmarked for the ERDF and MEUR 287.52 for the ESF.²⁴

Main reasons for the joint programme are²⁵:

- focus on the greatest possible thematic concentration of individual objectives and associated investment priorities;
- The multi-fund programme combines two target area or region categories according to Art. 82 of the ESI Regulation. The transition region Lüneburg (ÜR) and the rest of Lower Saxony as a more developed region (SER) statistically no longer completely depict the regional economic and demographic disparities existing in the country, so that an integrated approach is indicated by the multi-fund programme;
- Facilitation of cross-regional and cross-regional projects; also transnational projects in special cases;
- Facilitation of cross-thematic linking of individual ERDF and ESF programme areas, such as: supporting start-up support, securing skilled labour and - in the context of climate protection - green jobs. Synergies are expected that could not be achieved if implemented through Fund-specific OPs.

For social innovation, MEUR 16.6 are earmarked; 20% thereof for state offices and 80% for projects.²⁶

²⁴ https://www.europa-fuer-niedersachsen.niedersachsen.de/startseite/regionen_und_foerderung/efre_und_esf/das-multifondsprogramm-151599.html

²⁵ Multi-funds operational Programme of Lower Saxony, p. 1.

²⁶ <http://www.videliostreaming.com/SocialinnovEU/>

4.2.5.2 Description of the SI PAx/measure(s) under which SI interventions are foreseen/funded

Social innovation is programmed for the following Priority Axes:

- Priority Axis 6 - Promoting employment through gender equality and regional approaches to securing skilled labour
- Priority Axis 7 - Promoting employment and regional social service innovation
- Priority Axis 8 - Poverty reduction through active inclusion
- Priority Axis 9 - Investing in education, training and vocational training

Of particular relevance are the references to social innovation in PA 7 *"Promoting employment and regional social service innovation"*, which has a focus on the contributions of the Multifund Programme to the development of social innovation. The entire priority aims to develop social innovation in the context of managing change in enterprises and to develop innovative approaches to improving access to quality health and social services. The funding is aimed at the development and testing of model projects with the aim of transferring successful approaches to regulatory support. A central role is played by the newly established regional offices for social innovation. Their task is not only to carry impulses and ideas from other countries to Lower Saxony, but also to support the preparation and dissemination of the tried-and-tested approaches.

Social innovations also play an important role in the other three ESF priority axes:

- PA 6 *"Promoting employment through gender equality and regional approaches to securing skilled labour"* also contributes to the design of social innovation, as part of its potential relevance to PA 1 *"Promotion of Innovation"* by providing education and training systems to support innovation processes. On the other hand, special measures can be taken to facilitate women's access to R&D activities.
- The PA 8 *"Poverty Reduction through Social Inclusion"* enables the promotion of tackling topics that are particularly relevant to the development of social innovation. These include social inclusion, poverty reduction and labour market integration of target groups of multiple and often mutually reinforcing mediation barriers.
- PA 9 *"Investing in Education, Training and Vocational Training"*, in particular with the measure *"Innovative Education Projects in Initial Vocational Training"*, covers the promotion of strategic innovations in the field of lifelong learning, which offer great potential for the development and testing of social innovation.

During a telephone interview with the competent ministry involved in programming the OP, it was confirmed that social innovation is focused on the investment priorities

- 8 (v) Adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change
- 9 (iv) Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest.

Concerning a definition of Social Innovation, the ministry emphasises that it is about solving a social problem. Social added value must arise. Therefore, "new" does not have to be new; it can also mean "different than before". A service should be new, different, better than before; then it is innovative. As a second criterion, it also has to be sustainable and should not just rely on temporary subsidies. In this way, the approach of the Funding Directive is very broad. Funding is possible for everything that is innovative in these fields. This leads to a very broad setting of projects dealing with

- Labour market
- Refugees
- Supply in rural areas

The Funding Directive stipulates that the social partners must be involved in the implementation of the directive. Social partners are the collective bargaining partners (trade union and employers) as well as the social associations. In Germany, there is a particular structure with free social organisations, e.g. the Red Cross or the Workers' Welfare. The social partners are involved in the project development. They are actively looking for new ideas through their networks and organizations. In this way, a bottom-up approach is realised

4.2.6 Main findings

Overview

The Federal Operational Programme mainstreams Social Innovation under the following TO:

- Promoting sustainable employment;
- Social inclusion and combating poverty;
- Education and training.

Among the federal states under study, the Bavarian OP sees Social Innovation under

- Combating long-term unemployment;
- Combating early school leaving, improving access to education and training.

The Brandenburg OP, there is a special Priority Axis for Social Innovation which is open to all thematic objectives. Additionally, two investment priorities are mentioned:

- Adapting the workforce, companies and entrepreneurs to change;
- Active inclusion, not least through the promotion of equal opportunities and active participation, and improved employability.

The Lower Saxony OP focuses Social Innovation on

- Adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change;
- Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality health care and social services.

The choice of topics seems to reflect different situations of the three federal states. Whereas Brandenburg with its transition economy focuses on adapting its workforce and enterprises to a changing economic environment as well as on employability, Lower Saxony, besides adaptation to change, tackles the challenge of its rural areas with shrinking population and crumbling infrastructure. Bavaria, the richest of the German federal states, lays emphasis on the structural problems of long-term unemployment and lack of education.

SI measures cover a broad field of topics:

- Securing of skills
- Employment
- Start-ups
- Disadvantaged youth and refugees
- Education and training

During a conference, a representative of the Federal State of Lower Saxony mentioned three Social Innovation initiatives dealing with social and health services in challenged rural areas, the second of the above-mentioned priorities.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to receive a first-hand list of measures from Bavaria or Brandenburg. Whereas the Bavarian 2016 AIR mentions first calls in 2015 and 2016, the Brandenburg OP estimated the start of activities for 2017.

The inclusion of the social partners in the OPs were explicitly mentioned in the Federal OP as well as for all three regional OPs. This was to be expected in a country with strong traditions of social partnership like Germany.

Bottom-up approaches are explicitly mentioned in the OPs at the Federal level and of Lower Saxony. In these two cases, the interviews held confirmed the emphasis laid on this approach.

Lessons learned and feedback

For the lessons learned, the interviews focused on two issues, the definition of Social Innovation and challenges of practical implementation of Social Innovation projects within the ESF OPs.

Concerning the **definition of Social Innovation**, two features were pointed out

- Social Innovation **does not require strictly new solutions**. With such a strict definition, almost no projects could be called innovative. Also, services carried out in a new way different than before or with better quality fall into this category. Solutions already implemented in another region and taken over qualify for being innovative, too.
- The **partnership approach is crucial**. On the one hand, many ideas come from volunteers, small regional groups or trade unions, according to a bottom-up approach; on the other hand, communication is essential, especially with partners that are crucial for successful project implementation like e.g. the municipalities.

Concerning practical implementation, there seems to be a basic conflict between the search for innovative new solutions (i.e. taking risks) on the one hand side and the requirements for up-scalability, economic sustainability and reporting of indicators (i.e. minimising risks) on the other hand side leading to potential exclusion of promising projects.

Main issues that should be taken into consideration:

- Especially regions with shrinking population and infrastructure need innovative solutions that, however, might not be economically self-sustaining or up-scalable for exactly these reasons. Often these are small projects promoted by volunteers.
- The requirements on drafting of the applications and reporting are very demanding; a fact that might scare away organisations with limited administrative resources like volunteers or SMEs.
- It may be difficult to measure truly innovative approaches with indicators based on historical experience.

Possible **recommendations** based on this feedback:

- For Social Innovation projects, strict criteria of commercial viability could be adapted to a more strategic approach where the fact that potential failure is a necessary element of innovative entrepreneurship is accepted; e.g. via a targeted success quota of the total of funded projects instead of risk minimisation in each individual case.
- Red tape should be avoided.
- Qualitative evaluation of projects would be preferable to quantitative evaluation; however, it is very demanding for the managing authorities and the other bodies involved in programme implementation.

4.3 Italy

4.3.1 Introduction

Italian Operation Programmes, in compliance with the Italian Partnership Agreement, envisage a wide range of initiatives in order to promote Social Innovation. It is worth to point out that Italian MAs have programmed social innovation applying a mainstreaming logic instead of opting for dedicated priority axes.

Two National Operational Programmes cover social innovation using ESF funding: the National Operational Programme "Metropolitan Cities" aims at improving the quality of social services in order to promote social inclusion in metropolitan areas and the National OP "Inclusion" pilot social innovation projects to identify effective models of intervention as to allow a more efficient allocation of public resources.

In regional Operational Programmes, social innovation is conceived as a tool to offer new solutions for addressing gaps of the educational and social systems, to increase the link between active labour market policies and the needs of the territories, to favour the role of social entrepreneurship in the promotion of social inclusion of most vulnerable groups.

At the level of thematic objectives, in relation to TO8, social innovation mostly covers the access to work of vulnerable groups (LTUs, older people, disabled and migrants), the promotion of work-life balance and corporate welfare, the promotion of cooperation between public employment services, the school systems and companies. In relation to TO9, Italian OPs promote the development of personalised and multi-disciplinary services for favouring the access to employment of vulnerable groups, the promotion of the application of ICTs to welfare services, the increase of the quality of services for domestic assistance for non-self-sufficient people. With regard to TO10, the greatest effort is directed towards tackling the school drop-out and promoting education and training through digital learning. TO11 promotes the qualification and empowerment of public institutions and of all social inclusion stakeholders so as to support collaborative decision making. In order to establish the preconditions for social innovation, TO11 funds measures aim to strengthen the digitalisation of administrative processes.²⁷

Moving to the implementation phase²⁸, the analysis of the calls launched in Italy within the ESF shows that, in line with programming, the focus of social innovation initiatives, is placed on welfare and social services. Managing authorities of the Regional Operational Programmes launched calls to promote the consolidation and qualification of social services for vulnerable people - and their families - in a way to boost the development of competences in view of an easier access to the labour market (e.g. ROP Campania²⁹).

The actions of community welfare aim to contribute to the development of services inspired to the promotion of new governance models based on the cooperation of different stakeholders and integration of health policies, labour market policies, VET policies and innovation policies (e.g. ROP Piedmont). Innovative projects in the care services and work organisation have been promoted in several Operational Programmes; relevant examples are the calls launched by the

²⁷ Teresa Cianni, *Innovazione sociale, cos'è e come si sta sviluppando* (Social Innovation what is it and how it is being developed), Quaderni di tecnostruttura, 2016, available at: http://quaderni.tecnostruttura.it/quaderno/quaderno_del_31_marzo_2016/introduzione/.

²⁸ Information included in this section concerning the screening of call has been provided by Tecnostruttura, the agency providing assistance to regional governments in the implementation of their ESF OPs.

²⁹ Campania Region, "Scuola di Comunità" available at: <http://www.fse.regione.campania.it/opportunita/scuola-di-comunita/>.

Basilicata Region and by Friuli Venezia Giulia³⁰ on flexible childhood services. At the same time corporate welfare generated by private companies that develop new organisational models in order to promote work life balance and to integrate the services provided by the public sector is a focus of the actions of Italian Operational Programmes (i.e. ROP Sardinia and ROP Lazio³¹). It is worth to mention that the Veneto Region has launched a call for projects to promote research activities on social innovation and social impact as to promote innovative paths for job creation in a perspective of cooperative economy and social finance.³² With reference to measures aimed to tackle extreme social exclusion it is worth mentioning the integrated interventions that act simultaneously on improving competences of the target groups and improving care services (ROP Lombardy and ROP Abruzzo³³).

The National Operational Programme "Metropolitan cities" and the Operational Programme of the Piedmont Region have been selected to be analysed in depth. The main findings of the analysis are illustrated in the following paragraphs.

4.3.2 National Operation Programme Metropolitan cities

4.3.2.1 Overview of selected ESF OP and how SI is programmed in the OP

The National Operational Programme Metropolitan Cities³⁴ is dedicated to urban sustainable development and aims at improving the quality of services and at promoting social inclusion in 14 Italian metropolitan areas: Bari, Bologna, Cagliari, Catania, Florence, Genova, Messina, Milan, Naples, Palermo, Reggio Calabria, Rome, Turin and Venice. The authorities of the Metropolitan areas act as intermediate bodies on the basis of a series of criteria defined by the National Managing Authority (Italian Agency for Territorial Cohesion).

The OP is one of the Operational Programmes contributing to Social Innovation. The Priority Axes dedicated to Social Innovation are Axis 3 "Services for Social inclusion" - funded by ESF - and Axis 4 "infrastructure for social inclusion", funded by ERDF. Axis 3 and 4 contribute to the National Strategy to tackle housing poverty and the strategy to tackle poverty and extreme marginality". Priority Axis 3, covering TO9, is endowed with EUR 217,2 million while EUR 49 million has been earmarked for the social innovation of Priority Axis 3.

As indicated in section 2A7 of the OP, social innovation is considered as a principle for programming and for the implementation of the measures financed under the relevant Axis.

³⁰ Basilicata Region, call "Buoni Servizio per l'accesso ai servizi socio educativi della prima infanzia" available at <http://portalebandi.regione.basilicata.it/PortaleBandi/detail-bando.jsp?id=393945>, and Friuli Venezia Giulia, call "sperimentazione di modalità di erogazione e fruizione flessibile dei servizi per la prima infanzia" available at: <http://bandiformazione.regione.fvg.it/fop2011/Bandi/Dettaglio.aspx?Id=4241>.

³¹ Sardinia Regione, call "Welfare e work life balance nella vita quotidiana delle aziende, delle lavoratrici, dei lavoratori e delle loro famiglie", available at: <http://www.sardegna lavoro.it/download/Avviso%20Welfare%20Aziendale.pdf>;

Lazio Region, call "Sviluppo dei Piani Welflex Produttività ed equilibrio vita-lavoro nell'ambito del Contratto di Ricollocazione" available at: http://www.regione.lazio.it/rl_lavoro/?vw=documentazioneDettaglio&id=39371.

³² Veneto Region, call "Strumenti di innovazione sociale NS2 Nuove Sfide Nuovi Servizi" <https://bandi.regione.veneto.it/Public/Dettaglio?idAtto=1742>.

³³ Lombardy Region call "Marginalità 2017" <http://www.fse.regione.lombardia.it/wps/portal/PROUE/FSE/Bandi>;
Abruzzo Region, call "Piani di Conciliazione" <https://app.regione.abruzzo.it/avvisipubblici/piani-conciliazione-novembre-17>.

³⁴ Interviewee: Mr. Gianfranco Presutti, Head of Economic Development, European Funds and Smart City Department, Municipality of Turin. The interview covered the social innovation projects implemented by the Municipality of Turin as intermediate body of the NOP Metropolitan cities. The projects of the Municipality of Turin tackle housing poverty through integrated actions ("To home, verso casa"), pilot services of social innovation ("Servizi sperimentali di innovazione sociale"), development of a crowdfunding civic platform ("Sviluppo e animazione di una piattaforma di civic crowdfunding"), coaching, tutorship and training support for the realisation of social innovation projects (Servizio di accompagnamento, coaching alla realizzazione di progetti di innovazione sociale).

Table 16. Budgetary allocation to ESF OP Metropolitan Cities by Priority Axes

Priority axis	Fund	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
Metropolitan Digital Agenda	ERDF	98.084.915	53.897.915	151.982.830
Sustainability of public services and urban mobility	ERDF	210.808.800	107.479.200	318.288.000
Services for Social Inclusion	ESF	142.376.058	74.817.534	217.193.592
Infrastructures for social Inclusion	ERDF	113.306.228	56.445.352	169.751.580
Technical Assistance	ERDF	23.523.999	12.193.333	35.717.332
Total	ERDF	445.723.942	230.015.800	675.739.742
Total	ESF	142.376.058	74.817.534	217.193.592
Grand total		588.100.000	304.833.334	892.933.334

Source: SFC 2014

The expected results of the ESF OP regarding Social Innovation are the following:

- integrated educational path for job, social, educational, health care placement and housing supplement for 3.904 low-income individuals and for 5.855 individuals with severe forms of distress,
- integrated programs for 485 individuals belonging to the Roma, Sinti and Camminanti communities.
- low-threshold services and emergency social intervention for 1.811 homeless
- support to 644 projects implemented by active actors in welfare or NGOs involved in the target areas.

4.3.2.2 Short description of the SI PAX

Within Priority Axis 3, the most relevant actions for Social Innovation are:

- **Action 3.1.1 "Integrated actions to combat housing poverty"** which, if applied in synergy with Action **4.1.1 "Construction and recovery of houses" (ERDF)**, should implement the principle "*housing first*", linked to the provision of "sheltered housing" to vulnerable groups intended as a starting point towards the entry or return to the labour market and to active social life.
- **Action 3.3.1 "Support for the activation of innovative services in degraded areas"**, applied in synergy with action **4.2.1 "Recovery of unused buildings and definition of spaces equipped to be used for social voluntary services" (ERDF)**, allows to put in practice the "*community hubs*" paradigm, whereby various care services are provided through a one-shop-stop approach. These interventions support mostly non-profit organisations and market-oriented entities willing to take on the provision of new services in degraded areas in the context of innovative partnerships with public administration. The rationale behind this measure is that non-profit organisations and market-oriented companies can create new inclusive social relations and stimulate the active participation of the final recipients of the ESF interventions, even those in conditions of greatest difficulty.

4.3.3 ESF Operational Programme Piedmont

4.3.3.1 Overview of selected ESF OP and how SI is programmed in the OP

The Piedmont Region³⁵ has included the EU2020 Strategy within the unitary strategic document (DSU) for the ESI Funds of the 2014-2020 programming period. Based on this strategic document the Region has adopted, in May 2017, a strategy - WE.CA.RE (*Welfare Cantieri Regionale*) - for promoting responses to social needs centred on social innovation. WE.CA.RE. was designed through a participatory approach, involving municipalities, consortia managing social services in existing social cohesion districts (*Distretti della Coesione Sociale*), trade-unions, third sector organisations, bank foundations.

The Piedmont Region, over the last years has taken action to improve the efficiency of the welfare system which is not adequately equipped to face emerging forms of social exclusion, namely the exclusion of people that were guaranteed employment safety before the crisis (i.e. people in working poverty or people involved in mass redundancies). Since public expenses could not be increased to face such challenge given the need to stabilise the regional budget, this challenge could only be tackled by promoting innovative processes of policy design and policy implementation. In this regard the ESF and the ERDF provided the opportunity to stimulate innovative design of social services with the perspective of modifying the overall approach to welfare and local development. The interventions covered within the strategy are aimed to give answers to changing socio-economic needs (ageing, labour flexibility, migration, increased inequalities) through welfare initiatives developed by local communities.

WE.CA.RE envisages a mix of measures promoting social innovation in a way to implement processes of innovation in order to improve local governance, stimulate cooperation between public actors, third sector organisations, support social-entrepreneurship and corporate welfare.

The Piedmont ESF OP does not dedicate a specific Priority Axis to social innovation but it covers Social Innovation under the Priority Axis 1 (covering TO8) and Priority Axis 2 (Covering TO9).

Social innovation activities absorb, according to the Regional Strategy for Social Innovation, EUR 15 million: EUR 11 million on TO9 and EUR 4 Million on TO8. Additionally, the OP envisages investments for training activities for the personnel of the Region with a focus on social innovation. It should be added that WECARE is implemented through a close synergy between ESF and ERDF, which contributes by strengthening entrepreneurial activities having a social impact.

³⁵ Interviewees: Mr. Augusto Ferrari, Assessor for Family, Social and Housing Policies, Piedmont Regional Government; Mr. Gianfranco Bordone, Managing Authority of the ESF OP Piedmont.

Table 17. Budgetary allocation to ESF OP Piedmont by Priority Axes

Priority axis	Fund	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
Employment	ESF	199.800.000	199.800.000	399.600.000
Social inclusion and fight against poverty	ESF	88.250.000	88.250.000	176.500.000
Education and training	ESF	129.500.000	129.500.000	259.000.000
Institutional and operational capacity	ESF	1.250.000	1.250.000	2.500.000
Technical assistance	ESF	17.345.000	17.345.000	34.690.000
Total	ESF	436.145.000	436.145.000	872.290.000

Source: SFC 2014

4.3.3.2 Short description of the SI measure(s) foreseen/funded

The ESF contributes to the WE.CA.RE strategy through four measures implemented under two investment priorities: 8iv (Equality between men and women in all areas, including in access to employment, career progression, reconciliation of work and private life and promotion of equal pay for equal work) and 9v (Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment).

Table 18. Social Innovation measures of the ESF OP Piedmont

Investment Priority	Specific Objective	Description of the measure
9v	Strengthening social economy	Experimentation of innovative actions of community welfare
9v	Strengthening social economy	Innovative projects for the third sector
8iv	Increase female employment	Promotion of corporate welfare
9v	Strengthening social economy	Coaching and support

The objective of the first measure, "Experimentation of innovative actions of community welfare" is to contribute to develop community welfare services, as an answer to the needs expressed by local communities. Beneficiaries of the action are municipalities or consortia managing social services in the thirty social cohesion districts (*Distretti della Coesione Sociale*). The key condition for beneficiaries is that the project is managed with the participation of "local resources" and that it is focussed on addressing one need as selected by the local community through a participatory approach engendered and organised by the beneficiaries.

Projects are defined in social cohesion districts in a perspective of co-design and co-production of relevant actors (public actors, third sector organisation, employment services, private companies, etc). The services to be produced within the action are, for example, innovative welfare services, experimentation of innovative services for the most vulnerable citizens, services of orientation and well-being for vulnerable people through the application of innovative, pilot projects on the use of innovative technologies for social emergencies and access to welfare services.

The second measure “Innovative projects for the third sector” promotes the development of a system of innovative social entrepreneurs and the growth of the third sector. In other words, beneficiaries and third sector organisations, will experiment innovative welfare services or enhance the efficiency and the effectiveness of existing services. Since third sector organisations are characterised by a high labour intensity and by a low use of ICT, the action will stimulate, in particular, innovative solutions based on the application of innovative technologies – both hardware and software - to services having a social impact.

The third ESF measure “Promotion of corporate welfare” aims at involving the entrepreneurial system in the design and activation of corporate welfare, with a specific focus on work-life balance and the promotion of gender equality. The types of interventions to be funded under this measure are: work-life balance measures that promote a greater participation of women to the labour market, policies for equal opportunities - such as support to maternity/paternity, support for the well-being of workers – vouchers and incentives for sport and cultural activities), scholarships, vouchers for book sale or study trips for dependents of employees, support to care services for elderly or non-self-sufficient, projects of corporate volunteering, etc.

Projects financed under the second and third measure are closely connected with the first measure in a way to foster the sustainability of projects and stimulate the coordination between the different experiences.

The fourth measure “Support and coaching” aims at innovating the current welfare system by providing support for training and coaching to local communities involved in the experimentation financed under measure one.

The measure is a system action aimed to strengthen the system of actors involved in the experimentations in a way to boost the cooperative dimension between them so as to promote the sustainability of the initiatives financed and of the participatory approaches engendered. This will be implemented by a specific professional figure called “Social Facilitator”, one per each district, who will have a key role in supporting the local community in the finalisation of the project and, during the implementation, in the financial reporting and dissemination of project results.

4.3.4 Main findings

The 2016 Annual Implementation Reports (AIR) of the two Italian Programmes analysed in depth in this study do not report on the activities implemented and on the results achieved with regard to Social Innovation. However, from the interviews, it emerges that their approach to social innovation complies with the key elements of the conceptual framework developed within the present project:

- **Social Needs:** social innovation engendered by the two OPs aims at reducing a gap between social needs (i.e. new poverties, housing poverty) and existing solutions (the current budget could allow to address social needs effectively),
- **Novelty:** the core objective of the OPs is to develop a wide array of new ideas and services that work in meeting social goals expressed by local communities. The establishment of new relationships is also promoted by stimulating cooperation between new partners at the local level (ROP Piedmont) or by exploiting the existing networks of organisations which provide support to vulnerable groups in urban areas such as the network of neighbourhood homes, *Rete delle case del quartiere* (NOP Metropolitan Cities)
- **Social impact:** Multi-stakeholder governance and de-institutionalisation of policy design promoted by the OP aim to providing high quality services in the most economically-effective way,

- **Process:** WE.CA.RE as well as the projects funded by the NOP Metropolitan Cities are implemented through a multi-stage process: the diagnosis of the problem is made with the contribution of all relevant actors at the local level; the projects are designed, piloted and fine-tuned through a participatory approach; sustainability is ensured through support, coaching and training to local actors.

Main success factors identified

1. **Political support:** As reported by the Managing Authority of the ESF OP Piedmont, political will is necessary for sound social innovation programmes to be designed and implemented. In the case of Piedmont, policy makers acknowledged that public budgets could not address new social challenges and that innovative processes should be enacted to develop quality services in an economically effective manner. Furthermore, the strong political will was key to make a clear and ambitious choice: using social innovation to introduce a totally new paradigm in the design and provision of welfare services, based on co-creation. This will represent, in the medium term, the ordinary approach to welfare services.
2. **Synergy with other initiatives:** When asked about whether the ESF architecture is adequate to promote social innovation, interviewees (Assessor for Welfare Policies of Piedmont Region and the Managing Authority of the ROP Piedmont) reported that the ESF is adequate to develop synergies with initiatives implemented in border regions in a way to design social innovation initiatives through a macro-region approach. As a matter of fact, synergies have been established in the framework of transnational cooperation with Switzerland and France (social innovation in the field of tackling the needs of non-accompanied minors with France and tackling the needs of people with psychologic pathologies with Switzerland). Other synergies are being sought with initiatives undertaken in the NOP Metropolitan cities and EARDF since the agricultural sector has a great social innovation potential when it comes to social agriculture.

Main risks and difficulties to face:

1. The experience of the ESF OP Piedmont, suggests that standard costs are useful, but they tend to standardise interventions. Social Innovation initiatives, being non-standard, are difficult to manage by using existing SCOs.
2. Social innovation faces the risk of low commitment from relevant actors in the social innovation processes.

Recommendations and lessons learned

1. SCOs as are now are not fully adequate to social innovation. In the medium term, SCOs tailored to social innovation should be developed.
2. In order to prevent the risk of low commitment of actors relevant for social innovation processes, the ESF should ensure that all of them are awarded forms of monetary compensations. Smaller organisations, especially the ones offering proximity services in urban areas would definitely benefit from the possibility of receiving down payments of funding.
3. Social Innovation is key to reduce the fragmentation of policies. In the specific case of Piedmont Region, the possibility to combine ESF and ERDF enacted a strict coordination of four different departments in the preparation of the Social Innovation Strategy (WE.CA.RE).

4. With specific regard to the NOP Metropolitan Cities, the interviewee stressed that a key added value is represented by the governance model adopted by the NOP Metropolitan Cities – one national managing authority and cities acting as intermediate bodies – as well as the specific coordination arrangements³⁶ which favour the exchange of social innovation practices that could be replicated in the different cities in order to tackle similar needs.
5. A greater integration of ESF resources with resources made available by national initiatives (i.e. National Plan for Peripheral Areas) would allow to concentrate resources on the most relevant needs and to achieve a more tangible social impact in degraded urban areas.

4.4 Poland: ESF OP Knowledge, Education, Growth (PO WER)

The Polish ESF is structured around 17 Operational Programmes of which 16 are regional ones. The national Operational Programme Knowledge, Education, Growth (PO WER) has a dedicated Priority Axis (Pax) IV that is Social Innovation and Transnational Cooperation.

The PO WER has a total financial envelop of EUR 5,429 billion (total EU contribution amounts to EUR 4,689 billion)³⁷.

4.5.1. Overview of selected ESF OP and how SI is programmed in the OP

The implementation of Axis IV of the PO WER is focused on supporting social innovation as well as mobility and transnational cooperation. This PAX covers all ESF Thematic Objectives. The approach of the ESF Polish Authorities to social innovation is based on the assumption that the best social innovations take place “at the border” of different sectors and with the participation of different actors (public, private) (multidisciplinary approach to social innovation). As such the broad scope of PAX IV served the purpose of leaving sufficient flexibility in selecting typologies and themes of intervention as implementation as the OP develops. The OP does not follow a set definition of SI, it is recognized as new and better solutions for existing problems across different themes and for which existing actions are not sufficient or the problems require new and different approach.

The choice of selecting a dedicated PAX derives from lessons learned during the previous programming period, when SI and TC were implemented following a horizontal approach. This entailed a highly decentralized structure with the participation of many implementing bodies acting at different levels (regional and local) and following differing approaches. This resulted in a lack of coordination and visibility of SI and did not bring about the necessary mainstreaming, promotion and upscaling of the many social innovations that had been developed through ESF. Such system was not conducive to building a SI ecosystem. The current programming follows a more centralized approach and responsibility for coordinating and promoting SI lies with the Ministry. A more centralized approach is also functional to testing and establishing new solutions that have to be in line with the national strategy and interventions and shall focus on most urgent and complex problems.

According to the MA this approach is proving effective so far – even though evaluative evidence is still being collected (and will be available soon). The overall aim is to develop a **stronger**

³⁶ Technical Secretariat aimed at promoting the national coordination activities useful for the definition of criteria, approaches, design standards appropriate to the achievement of the objectives of the NOP Metropolitan Cities.

³⁷ ‘Annual and final implementation reports for the Investment for growth and jobs goal’, 2014PL05M9OP001, 20th of June 2017, p. 3

ecosystem of social innovation that had not been built in Poland so far. Polish markets and societies are poorly equipped with non-profit organizations, relatively few institutions of third sector and low societal engagement in social activities³⁸. This factor represents the main obstacle and weakness to achieving a solid SI ecosystem (main expected result of current programming, although not easily measurable nor a tangible result). According to the MA, the ecosystem of social innovation is still ***terra incognita***. A lot of work is still needed in Poland to build a system in which different incubators can link different levels (country/regional/local) and different actors – those who know what the social innovation is, those who know how to reach out to innovators and those who know what public policy needs and how to achieve that.

The MA is accompanied in its Social innovation work by an ongoing evaluation – and are currently in the process of assessing the micro innovations strand (the report will be readily available). In the previous period only *ex post* evaluation³⁹ was carried out on the theme of SI and this did not allow space/time from learning.

PAX IV has an overall financial allocation of EUR 7,115 billion, which constitutes approximately 13% of the overall PO WER budget⁴⁰, but the financial allocation to SI activities is estimated at **EUR 175.819.538**⁴¹. At the end of 2016 29,5% of allocated budget had been committed to selected projects (against 22,5% for the overall OP) and the certified expenditure rate was 11,3% (against 8.5 for the overall OP).

4.5.2. Short description of the SI PAX

The aim of the social innovations projects is to develop and test new, more effective solutions to existing problems in the areas of the labour market, social integration, life-long learning, health and modernization of public administration, where existing activities are insufficient or require a new approach. Social innovation products will be included in national policies at various levels - not only in legal acts, but also through the implementation of new models/standards of running the institutions. Social innovations are implemented under two main schemes: **micro** and **macro**.

Micro innovation (covering approximately 16% of allocations): under this strand the OP funds the set up and creation of social incubators. Social incubators are non-profit organizations that were selected to take a role of social innovation intermediary. They receive ESF funding and they announce regular grants for micro-initiatives offered to local organisations or individuals. Their main task is to scout small Social Innovators, who operate at the local level, work with them while developing tools, test solution on micro scale and then support social innovators to mainstream their innovative product. These incubators support the work of the Ministry, although they are beneficiaries. Their role is very broad. They financially support SI through grants allowing individual/NGOs to develop and test solutions. There was a regular call /contest in which they were nominated to be a social innovation incubator.

³⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/national_report_pl_en.pdf

³⁹ There is an *ex post* evaluation report in the field of social policy, including some aspects of social innovation, <https://www.efs.2007-2013.gov.pl/analizyraportypodsumowania/strony/opracowania.aspx>; [access 7/3/2018] There is no *ex post* evaluation report focused only on social innovations. However, there were evaluation meetings with NGO's, researchers, administration and policy makers after the previous programming period.

⁴⁰ Source: SFC2014

⁴¹ Information provided by the PO WER MA

SI incubators shall not be mixed with business angels, i.e. organisations who accompany start-ups across their various growth stages. The difference between social incubators and business angels is significant. While business angels operate in the private sector, select business initiatives that they find the most prosperous and benefit financially by becoming a shareholder of the initiative, social incubators receive public money and they are responsible for distributing them to the best ideas, who are in general small and addressed at the micro-level. They do not benefit financially from this co-financing.

The MA launched a pilot call for operators of incubators in 2016 (and a new one is expected for 2018). These incubators can in turn provide grants and support for the development of innovative ideas. The incubators focus on 4 thematic areas:

- Lifelong learning for adults
- Services for dependent people
- From education to work, how to prevent unemployment
- Integrating disadvantaged groups into the labour market.

These four thematic areas are strictly connected to the general aims of social innovation projects in general (already mentioned in the previous paragraph). Currently there are 17 incubators of social innovation in Poland funded through the ESF.

The calls within Axis IV are addressed to different entities, mainly Civil Society Organisations and NGOs, groups of organizations/institutions. Selected operators will support single persons/institutions etc. in their work on innovative solutions to social problems^{42 43}. It means, that incubators are aimed at announcing regular calls for grants, where they define topics for the ideas, terms of references, deadlines, and budgets. Each incubator selected minimum 30 ideas (maximum 60), where all of them are right now in the process of the implementation.

The main innovative and distinguishing feature of this strand (also with respect to the previous period) is the introduction of incubators as “intermediaries” for social innovation, while still targeting the innovation process (innovation circle). Instead of providing support directly to potential social innovators, the OP supports incubators who in their turn scout for ideas and promote social innovation by providing advice, counselling and – if relevant - grant support. While social innovators may be good at developing ideas and solutions, they still need support in developing a concrete plan, fundraising, and in undertaking financial/administrative work. Social incubators focus on searching innovators and then work on them on concrete solutions.

This strand does not fund startups, although Social entrepreneurs can still be supported by incubators, but the support is towards the concrete solution.

Macro innovation – the aim of social innovation projects under this scheme is to solve the problems in the most important for European Social Fund areas and will be implemented by entities with greater potential, having real possibilities of including solutions in public policy practice. This is a more “traditional” approach to Social innovation.

The first call for projects within macro scheme was announced in 2015 and the thematic areas within macro scheme were the same as in the case of micro: 1) life-long learning for adults, 2) services for dependent people, 3) preventing unemployment – from education to work and 4)

⁴² Ibidem

⁴³ <https://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/strony/wiadomosci/po-wer-wsparcie-innowacji-spolecznych-mobilnosci-i-wspolpracy-ponadnarodowej/>, [access 14/2/2018]

integrating disadvantaged groups into the labour market⁴⁴. Different types of institutions were eligible to apply for grants: entities responsible for creation, implementation and monitoring of public policies as well as control and supervision over these policies, such as local public organisations/authorities⁴⁵.

One important focus of this macro strand is deinstitutionalisation, by looking for innovative solutions for people with mental illnesses and designing new models of care in order to prevent hospitalization (environmental care). This approach has been tested with a view to mainstream it in the broader policy measures and, after testing, the best model will be included in policy

In general, social Innovation projects are much more difficult in implementation when compared to other types of projects. According to the Managing Authority, while doing social innovation projects there is uncertainty as to results. The solution to these challenges is a creation and implementation of a so called 'Regulatory sandbox' concept, well known in business. The implementation of this project would allow institutions to test innovative products, services and models in order to set up the best strategy more easily and more effectively. Unfortunately, this concept is still not implemented in Poland, since there is no national law that would allow for that.

4.5.4. Concluding remarks

- SI projects are more difficult to implement than standard projects because there is uncertainty on the results. The final product might be known but not the means to achieve it and this sometimes calls for a change of strategy in the course of project implementation. This is a problem particularly for Macro innovators that encounter obstacles in testing the developed social innovations since the regulatory framework does not give enough flexibility. Testing without necessity of mainstreaming would allow for more flexibility. This appeared to be a problematic issue in the whole SI idea in Poland.
- Social innovation projects need time to be designed, tested and implemented well. The social innovation projects need an effective evaluation.
- National and ESF regulations are sometimes perceived as complicated and time-consuming, so the applicants are discouraged. According to interviewees (non governmental stakeholders), ESF regulations are too strict for social innovators. Restraints are particularly felt at the level of eligibility of expenses, and this is particularly a problem for ESF beneficiaries. **The official regulations of the programme 'limit' somehow the concept of social innovation.** The terminology, thematic objectives, procedures are already defined and have to be in accordance to different European Union's sectoral policies. It means that social innovation is limited from the very beginning.
- A possible **solution could be development of a 'Regulatory sandbox'** that allows beneficiaries to "play" with a limited set of rules. Also the creation of steering groups with representatives from different ministries (in accordance with the multi-disciplinary approach) has proven to be a good practice supporting dissemination of results in specific areas. These need to be created since the very beginning of the actions. These groups

⁴⁴ <https://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/nabory/41-konkurs-na-inkubacje-innowacji-spolecznych>, [access 14/2/2018]

⁴⁵ Ibidem

supervise projects and give recommendations, i.e. how to make results more usable for the ministries.

- **The innovation has to prove to be 'effective'** (= 'more (ideas) for less (money)) but sometimes this is not the right way to think about innovations. Not everything, not always has to be effective. **The terms and conditions of the programme enforce an effective approach to the innovations.**
- Although the idea of a project might be truly innovative, administrative and regulatory provisions might significantly influence the implementation of the project, including long pre-project negotiations between the Ministry and the beneficiaries and strict checks on eligibility of expenditure/payments which imply a risk on beneficiary.
- Social innovation projects have to tackle local conditions such as lack of motivation of local organisations/authorities, lack of resources, lack of will to cooperate on local level, differences between local actors (representing different institutions).
- The organizations who run the macro projects are requested to "implement" the social innovation and sustain it after the official ending of the project, but its implementation is sometimes tied to the commitment of local authorities and their willingness to implement the solution while there is no guarantee that they will uphold their interest in incorporating the model. This might potentially lead to **risk averse** behaviours and opt for "safer" and less ground-breaking social innovation.
- **The incubator projects** seem to have **more flexibility and the possibility of failure is contemplated.** The incubator ideas are very often **being changed** during different phase of the project. The main aim of the incubator of ideas is to make them **durable.** Innovation is a life skill. The innovation is not being born as a result of having financial resources. It is difficult to make innovations without damaging them. How to support them, but not damage them at the same time? The Managing Authority gives micro projects more flexibility in order to 'achieve' innovation that will be durable.
- Social innovation should be **viral.**

4.5 Portugal Social Innovation Initiative (Portugal Inovação Social)

4.5.1 Introduction to the case study

The **Portugal Social Innovation Initiative** is a public initiative, pioneer in Europe created in December 2014 with the aim of fostering an ecosystem of innovation and social entrepreneurship and of promoting social investment in Portugal by channelling an important share (near EUR 150 million) of European Structural Funds. Through its Mission Structure, EMPIS, it participates in two thematic ESF OPs, "Employment and Social Inclusion" (POISE) and OP "Human Capital", and three of the five regional continental OPs (namely in North, Lisbon and Alentejo OPs). This case study focuses on the work undertaken by Portugal Social Innovation, its instruments and main lessons drawn so far.

Social Inclusion and Employment - ESF/YEI⁴⁶

The 'Social Inclusion and Employment' ESF operational programme (OP) in Portugal focuses on thematic objective Employment and labour market (TO8) and Social inclusion (TO9) and

⁴⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=576&langId=en&pay=PT>

addresses major economic and social challenges and contributes to ongoing structural reforms. The OP has a total of EUR 2,5 billion in funding, of which half is directed at promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination.

The OP focuses on four areas:

- Improving access to employment and jobs and supporting workers' mobility.
- Implementing the Youth Guarantee through the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).
- Fostering gender equality, helping workers and companies adapt to change, and modernising labour.
- Implementing active inclusion measures, promoting equal opportunities, and providing better access to services for disadvantaged groups.

Human Capital - ESF

The ESF Human Capital operational programme (OP) in Portugal focuses on TO10 - Education and training- and thus invests in education and vocational training to give young students and workers the qualifications and skills the economy needs to grow and to promote social inclusion. Further investment in higher education finances more equal access to tertiary education by students with limited resources.

With nearly 85% of its funding coming from the EU budget the OP – worth EUR 3.642 billion – has the following priorities:

- To improve the quality of school education, to reduce early school leaving rates to 10% and give marginalised groups better access to good quality education at pre-school, primary and secondary levels, reducing their risk of social exclusion.
- To support higher education, particularly for people currently excluded from this.
- To improve the educational level of workers and jobseekers.

4.5.2 Overview of selected ESF OP and how SI is programmed in the OP

In a context of long and strong tradition of social innovation, the approach of Portugal ESF OPs to SI is not through dedicated Priority Axis/axes, but transversally across a number of OPs. The amount earmarked to secondary theme "social innovation" reaches EUR 267.187.607, more than half of which (EUR 140 million) corresponds to the OP Social Inclusion and Employment. The region North stands out with a global allocation of over EUR 88 million in three OPs (see Table 19).

The objective of **Portugal Social Innovation Mission Structure (EMPIS)**, is to finance, in an integrated manner, throughout the period 2014-2020, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Initiatives (IIES) and to ensure the technical management and coordination of the implementation of the Portugal Social Innovation initiative.

As declared by respondents to the e-Survey, through the Portugal Social Innovation initiative, the ESF brings added value to the national political strategy through the promotion of entrepreneurship and social innovation, the dynamization of the social investment market, and the training of actors in the innovation and social entrepreneurship system, improving the response levels of social economy entities and contributing to their sustainability.

Table 19. Earmarked to secondary theme "Social Innovation"

OP	PRIORITY CODE	PRIORITY NAME	€ AMOUNT
OP Social Incl and Empl	3	Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination	140.000.000
North	7	Social Inclusion and Poverty	50.948.653
North	8	Education and Lifelong Learning	3.479.800
North	9	Institutional Capacity Building and ICT	34.245.400
Alentejo	2	Teaching and Qualification of Human Capital	2.236.555
Alentejo	6	Social Cohesion and Inclusion	3.545.602
Azores	9	Social Inclusion and Combating Poverty	500.000
Lisboa	5	Promoting sustainability and quality of employment and supporting worker mobility	6.000.000
Lisboa	6	Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination	10.000.000
Competitiveness and internationalisation	V	Strengthening the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and the efficiency of public administration (OT11)	16.231.597
		TOTAL	267.187.607

Source: SFC2014, ESF OPs AIRs 2016

4.5.3 Short description of the SI measures

The mission of Portugal Social Innovation is to promote and dynamize SI investment markets and SI projects. It works with four financial instruments aligned with the lifecycle of projects:

1. **"Capacity building for social innovation"** Programme, aimed to finance the development of SI competences for the teams working on SI projects. Its co-creation format is innovative, and also the fact that it is paid on the basis of outputs. It is aimed to develop small projects (up to 50.000 €) of up to 18 months duration. Recently a first call launched with great success and high demand;
2. **"Partnerships for impacts"** is a match fund model, where 70% of the SI project is financed provided a social (public or private) investor funds the remaining 30%. Aimed to larger projects (over 50.000 €) with 1 to 3 years duration. Two calls have already been launched, with high acceptance and promising projects presented, many of them based on public-private partnerships with an active dynamic participation of municipalities and focused on employment, social inclusion, health, education or justice issues.
3. **"Social impact bonds"** fund SI projects that respond to social problems covered by public policy, in a logic of payment for results. The projects' application must involve Social Investors (who finance the project), Public Entities (which certify that the solution is in the scope of a public policy and the expected results are relevant) and Implementing Entities (Social Economy Entities). If the contracted results are reached, the Social Investors are fully reimbursed. In the last call only 3 projects were approved, and a new tax incentive has been approved to encourage higher participation of private investors.
4. **"Social Innovation fund"**, 100% public, with the objective of fulfilling the lack of options in the financial sector of Social Economy entities and social start-ups organisations. It is not yet operational and foresees two possibilities: a guarantee for the banks and an equity instrument (the fund goes directly to the capital of the project).

At the time when this report was written, 5 calls for projects had been launched with 260 applications out of which 144 approved interventions: 42 with the "partnership for impact" instrument; 3 with the "social impact bond" and 99 with the "capacity building for social investment" instrument. These projects involve a financial allocation of 15 million euro of ESF funding and additional 10 million euro of social investment provided by foundations, national and international companies, social economy organisations and municipalities.

Regarding the instruments "Capacity building for social investment", "Partnerships for Impact" and "Social Impact Bonds", Portugal SI is responsible for the analysis of the applications submitted by the beneficiaries, as well as for the implementation, in partnership, of the management checks, and the technical verification of the operations. On the other hand, the "Social Innovation fund" Portugal SI is responsible for ensuring the development of the phases inherent in the entire life cycle of the operation.

The fact that Portugal SI manages SI transversally in two OPs guarantees consistency of SI treatment among the OP and better communication. The strategy is working well, because of a very favourable SI environment (highly motivated SI ecosystem), also at political level. This allows for good coordination across different ministries and a multisectoral vision. Thus a top-down approach is complemented through a highly motivated ecosystem, participation of third sector organisations, municipalities, companies, etc. (bottom-up). In particular, a dynamic "activation team" of Portugal Social Innovation (more than 10 persons) plays an important role in promoting SI partnerships and projects at the regional and local level.

4.5.4 Main findings

Main success factors identified:

Political consensus on the importance of Social Innovation for a broader social and economic development. Increased **recognition** by public and private entities of the importance and advantages of financing the experimentation of new social responses. As a result, a highly motivated ecosystem is in development: mobilized **institutions**, especially in the social sector; creative **entrepreneurs**; a growing involvement of **municipalities** as investors, as mobilizers of social organizations and as agents of social innovation.

Government leadership, which allows for a favourable political context towards SI, coordination with all ministries (multisector vision) involved and audacious SI policy. The minister who coordinates Portugal Social Innovation coordinates as well innovation initiatives in the public sector and administrative modernization. This issue is relevant because it reinforces the multisector vision of the initiative and does not associate it exclusively with a specific government area (social security, education, health, etc.).

An agency like *Portugal Social Innovation*, which **concentrates** the management of ESF funding for Social Innovation, allows a consistent and comprehensive communication strategy, as well as the development of relevant networks, providing broad visibility to social innovation and social entrepreneurship. Such a coherent strategy and an operational central Government structure with a clear mission and means to implement it is an effective way to achieve a real and meaningful change in culture.

The horizontal approach provided by PT SI ensures consistency among OPs and actors and communication. This public initiative concentrates the Government national strategy for social innovation and assures its coherent and broad implementation. It mobilizes investors, social organizations and public entities, and creates guidelines on what social innovation is and how can and should be achieved.

The “activation team” plays a key role in actively promoting SI projects, partnerships and networks at regional and local level as well as promoting a bottom-up approach, with highly motivated SI ecosystem, with enthusiastic third sector organisations and municipalities able to talk with different ministries. It works with the big or small (potential) SI organisation mobilizing public and private entities for joint involvement in social innovation projects, clarifying doubts and promoting a network for sharing knowledge and experiences among projects that stimulates the development and sustainability of social innovation and social entrepreneurship. This “activation team” is at present made of 11 persons and works like a start-up.

Additional success factors are the long SI tradition and the existence of a rich ecosystem for SI and which enables strategic partnerships with key players like Foundations, Regional and Local Government, Social Innovation consultants and accelerators, etc.

Main risks and difficulties faced:

Limited culture and practice for “paying for results” in public administration in Portugal and lack of focus on social impact from service providers.

Lack of focus on measurement of Social impact of SI projects and, more generally, to evaluate. Not included in the calls so far.

Considerable differences in the financing system for social innovation projects compared to other types of operation, which may lead to lack of responsiveness of the beneficiary entities in the submission of applications and, at the same time, difficulties in project management by the MA;

Financial ESF mechanisms are not always compatible with SI needs making it more difficult to obtain responsiveness to the submission of applications leading to a mismatch between ESF regulation and administrative constraints and the purpose of Social Innovation, which involves experimentation, risk, flexibility, and outcome-oriented approaches. ESF funding is still mainly based on the **reimbursement of expenses**, which prevents financing solutions based on their greater efficiency and / or financial sustainability. ESF is limited with regard to the operationalization of **financial instruments**, namely the payment of management fees and the remuneration of investment.

These difficulties lead to serious implementation problems, from administrative, management and funding perspectives, including the need to adapt the management information system that was not fit for the reception and analysis of these projects,

Recommendations and lessons learned

It would be useful that the EC develop an action to clarify and conceptualise SI, intended for MA to disseminate to potential beneficiary entities.

Since SI address cross-cutting problems and SI projects are multidimensional and cross regional, the projects need to be trans-territorial. Multiregional projects should be eligible for funding in Portugal (5 continental regions have regional OPs). Moreover, social impacts of innovative social solutions are often multidimensional (ex.: a project on education affects qualification, employability, but can also have impact on health and social inclusion); therefore, social innovation financing framework should be the same regardless the area of social impact

Social Impact bonds have problems because of ESF payment mechanism (based on short-term outcomes, although these can arise in the longer run; and the reimbursement of eligible costs) and the derived complexity of the projects; also because of the maximum possible level for public contribution. The mechanism should be simplified, the level increased and multiple outcomes and timing considered.

Social Innovation needs to be discussed and shared in order to achieve its social transformation potential, so the budget for funding Social Innovation should be partially oriented for national and international communication, for disseminating good practices, for promoting a culture of social innovation and enhancing the social impact and investment in innovative social projects;

Reinforcement of training for SI managers: create measures and mechanisms to encourage training in the area of Social Innovation for managers and technicians of Public Administration;

Reinforcement of support to research and consultancy for pilot projects, to vouchers for SI, to the creation and functioning of collaborative networks, to promote SI incubators, etc.

4.6 Sweden: the National and the Community Led Local Development OP

4.6.1 Introduction to the case study

Sweden counts with two ESF OPs, the National ESF OP for Investments in growth and employment 2014 – 2020, and the Community-led local development (CLLD) programme 2014-2020, which receives support from ERDF and ESF. The first one is endowed with EUR 1.576 billion (of which EUR 810 million from the EU budget, including EUR 44 million from the Youth Employment Initiative), and the CLLD programme has EUR 8.504.984 from ERDF and 8.343.266 € from ESF allocated, with a total endowment of EUR 33.696.500.

The OP for Investments in growth and employment focuses on thematic objectives Education and training (TO10), Employment and labour market (TO8) and Social Inclusion (TO9) and the CLLD programme on thematic objective 9, social inclusion.

The next section describes briefly the overall approach of the national ESF OP to Social Innovation; an assessment of CLLD programme and of a selected project, *More Ways in*, promoted by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), follows, to end up with some concluding remarks. Four persons have been interviewed from the ESF National Coordination, from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), the CLLD and Leader area "Leader 3sam".

4.6.2 Short description of the SI measures

None of the two OPs mentioned has a Priority Axis dedicated to social innovation; neither do they have resources earmarked to secondary theme social innovation. However, the National ESF OP programme states that Social innovation in the two thematic objectives addressed is about developing, testing, applying, spreading and evaluating innovative methods and practices for skills development, employment and integration efforts. Indeed, as the interviewee argues referring to the EU Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013), the Social Fund shall promote Social innovation in all areas within its scope and the expected outputs/results of Social innovation interventions are: better adapting employment and labour market policies to social change, stating that Social innovation should be promoted in all areas of the Social Fund's scope at local, regional and national level.

The Employment agency, together with other actors, can improve its way of working with guidance, supervision and internships; or try different ways of working with employment initiatives. The Social Fund will support initiatives aimed at developing efforts to counteract early drop outs among students. Social companies as well as non-profit activities play an important role in creating new innovative ways to incorporate unemployed individuals into working life, including people far from the labour market, for example through work-integrated social enterprises. In order to enable an effective evaluation of the results and effects, national and regional funding can finance evaluation, analysis and dissemination activities.

PAX 2 aims at developing or expanding the application of successful methods that strengthen the transition to work for the programme's priority groups. Work undertaken needs to contribute to a solution to the social needs that are in place for achieving the established goals. The efforts may include both participants in the priority groups and persons who, within the framework of their activities, can contribute to the achievement of the programme's objectives. Frequently, collaboration between stakeholders is an important component in finding solutions that facilitate transition to work.

The projects themselves are expected to work with a focus on results. To monitor this, the projects will continuously and systematically monitor and evaluate their operations and the results, to make sure they stay in the desired direction. The Social Fund provides opportunities for trying new ways of working that can complement and develop the national labour market and social policy. Therefore, it is important to work with monitoring and evaluation in order to be able to determine what gives good results and why. Even when projects apply existing working methods, it is important to follow up the activities to follow the development and what results are achieved.

Initially, the ESF did not have enough knowledge about how Social innovation has evolved within the framework of the Social Fund, according to the respondents. In the light of this, the MA has taken the initiative to order a knowledge-based inventory, partly to increase the knowledge of Social innovation within the Social Fund and partly to look into how the operational programme has incorporated Social innovation. The inventory is scheduled to be completed by early summer of 2018.

4.6.3 Main findings

Social innovation comes partly from developing new services, methods, organisational methods or practices that are social in their means and goals. An example is the Supported Employment method. The method aims to support people who are far from the labour market to find, retain and maintain work in the open labour market. The method is a good tool for building sustainable social innovations through a bottom-up and top-down perspective. The incorporation of **horizontal principles** is another example: the principles give the stakeholders as well as the authorities the tools to ensure methods in which the ESF target groups are actively involved in Social innovation processes, rather than passive recipients of efforts.

Social innovation is a complex area. The concept of Social innovation can encompass many parts and there still exists a lot to be learned. One lesson to draw is that it is necessary to develop models for how Social innovation can be integrated into the projects and the agency's work in Sweden, to increase the potential for innovation and effectiveness of the implementation of the Social Fund and increase the potential for Social innovation in the next programming period.

It is too early to draw any lessons for the remaining programming period or for the next one, but the respondents in Sweden tend to believe that **the best solutions for social innovations are found at the local level**. Although at present it might be difficult to get projects connected to Social Innovations started since it is a new area, knowledge and expertise is being gathered at present, which may make them succeed better in the coming project period. It is believed to be a promising way to work, which contributes to smaller associations daring to participate, which have simpler work tasks to offer but often are afraid of taking responsibility for the individuals they shall receive. If it is possible to find forms to solve this, a lot will however be gained.

There is **potential for synergy with other ESIF instruments**, such as the ESF, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Regional Development Fund. Through

cooperation, the objective is to simplify the implementation of the programmes, both for the authorities and for potential beneficiaries. The aim is to promote synergies and avoid overlaps at work, so that funds are used efficiently.

Evaluation needs to take due account of the fact that many project outcomes may take place after the project has ended and that, if not properly addressed, those results may never be captured.

5 Conclusions, lessons learned and Recommendations

This chapter synthesizes the findings of the analysis and the lessons learned therefrom and recommends changes which would improve the ESF support to SI in the next programming period. The chapter is structured into three sections: the first one addresses the research questions regarding effectiveness, relevance, coherence, EU added value, efficiency and sustainability. In the second one, the main lessons learned are presented. The third one presents a series of recommendations for the current programming period and for the post-2020 period.

5.1 Effectiveness, relevance, added value, efficiency and sustainability of SI

5.1.1 Effectiveness and efficiency

The mapping of social innovation across the ESF initiatives based on the previously discussed conceptual model highlights how the ESF OPs follow a very broad range of approaches in promoting SI and this in turn is reflected in the contribution of SI in promoting a more effective and efficient ESF.

The analysis shows how EU member States' projects and initiatives pay high attention on three SI dimensions, which comprise by far the most frequently addressed issues. These dimensions are:

- **Novelty:** The vast majority of the OPs highlight how novelty is at the heart of social innovation. EU member States put significant effort on delivering initiatives consisting of new and different ways of approaching unsolved social issues and, therefore, encompassing new processes and relationships. The most frequent type of novelty consists of new processes put in place by public and private actors and/or formal and informal actors. At the same time, novelty is often based on the implementation of new relationships and partnerships, bringing to a high diffusion of multi-disciplinary approaches to social innovation. Such a relevance assigned to novelty highlights a heightened awareness among EU States of the importance of shifting the focus from a purely top-down approach to an increasingly bottom-up and participatory one, based on a distribution of ownership and governance rights among the ecosystem.
- **Social mission:** Around two thirds of the OPs draw high attention on social mission, providing detailed information on this dimension. Many OPs link their actions to motivations emerging from local communities. Such a focus goes hand in hand with a spur in the interest accorded to the empowerment of local communities, which have become key players for the development and implementation of socially impactful solutions. Both the leverage of social motivations and the empowerment of local actors represent core elements within the social mission of a large majority of ESF initiatives.
- **Needs:** The reported social innovation actions most frequently focus on vulnerable groups, such as NEETs, women, migrants and refugees. One example of this significant emphasis are the many youth entrepreneurship initiatives developed within the ESF framework. Interestingly, an important role is also played by projects aimed at supporting positive levels of work-life balance within EU States. By encompassing and integrating different aspects such as welfare, HRM practices and private and family life issues, this focus on work-life balance further underlines the multi-dimensional nature of social innovation.

Conversely, the analysed OPs devoted less attention to the following dimensions:

- **Follow-up:** The OPs provide scarce information on the aftermath dimension. Such a lack of information can be related to two reasons in particular. Firstly, scarce emphasis is put

on promoting and sharing positive achieved results: raising the awareness on this aspect could help to diffuse successful social innovation projects and to make such best practices available to the overall ecosystem. A second reason is linked to the high focus on vulnerable groups observable in most of the projects illustrated in the analysed OPs. The monitoring, evaluation and report of the “aftermath” of implemented actions do not often represent the leading objectives of this type of projects, which mainly focus on delivering high social impact and immediate alleviation of pressing issues.

- International networks: Very few OPs address this important dimension. Fostering international networks that engage EU States in shared actions would be of high importance in terms of both dissemination of positive outcomes and best practices and cross-fertilization of competences and experiences between different Member States. Accordingly, it would be useful to increase the number and magnitude of such networks, to raise more awareness on their potential beneficial impacts and to define a common framework in order to effectively disclose and share the achieved results and the potential “lessons” deriving from already existing networks.
- Multi-stage process: Very few OPs are truly structured through all the six steps of the social innovation process. In fact, although some OPs take into account several steps of the multi-stage process, most of them do not contextualize such steps in a well-structured flow that could point out the best path to follow in order to deliver effective outcomes. Every single step brings its own needs in terms of resources, efforts and actions and all the six steps show some forms of interdependencies between one another. Therefore, being aware of the multi-stage nature of the social innovation process is of high importance.

These assumptions draw the attention on a need for more effective mechanisms for the evaluation of the impact of the many initiatives developed under ESF. In fact, as confirmed by both the analysis on the operational matrix and the case studies presented in the report, social innovation is a complex and multi-dimensional concept still showing an experimental nature when it comes to translating it into practice. Within this context, many EU Member States have set up projects and initiatives aimed at tackling unsolved social issues in new and innovative ways. They are often recent and locally focused actions, partially explaining the existing mismatches in the communication and promotion of the social innovation dimensions. Despite these discrepancies, the case studies presented in this report raise attention on the importance of two particular aspects:

- Multi-stakeholder governance: Designing and implementing a multi-stakeholder approach for the governance of social innovation programmes is often seen as a key aspect. Many OPs, in fact, show how a multi-stakeholder and participatory governance based on co-creation processes and de-institutionalisation of policy design can support the provision of high quality and cost-effective social initiatives.
- Political support: In parallel with the relevance of a multi-stakeholder and participatory governance, many OPs highlight how an effective political support is also needed for the design and implementation of sound social innovation actions. Such a positive support from policy-makers plays a key role in developing a friendly environment that facilitates the emergence of interrelations and new types of partnerships between different actors, thus bringing to a change in the ways social policies are designed and set in motion.

Conversely, there is a lack of attention on reporting and promoting effective streams for long-term economic sustainability and on the evaluation and comparison of goals, processes and achieved results (i.e., the accountability dimension of the conceptual model). As far as sustainability is concerned, this dimension is taken into account mainly by social entrepreneurship programmes: broadening the focus to other types of projects would be of high relevance. These mismatches in both communication activities and operational focuses put

forward by EU States, coupled with the complex and multi-dimensional nature of social innovation, further confirm the need for a common framework that could support both the understanding and delivery of socially impactful solutions. In this regard, by providing specific core dimensions that encompass the many defining features of social innovation, the conceptual model presented in this report could support the definition of such common framework for EU States in order to communicate their goals, intended processes and achieved results in the most aligned and consistent way possible. This would be a highly relevant step that could help the establishing of social innovation as a widely recognized policy tool to be used to address social issues and to provide answers to different communities' needs.

Concerning cost-effectiveness **no available evidence** has been collected on whether methods employed in promoting social innovation are cost-effective. As explained, available indicators are limited to OPs that programmed their SI actions through a dedicated PA. Moreover, most of these indicators report a limited degree of implementation. Therefore, it is not possible to compare the results of SI actions with the average ESF actions and thus conclude whether they are more or less cost effective. Yet, some OPs include evaluation actions which can shed some light on this issue. For example, in Greece some OPs compare the results of SI actions with a control group with similar socio-economic characteristics, which could serve to build cost-effectiveness indicators.

5.1.2 Relevance

As shown in Chapter 3, most of SI actions consider the social needs dimension and are thus relevant to the most pressing societal challenges. **Human wellbeing** is considered by the majority of OPs when planning SI actions (73,9% of OPs participant in e-Survey). This often involves actions to improve the quality of **education**, improving the match between the skills demanded by the labour market and those taught by the education system, or towards reducing early school leaving. **Health** is also frequently addressed, with special attention to the needs of ageing population and to the implementation of technology-based SI approaches to improve the quality of health care sector.

Societal challenges and systemic changes are less targeted by OPs (35,7% of OPs participant in e-Survey). The most common challenges concern the adaptation to technological change, population ageing or territorial unbalances. Actions aimed to improve the situation of **vulnerable groups** are especially frequent (87,3% of OPs). Both E-Survey results and mapping of actions show that few OP target one single concrete vulnerable group (refugees or NEETs), but that in general they are diversified into many.

Several OPs direct their SI actions towards the achievement of **Europe 2020 targets**. A limited share of OPs describe a link between their SI actions and the latest CSRs related to SI, such as national/regional strategies covering SI. Portugal is an exception on this, through the Portugal Social Innovation Initiative (see PT Case Study).

5.1.3 EU added value

The existing documentation and the experts' insights have contributed to the identification of four added-value sources of ESF support to SI:

- First, promoting SI at EU level through the European Social Fund enables **experimentation of new ideas and approaches**. Several E-Survey respondents point to ESF support to SI as the "lab" of new policies at the national or the regional level. ESF permits to make experiments, to test ideas and to develop procedures (FI)

and makes it possible to think outside of the box (LU). Thus, new models can be tested and if they prove to be successful, they can be further developed and implemented in national policies (BG, DE, LV). The ESF is a fundamental public investment instrument necessary to develop innovative solutions and intervention models capable of responding adequately to existing societal problems in various areas of public policy. In other words, the promotion of SI through the ESF has made it possible to innovate national policies and strategies (PT). As a concrete, example, in Finland ESF support to SI has promoted the development of a governmental new integration plan and a more open society to migrants; and in Germany it has contributed to the social integration of people who are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market and threatened by social exclusion and poverty.

- Second, the support of ESF to SI **complements national policies**, such as in Sweden, where the ESF support to SI is regarded as a complement to Swedish labour policy. Similarly, in Spain, it promotes the improvement of the quality of general policies and the participation of new entities. It also promotes the **creation of new partnerships** with new approached (DE, HU).
- Third, the ESF also brings added value to the national political strategy through the **promotion of social entrepreneurship and the social innovation ecosystem**. Concretely, it supports training of actors improving the capabilities and sustainability of social economy entities (PT, Portugal Social Innovation initiative).
- Fourth, ESF allows for **mutual learning activities at EU level. Mutual learning activities reduce the risks of trying new approaches while dropping experimentation costs**, as well as disseminating social innovation approaches that have been already successfully tested. This has been carried out for example through the creation of international networks (ES, FR), or establishing regional offices for social innovation to bring ideas from other countries (DE).

5.1.4 Coherence

In general terms, the information about **synergies with other funding instruments**, such as EaSI or Horizon 2020, is scarce. A few OPs do not plan SI actions under ESF but develop their own SI agendas within the EaSI framework (OP of Navarre, ES).

Synergies with ERDF or with RIS3 strategies are more frequent. Indeed, several OPs develop their SI actions with the main purpose of supporting their regional development agendas or RIS3 (research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation). These OPs frequently conceive the development of the regional economy as a means for the creation of jobs, which facilitates the participation in the labour market of vulnerable persons and thus contributes to reduce poverty. Thus, regional development is supported from the SI field through actions to identify concrete skills that are demanded by strategic sectors and provide the training/education needed. Technological change often plays a guiding role for these OPs. Moreover, in some OPs these strategies are combined with actions for the development of entrepreneurship and social economy. Examples of this approach can be found in the mapping section in Chapter 3.

Other OPs combine ERDF and SI interventions to promote local development of deprived areas (Community led local development, CLLD). ERDF funds local infrastructures or housing programmes while SI actions promote the participation of the local community in designing solutions for local problems with the participation of local agents.

5.1.5 Sustainability

For SI to be sustainable it needs to be **effective and efficient**, i.e. it needs to produce social impact on the challenges it addresses, and in a more effective way than traditional solutions. For this to happen, **evidence needs to be rigorously built** so as to show the advantages and transformation potential of SI, compared to other solutions.

Yet, as shown in Chapter 3, the information about the aftermath dimension is limited. Just 9,6% of the 187 ESF OPs report relevant information about the **sustainability** of their SI actions. Some OPs that pay attention to the development of social entrepreneurship include information regarding the sustainability of entrepreneurial projects. Other OPs that create networks (teachers' networks in CZ) or are based on partnerships plan to maintain them after the completion of the actions. In other cases, sustainability is achieved when the social innovation is mainstreamed through regular employment or other welfare policies (assisted training or "dual & inclusive" project on the school to work transition for children with disabilities in DE). More in general, it is considered that an effective and efficient SI initiative is sustainable.

Purely experimental actions are supposed to come to an end and are not necessarily expected to continue, especially if the results are not positive. In this sense, OPs that have sound content about testing and scaling usually provide information about the **replicability** and scaling-up of projects if the results are successful (15,9% of the OPs reported relevant information about replicability of its SI actions).

Finally, some OPs include actions to promote the **diffusion** of successful SI projects and good practices (17,2% of OPs). Diffusion plays a key role in SI, as it can spread the main findings of pilot projects which can be applied in other regions, reducing experimentation costs and inspiring further experimentation.

5.2 Lessons learned

The initiatives aimed at promoting Social Innovation are in the initial phase of implementation and therefore and for some agents these are not ready for the identification of the major critical issues. In the future, the complete implementation of the SI actions programmed will enable for an overall assessment of the 2014-2020 period. However, interesting lessons learned can already be described in this intermediate report. These arise from all the information sources that have contributed to this document: financial and performance indicators, mapping of SI actions across AIRs and OPs, E-Survey and Case Studies.

1. Social Innovation is a still a relatively new concept in ESF

Although there exists sound experience related to social innovation and a wide array of literature on it, a number of loose definitions coexists with the stricter understanding of SI included in art 9 of ESF regulation. As a result, **clarity and uniqueness in understanding about SI is lacking**. This makes difficult the systematization of the information and the measurement of the performance of actions and its outcomes (LU, FI, PT, CY, BG). This novelty and lack of clarity is also behind the variety of approaches in the support for SI in ESF.

Against this background, this report provides a conceptual framework for SI (Chapter 2) based on the existing literature and the expertise and knowledge of a set of key actors consulted. It gathers a set of building blocks, dimensions and elements that should be present in SI initiatives to different degrees, depending on the more or less strict approach to SI adopted. The operational matrix constructed has allowed the screening of all 187 ESF OP as regards these

dimensions and elements and their interactions. The result of this exercise suggests that the majority of OPs follow a rather loose definition of SI and that only a small share follow an experimental (testing, evaluating, upscaling) approach. Deeper analysis about the interactions between dimensions and elements in the ESF OPs should be carried out, with more and better information about the OPs, at the end of the programming period.

Related to this, and with large disparities among countries, in general, **existing capacity to design, implement and evaluate SI policies and initiatives is weak**. Countries with wider and/or longer experience would be able to get closer to the stricter experimental definition of art 9 of ESF regulation while the SI initiatives of countries with less capacity would be rather oriented to innovate processes and/or stakeholders, without properly testing, evaluating and up-scaling them.

2. Partnerships play a key role in SI

The participation of different actors is essential in SI in order to enable an open and bottom-up approach and develop multi-disciplinary solutions. The participation of diverse actors requires the creation of partnerships and multi-stakeholder governance. Despite the fact that there seems to be agreement among MA on that SI actions rely on the engagement and commitment of different actors in order to achieve its social mission, the OPs mapped contain limited information regarding partnerships or on the adoption of participative approaches.

It is important to acknowledge the resources needed to make partnerships work. Partnership building needs time to adapt different organizations to work together and to build mutual trust (Flanders Case Study). Motivation plays a key role as social innovation faces the risk of lack of commitment of relevant actors in the SI process (IT Case Study). Moreover, time resources are needed for dialogue with politicians, local governments and social partners on providing better and more effective implementation schemes of new policy initiatives (LV). The need for networking and coordination is also present, given the involvement of different local and regional agents (ES). In this sense, the importance of a culture of dialogue to be able to work on consensus basis and to find compromises needs to be highlighted (Flanders Case Study).

3. Relationship between participation, scale and objective of SI actions

Some OPs concentrate on a reduced number of actions, which tend to be larger in scope, such as national scale actions (the development of a new legal framework or the implementation of a new strategy for social services at the national level). In contrast, other OPs opt for a wider number of actions, which tend to be smaller and are usually designed and implemented by local communities. There is a relationship between the number and the scope of the actions on the one hand and the degree of participation of civil society and local communities in the design and implementation of SI actions on the other.

A more concentrated model, with a few larger scale actions, tends to involve less direct participation of the local community (if for example only one action is implemented at national level) and is linked with a top-down approach. In contrast, a more extended model, with many actions implemented at the local level, is more likely to count with more direct participation of the local community in the design and implementation of actions, thus linked with a bottom-up approach.

The small scale local SI actions perspective is, in principle, closer to the notion of Social Innovation (openness, multi-disciplinarity, bottom-up approach, new relationships). However, large scale actions often respond to needs that can only be addressed through large projects at regional or national level, possibly with more chances to result in systemic changes, at least in the shorter run. It would be an opportunity cost to discard the social innovation perspective from

large scale projects, as they cover very relevant fields for the society (e.g. Social Security system).

In this sense, there is a challenge to develop methods to overcome the constraints to set up more participative methods for SI large or national scale actions. Technological innovations can facilitate the development of methods that enable the participation of larger number of agents in the identification of needs, design of solutions and implementation of actions.

4. SI as a means or as an end in itself

Both styles described (concentrated or extended) are somehow related with two different views on Social Innovation. One view considers SI as an end in itself. From this perspective it is essential to empower local communities to enable them to identify societal challenges and to participate in the design and implementation of solutions. The other perspective considers SI as a tool to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of social policies. In some cases this is achieved through the implementation of technological innovations which enable for new ways of organization of social or employment policies. Both approaches are not necessarily related with the novelty of actions or their potential to address social needs. They relate with the way of understanding the organization of government and social policies.

These ideas can be summarized on the table next:

Table 20. Views on SI and participation

Number of actions	Size or Scope of actions	SI resources	Decision model	Closer to a perspective of SI as
High	Small	Extended	Bottom-up	As an end in itself
Low	Large	Concentrated	Top-down	As a means

Source: Own elaboration.

5. Combination of bottom-up (participation) with top-down approach (political commitment)

Top-down and bottom-up approaches do not have necessarily to be opposed. Indeed, both approaches can be found in the same MS, be combined and develop synergies. Top-down political support has a sound potential to develop a friendly environment and capabilities that facilitate the development of smaller scale actions with a bottom-up perspective. Portugal Case Study is a good example of this. It counts with a very motivated SI environment at the political level. This allows for good coordination across different ministries and a multisector vision (top-down). At the same time, there is a remarkable participation of the third sector organisations, municipalities and companies, boosted by an “activation team” with the role of promoting SI partnerships, projects and the participation of local communities (bottom-up).

Other Case Studies lead to similar conclusions. Italy Case Study shows that political will is necessary for sound social innovation programmes to be designed and implemented. Indeed, it can be a key motivation factor. In the case of Piedmont, policy makers acknowledged that public budgets could not address new societal challenges in the usual way and that innovative processes needed to be enacted so as to develop quality services in an economically effective manner. It is thus highly relevant to attract the attention and the support of policy makers, for which the advantages of SI need to be made visible and disseminated.

6. Coordination of SI across OPs and with other instruments

In most of the cases SI has been implemented through one OP. However, in some cases a single entity has been created or appointed for the specific purpose of developing and coordinating the **social innovation strategy in ESF through several OPs**. In Portugal, the governmental

initiative *Portugal Social Innovation* is an intermediate body of two OPs (Social Inclusion and Employment OP and Human Capital OP) and has the mission to promote SI investment markets and SI projects. This transversal management of SI across two OPs through one entity guarantees consistency of SI treatment among the OPs and better communication.

There is **potential for synergies with other ESIF funding instruments**, as these share many horizontal principles with ESF. The aim is to promote synergies and avoid overlaps at work, so that funds are used efficiently. Indeed, multi-funding at local level, with appropriate tools, can complement each other in a very efficient way, which makes it easier to reach the funds' targets together as well as to face the challenges of the local development strategy.

One example of multi-fund synergies in SI actions is reported in the Italy Case Study, through initiatives undertaken in the NOP Metropolitan cities and EARDF, since the agricultural sector has a great social innovation potential when it comes to social agriculture. The Sweden Case Study on the Community-led local development (CLLD) programme is also an example of joint intervention of ERDF and ESF.

7. Limited transnational cooperation

So far, **few OPs take into account transnational cooperation when addressing SI**. In some sense, there seems to be a contradiction between a transnational approach and the adoption of local and participative SI approaches.

However, transnational cooperation was a key pillar of innovative actions under the EQUAL initiative 2000-2006. The initiative focused on supporting innovative approaches, including through a transnational dimension of the projects, aimed at tackling discrimination and disadvantage in the labour market. The Equal Community Initiative has served as the basis for the continuity in current OPs of many projects initiated in that period, especially those developed at the local level. In some cases, SI actions focus on the qualitative transformation of services or on further implementation of innovations developed under EQUAL. In other cases, EQUAL has played an important role in developing partnerships and networks in the past, which nowadays serve to articulate SI actions through a partnership-based approach. The innovative approach of EQUAL continues in SI actions in the ESF 2014-2020 framework. In contrast, transnationality is limited to a reduced share of OPs.

Indeed, transnational cooperation and mutual learning has relevance for SI as **it enhances the replicability** of SI actions by facilitating their implementation in other MS. This helps to reduce considerably experimentation costs, as new SI actions can learn from former actions developed somewhere in the EU and thus design better projects. Given the experimental nature of SI, one of its main products is the knowledge about which methods work better and why when approaching social challenges. Sharing this knowledge across MS enables a high number of agents to benefit from this learning.

Moreover, there are **challenges that cross MS borders**. Beyond **mutual learning actions**, SI projects which are implemented in several MS at the same time have the potential to target these challenges. One example can be found in the Italy Case Study, where synergies have been reached in the framework of transnational cooperation with France (social innovation in the field of tackling the needs of non-accompanied minors) and with Switzerland (tackling the needs of people with psychologic pathologies).

8. Sustainability, replicability and dissemination

For SI to be sustainable it needs to be **effective and efficient**, i.e. it needs to produce social impact on the challenges it addresses, and in a more effective way than traditional solutions.

For this to happen, **evidence needs to be rigorously built** so as to show the advantages and transformation potential of SI, compared to other solutions.

The multistep pathway is a sound methodology towards achieving the desired change: 1) identification of societal changes through open participation; 2) testing of SI solutions; 3) rigorous evaluation, and 4) **up-scaling successful initiatives**. This experimental nature of SI can be integrated in the ESF framework through adequate performance indicators and targets: indeed, the risk of failure inherent to innovation needs to be taken into account; however, social impact needs also to be achieved.

Results need to be disseminated at national, regional and international level. The OPs seldom integrate transnational activities in their SI initiatives. Transnational actions could disseminate the experiences and lessons learned from SI actions so that these can be used to improve the design of future SI actions. **International networks** provide a substantial opportunity to **disseminate and replicate social innovation** approaches that have been already successfully tested. Moreover, international networks can reduce the risks of trying new approaches while dropping experimentation costs. Another possibility is to establish regional offices for social innovation to bring in ideas from other countries.

9. SI as the adaptation of social and employment policies to the challenges posed by technological change.

In addition to the patterns described above, some OPs interpret SI as the adaptation of social and employment policies to technological change. Interestingly, only a small share of ESF OPs (18%) mentions the technological change as a challenge or as a means for improving social and employment policies. However, the accelerating change in societies as a consequence of technological change and digitalisation is a reality. The fact that several OPs interpret SI this way may suggest that the need to adapt social and employment policies to accelerating technological change and to make the best use of it to improve policies is a challenge insufficiently address.

10. SI and work-life balance

Social innovation has a great potential for addressing the needs of better work-life balance. However, only a few OPs include SI actions in this area. These usually include new and more flexible ways of organizing work-schedules within companies. Innovation in the field of personal care of dependent persons and health provision is also present. The potential of technological innovations in this field is high (telecommunications applied to telework or caring for dependent persons).

Some OPs also highlight the potential of work-life balance measures not only for well-being and gender equality but also for the distribution of work and the reduction of unemployment. SI actions that involve a reduction of the working day facilitate the distribution of employment throughout a larger number of workers, reducing unemployment and increasing employment possibilities of those furthest away from the labour market.

11. SI and partnerships offer a chance to deepen democratic structures.

SI that relies on an open and participative approach favours a distribution of decision making towards a wider range of agents, facilitating the participation of citizens in the identification of needs, design of solutions and implementation of projects. It is then a step forward for the development of a more direct democracy, closer to citizenship. For this matter, it is important to take measures to include additional members of the society beyond the classic civil organizations or already established NGOs. Most of OPs which follow a participative approach rely on already existing organizations. It is also important to include actions to reach out to

citizens who are far from civil society organizations and to ensure more direct a wider participation.

5.3 Recommendations

As a result of the conclusions drawn in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, relevance, coherence, added value and sustainability and the lessons learned, a series of recommendations for the current and post 2020 programming period follows:

5.3.1 Recommendations for the current programming period

1. Clarify, agree and communicate on SI concept

There is a need for clarity and consensus on the concept and elements of SI in the context of ESF and its (lack of) coincidence with other frameworks (e.g. other EU programmes -H2020, EaSI- or funds -ERDF, EAFRD, etc.). The conceptual framework presented in this report can be a basis for this clarity and consensus. One possibility could be to make SI based on evidence a compulsory task in the next period; or alternatively to establish different criteria for approval of various types of SI projects, more or less close to art 9 definition.

Whatever the definition and consensus, if disseminated, it can help SI promoters to better focus their projects with the agreed approach/es. Moreover, a clearer understanding of SI can help SI promoters also to report on the AIRs on their SI activities with a deeper understanding of the requirements. Additionally, synergies with other funding instruments would also be facilitated with an agreed definition of SI. As a result of all this, more thorough analysis about the different patterns to address SI in OPs and about the interactions between the dimensions and elements included in the conceptual framework could be carried out.

At national level, SI needs also to be discussed and shared in order to achieve its social transformation potential. Activities should be oriented to national and international communication, to dissemination of good practices, promotion of a SI culture and therefore enhance the social impact and investment in innovative social projects.

2. Increase in SI capacity

Closely linked to the relative novelty and lack of conceptual clarity of SI, but also to the not so easy tasks related with promoting SI and the rather weak capacity of many actors to manage SI, **capacity building specifically on SI is a must**. Indeed, two criticalities have been reported: the difficulty to find experienced and motivated experts that support the MA work in the many fields where they are needed; and the associated need to train new actors to use community resources. Highly trained, motivated and enthusiastic in-house staff is a valuable condition to succeed in social innovation. Therefore, strong training policy specifically on social innovation for MA SI projects managers, technicians and potential partners and beneficiaries is highly recommendable.

There is a clear particular need to increase the **capacity of SI promoters to properly address the testing, evaluating and up-scaling** requirement embedded in art 9 of ESF regulation, thus to monitor the social impact of SI. Only a small share of OPs includes appropriate output and result indicators to measure performance and rigorous evaluation methodologies for the impact evaluations of the SI actions. Indeed, the indicators proposed do not show the extent to which SI actions are innovative, nor do they include important SI features (novelty, process, participants in design, implementation and evaluation, multi-stage process, etc.), such as those described in the operational matrix in this report. Only rarely do OPs consider, for example, evaluation based on a control group so as to assess the differentiated impact of the SI action.

In addition to training, other forms of support could be envisaged to increase capacity, such as mentoring support, collaborative networks of social innovation or collaboration with research and consultancy institutions.

3. Take into account the specificity of SI

An extended belief has been detected that the experimental nature of SI, with and inherent failure risk, is not compatible with the ESF framework, designed to base its evaluation on results. Yet, as repeatedly discussed in this report, SI programmes and projects do deliver results, albeit of a different nature than usual ESF activities, and these results need to be properly targeted, assessed and evaluated. Adequate indicators need to be designed to address this different nature. Thus, when SI "is an end in itself", that is when the objective is to empower stakeholders to enable them to identify societal challenges and to participate in the design and implementation of solutions, then the indicators to monitor this objective should refer to the number of innovations, partnerships or participants in these innovations. In contrast, when SI "is a tool" to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of social policies, then the indicators to use could refer to the number of tests and the number of new policies that are upscaled because they are more effective or efficient than the comparable alternatives. The results in terms of number of persons in employment or gaining a qualification are secondary in SI activities; moreover, acknowledging the experimental nature of SI and the failure risk, target values of these secondary indicators need to be set accordingly.

A stronger culture of SI needs to be built able to control and adequately monitor and evaluate the actual expected outcomes and impact of SI, thereby counteracting the existing impression that the ESF result orientation is SI adverse.

5.3.2 Recommendations for the post 2020 programming period

1. Administrative simplification

The ESF administrative complexity and the low flexibility of programming was reported as creating administrative burdens, limiting the potential of ESF support for SI. Therefore, a more simplified administrative framework is recommended. Among other, through:

- less targets, rules, regulations and indicators;
- less administrative restrictions or increased use of simplified costs options (SCOs) tailored to social innovation;
- simplified and expanded use of **lump sums** can also achieve simplification compared with grants (centered on validating expenditure, outcomes payment and impact measurement). The possibilities of all-or-nothing lump sums for each proposed outcome and of increasing the current EUR 100.000 limit of public contribution could be explored;
- longer implementation periods for **Social Impact Bonds (SIB)** would be needed, since outcomes take longer to be achieved (and measured). Moreover, when payment is linked to outcomes, then the pressure on the SI promoter can be excessive;

2. Simplification and reinforcement of coordination with other instruments

There is potential for creating synergies with other ESIF funding instruments (ERDF, EAFRD, FEADER), as these share many horizontal principles with ESF. There is a challenge to improve the cooperation among them through simplifying the implementation of the programs, both for the authorities and for potential beneficiaries to achieve synergies and avoid overlaps at work, using the funds efficiently.

There is also scope to improving coordination between ESF SI and EaSI or H2020 actions, making better use of potential synergies. In the cases where ESF POs and EaSI or H2020 funded actions are managed by different actors in a country, this may lead to disparity of conceptual SI

approaches in this country, eroding thus the unicity of the message and limiting the potential synergies.

An interesting debate is needed about the convenience, advantages and disadvantages of a centralised management of all SI funds, programs and policies at national level, so as to achieve coherence and a sound SI culture; or, alternatively, a mainstreamed SI approach through which SI is embedded in each fund, program and policy with the respective responsible institutions also responsible for designing and implementing SI. A wide range of possibilities in-between are surely feasible.

3. Transnational cooperation and SI

As reported, the share of OPs that set up or plan to set up international networks only reaches 8,9% (see Chapter 3). This figure suggests that **more effort can be paid in the future** to benefit from the advantages reported above of transnational cooperation and mutual learning.

In the current period, both SI and transnational cooperation are priorities in art 9 and art 10 of ESF regulation respectively and are regulated separately. Art 10 includes the creation of ESF Transnational Platform to facilitate the setting up of transnational partnerships, the exchange of experiences, capacity building and networking, and the capitalisation on and the dissemination of the relevant outcomes. However, as the results in terms of SI show, the Platform has not achieved it to link SI with transnational cooperation. Yet, transnational cooperation is a valuable tool for encouraging social innovation.

The experience of the EQUAL initiative, in which the promotion of SI in a transnational context was required, is a proof of the positive relationship between SI and transnational cooperation and can serve as a reference. The EQUAL initiative is known by seven out of ten MA respondents to the E-survey. However, there is no consensus on whether its design is more adequate to promote SI than the current one: one third of respondents agree but 38% do not consider EQUAL an adequate approach to promote SI.

Thus, **further reflection is needed** on how to better link SI and transnational cooperation. A combination of the approach adopted by EQUAL, linking both SI and transnational cooperation in one initiative, with separate SI and transnational approaches is a possibility. The debate discussed in the previous point on the advantages and disadvantages of a centralised or mainstreamed SI management should also be considered in this context.

6 Annexes

6.1 List of interviewees

Scoping interviews
- Mrs. Marie-Anne Paraskevas, Senior Policy Officer-expert in SI – Unit F1 ESF and FEAD: Policy and Legislation, (30 November 2017);
- Mr. Sacha Piehl, Programme Manager/desk officer - EU policies - ESF Germany-Austria-Slovenia-Croatia, D/5 unit's coordinator for SI, (30 November 2017);
- Mr. Gabor Toth, Evaluation Officer Unit G4 – Evaluation, Impact Assessment, (30 November 2017);
- Ms. Jessica Vilela-Hansraj, Geo-Desk for Portugal –Unit C4 Hungary, UK, Ireland, Portugal, (phone interview on 15 December 2017);
- Ms. Claire Grapeloux, Team Leader Social Innovation Unit C1 – Social investment Strategy, (phone interview 15 December 2017);
- Ms. Josefina Capdevila Penalva, Evaluation Assistant - Unit G4 – Evaluation, Impact Assessment, (19 January 2018).
- Mr. Mr. Stanislav Ranguelov, Geo-desk for Spain and Malta – Unit B4, (23 February 2018)
- Mr. Risto Raivio – Senior Expert in Social innovation - Directorate E, Unit 1 Job Creation, (8 February 2018).
Case Study interviews
<p>SWEDEN: Marianne Öberg-Håkansson, National Coordinator ESF (January 30, 2018) Christin N Granberg, Administrative Officer at The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) (February 2, 2018) Carin Alfredsson, Head of support to CLLD and processes Leader projects on a national level, Jordbruksverket (February 1, 2018) Sören Oscarsson, Executive at Leader area "Leader 3sam" (February 5, 2018)</p>
<p>ITALY: Mr. Gianfranco Bordone, Managing Authority of the ESF OP Piedmont (26 February 2018). Mr. Augusto Ferrari, Assessor for Family, Social and Housing Policies, Piedmont Regional Government (25 February 2018). Mr. Gianfranco Presutti, Head of Economic Development, European Funds and Smart City Department, Municipality of Turin (6 March 2018). Ms Rita Porru and Teresa Cianni, Tecnostruttura (February 1, 2018)</p>
<p>BELGIUM (FLANDERS): Louis Vervloet, ESF MA Flanders (26 January 2018)</p>
<p>PORTUGAL: Mr. Felipe Almeida, President of Social Innovation Portugal (EMPIS) (1 February 2018)</p>
<p>POLAND: Ms. Dominika Tadla, Deputy Director of the ESF Department (5 February 2018) Dr. Paweł Poławski from Instytut Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych (27 February 2018) Ms. Zofia Komorowska and Mr. Jakub Wygnański, both from Fundacja Stoczni (2 March 2018)</p>
<p>GERMANY:</p>

ESF Performance and thematic reports
The contribution of ESF to Social Innovation

Henriette Meseke, Nils Pagels, National Agency for Horizontal Objectives within the European Social Fund (Equality - anti-discrimination - environmental sustainability) (19 February, 2018)

Thomas Schleifnecker, Lower Saxony Ministry of Federal and European Affairs and Regional Development - Department of the Promotion Guidelines Social Innovation (23 February, 2018)

Juliane Bauer, Stelle für soziale Innovation der Freien Wohlfahrtspflege (Office for Social Innovation of the Free Welfare) (8 March, 2018)

6.2 Description of the most relevant SI interventions analysed by the case studies

6.2.1 Belgium Flanders

"JUMP lab", how to guide young people away from the low-skilled labour market

The research project "JUMP-lab" focuses on 2 emerging labour market problems: on the one hand, the group of low-skilled and unskilled young people, who will move into the labour market in Flanders in the coming years; on the other hand, the world has seen a constantly accelerated change in the labour market showing a growing need for employees with a number of unique future job skills that are not sector-specific or subject-specific and are currently under-stated within the educational ecosystem. According to the World Economic Forum, these future skills are: 1. Complex problem solving. 2. Critical thinking. 3. Creativity. 4. People management 5. Coordinating with others. Within the programmes for the low-skilled, these skills are only very limited, so that low-skilled youngsters cannot play these skills as unique added value on the labour market and are totally unable to use them through personal development. The challenges to research in this study are:

- Which levers mean that low-skilled and unskilled school-leavers, despite their lack of a (high-quality) diploma, can still build a successful professional career when they leave secondary education.
- Which needs have low and unskilled school leavers to whom the larger educational ecosystem currently does not respond.
- Which role can Future skills play in diverting future, low-skilled and unskilled young people. Within the broader educational ecosystem, the research will focus on third-level secondary. In doing so, a specific link with STEM education is made, because STEM's multidisciplinary approach offers the best breeding ground for research on future skills.

Call under PAx 5: Innovation through experimentation. This call aims to strengthen working people (including self-employed persons) and / or job-seekers (= final target group) in the Flemish labour market by developing a new service, aimed at this target group. In this way, the (short-term future) labour force can be better supported so that it can easily and quickly find a job with good career prospects at every stage of working life. In a first phase, organisations in this call are given the opportunity to examine a societal challenge, for which no suitable answer exists today, and to define an answer to this challenge. In a second phase, the aim is for the innovative solution to be developed in the form of a new service and be iteratively tested by means of prototypes. Then the service is performed in the form of a pilot that is evaluated on impact.

Date: 01 Nov 2017 to 30.06.2020

Total eligible costs approved on request: EUR 299.942

<https://www.esf-vlaanderen.be/nl/projectenkaart/jump-lab-hoe-jongeren-wegleiden-van-de-laaggeschoolde-arbeidsmarkt>

'Inplacement'

The tension between the available labour force in the labour market and the suitable workforce increases. Although the number of low-skilled people will fall in the coming years, there appears to be a constant group of job-seekers who are available on the labour market, but who cannot get to the workplace. Several barriers prevent a smooth labour integration. The approach of these jobseekers suffocates today in a fragmented policy,

hampering coherent matched results (outcome and impact). As long as labour has a social added value and no replacement function is filled in, a social group seems to be gradually excluded and in the long term to create a new group of inactive people. The central question is therefore what concepts can be developed to prevent this? How can we guarantee "inplacement" for this target group and for society an inclusion of these socially vulnerable people?

Call under PAX 5: Innovation through experimentation.

Date: 01.01.17 to 30.06.2020

Total eligible costs approved on request: € 305.754,00

<https://www.esf-vlaanderen.be/nl/projectenkaart/inplacement>

Adapted Social Profit into Adapted Elderly Care

The project is strongly labour market oriented in two sectors: Social Economy sector and Residential Care and Care for the Elderly. By exchanging and testing good practices, the project wants to investigate whether the Social Economy offers a solution in the context of the labour market problem within the Housing Care and Care for the elderly. The idea is to investigate whether functions within residential and elderly care can be adjusted or split up so that trained health care staff can focus on their care task and not be distracted by non-healthcare related tasks. Discussions with partners in the residential care sector indicate that the current division of tasks is unsustainable. Too many non-care specific tasks ensure a high workload and too little time for their main care task. This mainly concerns logistical tasks that may also be carried out by unskilled employees. The aim is to map which tasks these are and which new jobs can be created within the Social Economy. The Social Economy sector currently faces decreasing structural subsidies within the sector, so that it is opportune to explore new market niches. Thus, the Social Economy will be examined as how can it take over these tasks and in this way facilitate the residential care sector and / or elderly care in the field of logistics. To this end, the following research questions will be addressed: which initiatives and functions can arise? How can these be integrated into the Flemish labour market? Which partnerships should be set up and at what cost? How can the target group employees of the Social Economy be guided, so that they can take over these tasks? Existing initiatives and transnational examples will be mapped, trying to translate them into the Flemish context and test a number of initiatives within a strong partnership. Dissemination of the results of these tests within the two sectors and formulation of a number of policy recommendations based on the results will close the project.

Call under PAX 5: transnationality, access to employment⁴⁷

Date: 01.01.2018 – 30.09.2021

Total eligible costs approved on request: EUR 290.000

⁴⁷ <https://www.esf-vlaanderen.be/nl/projectenkaart/adapted-social-profit-adapted-elderly-care>

6.2.2 Germany

6.2.2.1 ESF FEDERAL OP

Section 14.5 of the AIR 2016 lists four initiatives in the realm of social innovation:

- ESF Social Partner Initiative "Securing the skilled labour base: vocational training and education (CVET) and gender equality" ("Fachkräfte sichern")
- Federal ESF Integration Directive
- TLN Mobility
- JOBSTARTER plus

In the following paragraphs we provide a short summary of these initiatives based on desk research.

ESF Social Partner Initiative "Securing the skilled labour base: vocational training and education (CVET) and gender equality" ("Fachkräfte sichern")⁴⁸

The programme seeks to support the social partners and in-company stakeholders in securing the supply of skilled labour and adapting to demographic change:

- Creation of staff development structures, particularly by upgrading the skills of key individuals and by implementing CVET measures for older workers, women, semi-skilled and low-skilled workers and staff from a migrant background
- Creation of interlinked CVET structures at SMEs and implementation of in-company and supra-company CVET measures for SMEs
- Initiation of dialogue across branches of industry
- Development of work time models and career pathway plans geared towards specific phases in a worker's life
- Strengthening the ability of stakeholders within the business to act to promote equality of opportunities

The planned measures shall make a contribution to establishing systematic further training in businesses, organisations and industries and to promote equality of opportunity in business enterprises. Specific guidelines are developed and implemented in close collaboration with the partners. Collective agreements on training or agreements with the social partners on skills development and equal opportunities are a prerequisite to be eligible for funding.

The initiative is a joint initiative of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Confederation of German Employers' Associations and the Confederation of German Trade Unions. It is the follow-up programme to the "weiter bilden" and "Gleichstellen" programmes, focussing on further training and equal opportunities, from the 2007-2013 ESF programming period.

Target group: enterprises, particularly SMEs and social partners

Number of projects: 52 at present

⁴⁸ <http://www.esf.de/portal/EN/Funding-period-2014-2020/ESF-Programmes/bmas/ESF-social-partner-initiative.html>

Implementation period: 2015.04.08 - 2020.12.31

Federal ESF Integration Directive⁴⁹

The aim of the Federal ESF Integration Directive is to integrate young people and young adults with special difficulties entering work or training gradually and sustainably into the labour market, more specifically make it possible for them to get an "Abitur" (German school-leaving certificate).

The measures of the ESF Integration Directive are promoted within the framework of a uniform, binding implementation structure. Companies or institutions of the public administration and job centres must be actively involved in the cooperation alliances. The binding structure should facilitate the participants' access to a job/training position individually and structurally. In addition, the individual integration processes of the participants are to be optimized by strengthening the agency work of the job centres/employment agencies and the resulting integration services through targeted linking with measures under this guideline. This is to ensure that the funded projects meet the requirements of the regional labour markets and are embedded in the regional labour market policies, in particular to avoid isolated solutions in project funding and to ensure the sustainability of successful project work following funding.

Measures under the integration policy are implemented by cooperative networks with the active involvement of business enterprises and/or public administration in tandem with regional public employment services (job centres/employment agencies) and will focus on three priority areas. This brings about sustainable structural improvements to facilitate access to the labour market for the target groups.

The priority areas of the cooperative networks are:

- **Integration, not exclusion (IsA):**

Project providers are free to develop measures tailored to the needs of the target groups within the framework of the defined goal (gradual and sustainable integration of the target group of persons aged 18 to under 35 years into employment or training). This ensures that the funding guidelines leave room for innovative approaches on the part of the local stakeholders.

- **Integration through exchange (IdA)**

IdA supports transnational mobility measures. Aimed at the 18 to under-35s, this priority area helps individuals complete an internship abroad in a European country. Its central component is a two-to-six-month stay abroad (focus on internships), accompanied by individual preparation and follow-up in Germany.

Implementation period: 2014.11.06 - 2019.12.31

Responsible: Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Thematic objective: B: Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination

⁴⁹ <http://www.esf.de/portal/EN/Funding-period-2014-2020/ESF-Programmes/bmas/ESF-integration-directive.html>

- **Integration of asylum seekers and refugees (IvAF):**

This priority area focuses on measures specially directed at the target group of asylum seekers and refugees. No age limit applies and measures involve targeted advice and guidance, company-focused activation and skills development, as well as placement in work or training.

Implementation period: 2014.11.06 - 2019.12.31

Responsible: Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Thematic objective: B: Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination

Target group: Young people, young adults, Unemployed, Migrants, people with a foreign background. In addition, individuals under 35 years with particular difficulty entering employment or training, including the long-term unemployed. Also for persons whose particular difficulty in entering employment or training stems from the uncertainty of their residence status (asylum seekers and refugees).

Number of projects: 128⁵⁰

TLN Mobility⁵¹⁵²

The coordinated programme call for transnational mobility measures with coordinated minimum standards developed within the framework of the transnational learning network TLN Mobility under the leadership of Germany represents a completely new approach to cooperation between member states at ESF level and will be tested for the first time in this funding period.

The ESF-funded Learning Network on Transnational Mobility Measures for Disadvantaged Youth and Young Adults (TLN Mobility) is a partnership between 11 Member States and regions in Europe to tackle youth unemployment through transnational mobility. The partners recognise the positive impact that work stays abroad have on the prospects for young disadvantaged people to enter training or employment. They have therefore planned for transnational mobility measures to be supported through their national and regional ESF 2014-2020 programmes.

In order to facilitate transnational collaboration between Member States in this field, TLN Mobility developed a Coordinated Call on Transnational Mobility Measures for Disadvantaged Youth and Young Adults. The Coordinated Call defines common parameters on target group, eligibility of costs, quality and implementation structures for transnational ESF mobility measures. An additional Manual of Guidance provides further recommendations and detailed examples for implementation.

In April 2017, Basque Country, Catalonia, Czech Republic, Galicia, Germany, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden and Trento have launched national/regional calls on mobility measures

⁵⁰ Link: [list of projects](#)

⁵¹ <http://www.esf.de/portal/EN/Funding-period-2014-2020/TLN-Mobility/content.html>

⁵² http://www.esf.de/portal/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/tln/about-tln-mobility.pdf;jsessionid=916EA3413DB413A5FB919622FD6AD63D?__blob=publicationFile&v=1

for disadvantaged youth and young adults based on the Coordinated Call. Further calls in 2017 are foreseen by Slovenia, Andalucia and Italy.

JOBSTARTER plus

The Jobstarter plus funding projects (KAUSA Service Centers) support SMEs in the prospective acquisition of young refugees as potential apprentices and future specialists. This includes the provision of key information to SMEs for the training of refugees in the workplace as well as initial and reprimand counselling of young refugees and their parents to the relevant institutions. For example, the service centres de The Jobstarter plus funding projects (KAUSA Service Centers) support SMEs in the prospective acquisition of young refugees as potential apprentices and future specialists. This includes the provision of key information to SMEs for the training of refugees in the workplace as well as initial and reprimand counselling of young refugees and their parents to the relevant institutions. For example, the service centres develop and test innovative instruments and approaches to reach the target groups, target group-specific event formats or offer competent advice for SMEs in individual and group formats. Funding will be provided for innovative training concepts and services that will enable SMEs to attract skilled workers and reach new target groups. This also includes the development of business-oriented concepts to improve the transition from school to company-based training. The regionally designed projects test current VET topics in practice.

Goals of "JOBSTARTER plus" are the strengthening in-company vocational training as well as the development of new skilled worker potential.

Implementation period: 01.01.2015 - 31.12.2022

Responsible: Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Thematic objective: C: Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning

Tailwind - for workers and businesses in the social economy

The aim of the "Tailwind" (Rückenwind) programme is to maintain and support the employability of workers in the social economy in conjunction with integrated and sustainable personnel and organisational development in the associations and organisations. "Tailwind" is the follow-up programme to "Tailwind - for workers in the social economy" from the 2007-2013 ESF programming period.

Implementation Period: 2015.04.01 – 2020. 12. 31

Responsible: Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Thematic objective: Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility⁵³

Micro-mezzanine fund

The aim of the micro-mezzanine fund is to increase the economic equity of business start-ups and small businesses through silent participations of up to € 50.000 and support these enterprises in the long-term financing of their businesses. This seeks to strengthen the

⁵³ <http://www.esf.de/portal/EN/Funding-period-2014-2020/ESF-Programmes/bmas/Tailwind.html>

performance and competitiveness of business start-ups and small enterprises and safeguard jobs.

Implementation period: 2014-2020

Responsible: Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Thematic objective: Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility⁵⁴

Encouraging Youth in the Neighbourhood (JUSTiQ)

In selected model municipalities nationwide, the "Encouraging Youth in the Neighbourhood" programme ("JUGEND STÄRKEN im Quartier" - JUSTiQ) is testing how municipal structures and collaboration across multiple areas of jurisdiction must be organised in order to improve individual support for young people. Geographically, the pilot programme is concentrated on the development areas in the "Socially Integrated City - Investing in the Neighbourhood" urban development assistance programme and other disadvantaged areas where the situation for young people is particularly difficult.

The core objectives of the measures are to:

- stabilise and strengthen personally and socially disadvantaged young people
- develop integration prospects, where possible in the form of training positions or employment

Implementation period: 2015.01.01 – 2018.12.31

Responsible: Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Thematic objective: B: Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination⁵⁵

Career Change - Men and Women in Early Childhood Education and Care

The federal pilot programme "Career Change - Men and Women in Early Childhood Education and Care" provides support to pilot projects that create or optimise training formats for adults aimed at male and female career changers wanting to become state recognised educators. The aim is to give men and women the opportunity of life-long learning while at the same time earning their livelihood – regardless of their previous employment status.

Implementation period: 2015.06.01 - 2020.08.31

Responsible: Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Thematic objective: C: Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning⁵⁶

⁵⁴ <http://www.esf.de/portal/EN/Funding-period-2014-2020/ESF-Programmes/bmwi/Micro-mezzanine%20fund.html>

⁵⁵ <http://www.esf.de/portal/EN/Funding-period-2014-2020/ESF-Programmes/bmfsfj/encouraging-youth-in-the-neighbourhood.html>

⁵⁶ <http://www.esf.de/portal/EN/Funding-period-2014-2020/ESF-Programmes/bmfsfj/career%20change.html>

Promoting vocational education for sustainable development

The planned measures are centred on two action areas:

- Skills development across trades in the energy-efficient refurbishment of buildings
- Greening of jobs - access and possibilities for action

Implementation period: 2015.01.01 - 2018.12.31

Responsible: Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety

Thematic objective: C: Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning

6.2.2.2 ESF OP BAYERN "Mainfranken 4.0"

Future-proof through innovation + qualification

„Technologie- und Gründerzentrum Würzburg GmbH“

- 32 qualification trainings in the field of digitization
- Improving the professional skills and digital skills of 320 employees
- Transfer between universities, research and regional economy to increase digital economic activity
- Improving the innovative capacity of companies and employees⁵⁷

„Avanta München e.V.“

Virtual University of Bavaria:

- Qualification in the field of office management
- Acquisition of the ECDL
- Objective: To improve placement chances of the long-term unemployed
- permanent vocational reintegration
- 10 passes since 2009⁵⁸

Manage it! – Part-time training

- Pre-qualification of mothers and fathers to take part-time training or part-time retraining
- Assistance in finding a training place in a company
- Accompaniment during the training
- since 2012 placement of more than 70 participants in more than 40 training companies⁵⁹

DEEP: Den digitalen Wandel verstehen und fördern („Understanding and promoting digital transformation“)

Vocational advanced training centres of the Bavarian economy (bfz) gGmbH

- 125 daily workshops in the field of digitization

⁵⁷ <http://www.tgz-wuerzburg.de/leistungen/bildung/mainfranken-4-0>

⁵⁸ <http://www.esf.bayern.de/aktuelles/berichte.php#p5>

⁵⁹ <http://www.esf.bayern.de/projektbeispiele/ausbildung.php>

- Raising awareness, promoting digital literacy and developing best practice approaches
- 1250 participants
- Imparting knowledge and skills - from basics to trend forecasts and digital know-how⁶⁰

Guide – Advice and support for business start-ups

Project promoter: Regio M

- Support in start-up of women
- Support for individual and workable solutions for the reconciliation of work and family life
- All 30 members are committed to improving the framework conditions for start-ups

6.2.2.3 ESF OP BRANDENBURG

The 2016 AIR points out that in 2016, preparations for the envisaged Funding Directive had been completed so far that it was considered likely that funding would start in 2017. In addition, it was not possible to carry out an interview with a representative from the federal state in time. Cited below are one measure of the new funding period that fulfils the above criteria as well as an initiative from the previous funding period.

Förderprogramm Brandenburger Innovationsfachkräfte (Funding Programme Brandenburg Innovation Experts)

Small and medium-sized enterprises with a permanent establishment in the state of Brandenburg are supported by The Investment Bank of the Federal state of Brandenburg (ILB) in implementing innovative measures with the aid of special innovation experts. The funding aims to support the employment of highly qualified young professionals in Brandenburg SMEs at an early stage and thus to keep them in the country. In addition, the transfer of knowledge should foster business innovation and growth. Duration of the support is between 6 and 12 months in the form of scholarships for students or support for salaries of working students or so-called innovation assistants. Period of validity of the Directive is 19 November 2014 to 31 December 2020.⁶¹

Innovationen brauchen Mut – IbM (Innovations need courage)⁶²

The project IbM provided tailor-made consulting and coaching for innovative founders in the pre-founding phase. The programme specifically supported people who wanted to start a business in the state of Brandenburg with new ideas and innovative approaches. The goal was to help founders and start-up teams develop viable business models that create long-term jobs and retain them in the region. In addition to the new start-up idea, it also assesses whether the project fulfils the requirements for a sustainable business model and whether the founder has the capabilities to implement the project. In addition, an idea

⁶⁰ <http://www.esf.bayern.de/projektbeispiele/index.php>

⁶¹ <http://www.masgf.brandenburg.de/cms/detail.php/bb1.c.334254.de>

<https://www.ilb.de/de/arbeitsuebersicht-der-foerderprogramme/brandenburger-innovationsfachkraefte/>

⁶² <http://www.esf.brandenburg.de/sixcms/detail.php/320676>

and founding laboratory for cultural and creative business start-up ideas and start-up initiatives in the northeast of Brandenburg was established (ILab).

The project is being implemented by the IBF - Institut Berufsforschung and Unternehmensplanung Medien e.V. and the ZukunftsAgentur Brandenburg (ZAB). From March 2010 to December 2012, 109 projects were funded with a total of 145 persons. The proportion of women was about 28 percent. The average age of the assisted persons was 40 years. Around 60 percent of the subsidized participants actually established a business.

6.2.2.4 ESF OP LOWER SAXONY

The 2016 AIR points out that, as the funding only started in 2016, the results cannot yet be assessed. During the Conference "Opening up to an Era of Social Innovation" at Lisbon on 27.11.2017, several examples of innovative projects for social services and rural areas in Lower Saxony were presented⁶³:

Telemedicine⁶⁴

In order to cope with the lack of doctors in the Osnabrück region, medicines can be consulted via videoconferences on tablets by the nurses actually visiting the clients. The medical assistants, who will go to the home visits to the patients in the future, were trained in an eleven-day theory and in a 40-hour practical training to "telemedicine care assistant for primary care" (cost ca. EUR 3.000). Social security funds are ready to pay for the services of the doctors. The pilot project is initially scheduled for one year until August 2018.

Social Franchise "Bürgermarkt"⁶⁵

The project has started in 2009. The Bürgermarkt Hagen in Bremen is a marketplace of citizens for citizens. People can rent part of the Citizens' Market in the form of a shelf and fill this part with unneeded items. Bürgermarkt takes over the actual sales of the goods. After the rental period, the profit is paid to the seller.

From 01.08.2016 onwards, the project receives ESF funding for two years. The idea is to transfer the concept to other places. During the funding period, four more markets are intended to be opened.

Cash provided by care services

The idea is that elderly people that cannot go to the bank anymore can collect their money from the care services.

⁶³ <http://www.videliostreaming.com/SocialinnovEU/>

⁶⁴ <https://www.noz.de/lokales/osnabrueck/artikel/944865/wie-teleaerzte-dem-landarztmangel-den-kampf-ansagen>

<https://www.noz.de/lokales/osnabrueck/artikel/830822/osnabruecker-hausarzt-bietet-sprechstunde-per-video-chat-an#gallery%260%260%26830822>

⁶⁵ <http://buergermarkt.com/>

6.2.3 Italy

6.2.3.1 Multi-fund OP Metropolitan cities

Within the architecture of the OP, social innovation projects are promoted and managed by the Intermediate Bodies. A screening of the projects undertaken under Priority Axis 3⁶⁶ in the metropolitan areas (14 in total) shows that the most covered topics of the projects are:

- **Multi-disciplinary paths to promote access to housing of an adequate standard for vulnerable groups:**
 - housing inclusion of all vulnerable groups and families at risk of social and housing exclusion (Turin, Milan, Bologna, Florence, Reggio Calabria),
 - housing support for Roma, Sinti and Camminanti (Milan, Genova, Venice, Bologna, Naples, Palermo, Cagliari),
 - promotion of independent living for persons with disabilities (Milan, Venice, Naples, Reggio Calabria),
 - promoting the overcoming of nomad camps (Rome, Catania),
 - providing temporary support to women victims of violence (Rome),
 - promoting experiences of co-housing (Bari),
 - providing temporary housing along with interventions promoting personal and work autonomy (Naples, Messina).

- **Promotion of community welfare:**
 - collaborative welfare in peripheral areas (Milan, Turin),
 - cultural activities of territorial civic collaborations with specific reference to youth and to the phenomenon of new poverties (Bologna),
 - local laboratories of civic engagement and social research in peripheries (Reggio Calabria).
 - microcredit for disadvantaged categories for the creation of new proximity services and associative networks and experiences of self-employment (Bari),
 - Development of a civic crowd-funding platform for stimulating new forms of crowdfunding (Turin).

- **Support to Social Entrepreneurship for the development of innovative services:**
 - Support to the development of innovative services and coaching for the promotion of micro-entrepreneurial activities (Turin, Milan, Cagliari),
 - activation of paths for the creation of social start-ups on assets confiscated from criminal organisations or unused (Reggio Calabria),
 - incubator of ideas to transform innovative ideas in services for the local community (Catania).

- **Low threshold services for homeless, including migrants:** support to existing networks of public and third sector organisations providing proximity services to the homeless, including migrants (Milan, Genova, Cagliari, Catania).

⁶⁶ The screening was made on the webpage of the NOP Metropolitan cities. The list of projects promoted by Metropolitan cities within the National Operational Plan Metropolitan Cities is available at <http://www.ponmetro.it/home/ecosistema/viaggio-nei-cantieri-pon-metro/>.

A brief description of exemplary projects is presented below.

1) Low-threshold services and support for autonomy for socially excluded people (Milan)

The project finances inclusive innovation activities in target areas characterised by high socio-economic criticality. In the identified target areas it promotes the activation of territorial animation services to let latent needs emerge, it supports citizens in the co-design of new services. These objectives are achieved through:

- Training on how to start-up, manage and further develop non-profit organisations or groups of citizens interested in elaborating a project proposal in line with the objectives of the project;
- Capacity building activities for non-profit organisations or groups of citizens interested in elaborating a project proposal in line with the objectives of the project;
- Personalised mentoring for beneficiaries of microcredit loans financed by the National Operational Programme Metropolitan Cities.

Project amount: EUR 3.571.986,13

Duration: December 2016 – December 2023

2) Support services for social housing and for homeless persons in the confiscated properties of Catona and Pellaro (Reggio Calabria)

The intervention aims to create a new Social Housing settlement. The projects set up a functional mix of types of intervention which are flexible enough to respond over time to new citizens' needs. Typical functions are: the provision of temporary housing for people in need, services to citizens for people in difficulty, social enterprise spaces, laboratories, playgrounds for children, places of multi-ethnic integration, exhibition spaces. Final beneficiaries of the intervention are individuals and disadvantaged families in housing due to the loss of work and/or particular family situation. The project includes a series of integrated services which goes beyond the assignment of housing to aim at the inclusion of a family in a precise and identified community through:

- the identification and acceptance of final recipients through the network of social services and proximity centres;
- provision of housing;
- involvement of the recipients in the services and construction of individualised paths of work, social, educational and health inclusion;
- involvement of the local community.

Project amount: EUR 2.352.511,23

Duration: October 2016-December 2020.

3) Support to women victims of violence (Rome)

The intervention provides for the destination of three buildings confiscated from the mafia to be used as anti-violence centre and shelter for women victims of violence.

The project includes a series of actions to support women through a path of exit from domestic violence escalation based on the activation of a series of services (information, training orientation to services and work, psycho-pedagogical support, parenting support, etc.).

Project amount: EUR 2.000.000

Duration: 2017- 2019

6.2.3.2 ESF OP Piedmont

Up to February 2017, only the call related to the first measure has been launched and the selection was ongoing while the present document was being drafted. Therefore there are no projects included in the section.

6.2.4 Poland: National OP (POWER)

"Potencjały – nowe formy kapitału społecznego w gminie Opatów", IPISS

Short description of the project:

The aim of the project is to develop, test and include into policy an innovative model in order to limit the phenomenon of intergenerational transfer of poverty and social exclusion. It can be achieved by changing the mental/cognitive patterns of recipients in accordance to a concept of behavioural economics techniques. The project is addressed to the dysfunctional families, especially to children and youth who are exposed to the impact of social marginalization processes. The model includes direct influence on children and youth through family assistant institution (in Polish: 'asystent rodziny') as well as through cooperation in groups and environmental activation. Also the project use the concept of "blended learning" that combines traditional and digital teaching techniques (using the social e-learning platform). The main result of this project will be an improvement in equalization of opportunities of children and youth who live in the areas of inactive social capital⁶⁷.

Date: 01.02.2017 – 31.08.2019

Total costs: EUR 1.720.346,46 (ESF contribution 1,668,734.46)

„Innowacje na ludzką miarę wsparcie rozwoju mikroinnowacji w obszarze usług opiekuńczych dla osób zależnych”, Stocznia

Description of the project:

This project is an example of an incubator of ideas within which different entities, individuals, groups of persons or an institution/organization from any place in the country can submit an application.

In order to be eligible for funding the innovation should be: addressed to a specific group of people (dependent people or/and people who take care of dependent people); and related to their specific needs (i.e. comfortable and safe movement, comfortable and safe living, access to social life). Also, there are different types of innovations that can be developed within the 'Innowacje na ludzką miarę wsparcie rozwoju mikroinnowacji w obszarze usług opiekuńczych dla osób zależnych' project: a product/tool, a service, a procedure or a way of organizing the activity. Finally, the idea can be somehow related to the functioning of different types of institutions.

There are three stages of support for the incubator:

⁶⁷ Project description: <https://www.ipiss.com.pl/projekt/05-projektbadawczy>, [access 2/13/2018]

- the initial incubation phase that lasts approximately 3 months and supports up to 24 innovative ideas; at the end of this phase the initial plan for the development of the innovation idea has to be prepared;
- the second phase of incubation lasts approximately 2 months and supports up to 12 ideas, based on the assessment of the initial innovation development plans; within this phase, the work on a prototype of solution is carried out and the plan for testing it should be developed;
- the third, testing phase lasts about 6 months; during this phase the idea can be piloted and implemented using a grant, according to the plan and with support of leading organizations⁶⁸

Each idea supported by the incubator can receive a special support from the organization running the project, in this case from Stocznia.

Date: 07.2016 – 03.2019

6.2.5 Portugal

Apps for Goods⁶⁹. A new way to teach Technology

Financed by POISE, **Apps for Good** addresses the high drop-out rate of students in Portugal (the 4th highest in EU), the fact that 35% of Millennials do not have relevant computer skills for work and that 38% of employers claim to struggle with recruiting for open positions. In this context, Apps for Good is an educational technology movement that reaches out to young people through partnerships with formal or non-formal education organisations - schools, colleges, youth centres, computer clubs, among others. It aims at raising young people's awareness of their communities' problems and enabling them to find new solutions to these problems through the use of technology. As part of their extracurricular activities, the young people are challenged to develop technical solutions in the form of applications that help to solve a problem facing their school or the community in which they live. Teachers and students aged 10-18 years' work as a team to respond to relevant issues in their day-to-day lives by creating smartphone or tablet apps. Through **Apps for Good** they have access to digital content and can contact experts from around the world.

The objective to the year 2020 is that 350 schools and 5.250 students have participated in Apps for Good. At present (early 2018), 200 schools, 450 teachers and 3.205 students have already been involved in the initiative.

There is a contest organised yearly so as to make the best initiatives visible.

The winners of the 3rd Edition Apps for Good 16/17 were:

1st Prize | Think Before You Publish

Think Before Publishing is the name of the solution that encourages children to read books by using virtual reality to animate the images of the books and make games about the same contents.

⁶⁸ Project description: <http://www.innowacjespoleczne.org.pl/inkubator-pomyslow>, [access 2/13/2018]

⁶⁹ cdi.org.pt/apps-good/

2º Prize | Articulândia

With the slogan "Articular has never been so spectacular!", Articulandia allows you to have speech therapy sessions, anytime, anywhere and within reach of anyone.

3º Prize | Book Trade

To facilitate the exchange of books between friends and people who go to libraries, schools or universities with the Book Trade solution.

Colorblind App

ColorADD is a color identification system for colorblind people, a pioneer, universal and inclusive alphabet which allows the inclusion of about 350 million people around the world. The ColorADD code is based on three graphic symbols representing the three primary colours. Through the acquired knowledge of the "Colour Addition Theory" taught in the early scholar years, the symbols can be related and the entire colour pallet graphically identified. Black and White appear to indicate dark and light tones. Symbols that include colours, becomes "a mental game" easy to memorize and apply in daily. ColorADD has signed a protocol with the Portuguese Ministry of Education and Science so that it can be used in education, free of costs, thus allowing the inclusion of colour-blind children without discrimination.

ColorADD creates added economic and social value to companies or entities that use the code, by offering to their consumers an innovative product with a strong social footprint. ColorADD is already implemented in several areas such as Clothing, Textiles and Shoes (labelling), Pencils, Textbooks Publishers, Transports (Subway maps), City Administration (e.g. Maps, Accessibility), Health (Accessibility and pharmaceutical labelling), Food Retails (Traffic light nutrition label), Photo luminescent Safety Signs, Didactic Games, Solid Waste Industry, General Industry (Catalogs), Information Technology (APP, Colour WEB Picker) among others, achieving expertise through strong partnerships and creating replicable clusters fundamental to deploy the code at a global scale.

6.2.6 Sweden

National OP

"More Ways in"

Developed by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR). In 2015, the organisation initiated a development effort in cooperation with six municipalities to make use of the expertise of people with disabilities that affect their ability to work, with the aim of meeting the recruitment challenges in the welfare sector. The interviewee was one of the co-workers behind the initiative, which resulted in the project *More Ways in*. The project *More Ways in* aims to create, test and evaluate models, methods and ways of working to make workplaces in municipalities and county councils accessible to more people. The target group consists of people with disabilities which affect their ability to work, with the aim of meeting the recruitment challenges in the welfare sector. The goal is to contribute to the skills supply of the welfare sector and to create long-term solutions for a sustainable working life for everyone. The project is now, in the beginning of 2018, in the early start heading for the analysis and planning phase.

Initially, during the developing effort in 2015 the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) worked in close cooperation with six municipalities, establishing a network including Skövde, Karlskoga, Eskilstuna, Gothenburg, Stockholm and Örebro. The municipalities' common goals were to exchange experiences and ideas to be able to hire and keep people with disabilities in their own operations to a greater extent. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions collaborated with a researcher from the Administration Academy and Södertörn University, Daniel Castillo, who followed the development effort, presented in two studies; *More ways in* – possibilities and prerequisites for people with disabilities to work in the welfare sector, and in the research report *Work for all* – creating long-term opportunities in working life for people with disabilities. In the studies, it became clear that the municipalities are facing a complex challenge creating long-term opportunities for people far from the labour market. One of the conclusions was that the labour market must be equipped to become more accessible and inclusive, and methods for matching/recruiting people with disabilities must be developed.

In *More Ways in*, the project aims to take the results from the development effort and the two following studies into the next level. In this project, it is aimed to contribute the skills supplied from the welfare sector to create long-term solutions for a sustainable working life for everyone. They also want to challenge the idea that an individual's competence and working capacity can be tied to a specific diagnosis or disability. By focusing on the individual's motivation to work and where participating stakeholders, including employers, union organisations and authorities, have a common view and shared vision, it is believed that the project will be able to point out better and more suitable ways for the target group to obtain and keep a job.

Collaborative partners in the project are: Unions, the Swedish agency for participation, The Employment agency, National Coordination for Mental Health, NSPH and Hjärnkoll.

The majority of initiatives within the framework of the project are focused towards employment. By putting the motivation of the individual in focus and involving actors - such as employers, trade unions and authorities- the project can create common goals and consensus so as to present better and more effective ways of obtaining and retaining a job for the target group. The involvement of the employers is an innovative social perspective and this has changed: whereas traditionally the majority of the efforts in employer's project within the target group was focused on changing or challenging the individual to fit into the system, in this case the project tries to change or challenge the system, not the individual. In the developing effort, The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions decided to hire a person from the target group with a cognitive disability. The aim was to create a common view and vision for the forthcoming project *More ways in* and thus "living as they teach".

CLLD and social innovation

CLLD has its Swedish national OP Locally led strategies for local development (*Lokalt ledda strategier för lokal utveckling*), Art 3.1b VI in Regulation 1304/2013, within thematic objective 9, social inclusion. CLLD is endowed with both ERDF and ESF funds in Sweden and has two priority axes: 1. Strengthening the adaptability of employed women and men in the labour market and 2. Strengthened employability for women and men far away from the labour market.

The multi-funding has resulted in new involvement from smaller and more local stakeholders (e.g. economic associations and smaller enterprises in rural areas), which

had never been involved in labour market issues earlier. Before the multi-fund, only bigger public stakeholders (e.g. Social services, Social insurance office, Employment agency and County councils) were involved around these target groups. Through participating in these projects, the target groups get closer to the labour market (jobs and studies). The main expected outputs of the interventions are: making individuals employable, facilitating them access to jobs, decreasing social exclusion and becoming self-supporting by thinking new and testing innovative methods.

These interventions have been innovative by adopting a bottom-up approach with a reinforced co-creation between stakeholders involved at local level both as a target itself and as a tool for finding local solutions for co-creation and identifying those private, public and non-profit stakeholders who can contribute to this (e.g. sports associations, municipalities, the social insurance office and social services.). In this way, unemployed people can access a network where it is possible to move outside the frames of what unemployed normally can do. Private and non-profit stakeholders are namely not limited and managed by regulations in the same way as public stakeholders are and are able to contribute with their resources. People who have been sick listed can for example receive supported work experience (as they do in the project Grön skön rehab) and immigrants can learn Swedish language in new ways besides the ordinary SFI (Swedish For Immigrants). For example, by participating in language cafés arranged by the non-profit stakeholders. The aim of the interventions is to avoid that each authority or organisation works alone and instead works together through co-creation. The local level is good at identifying these possibilities and knows the strengths that exist in the local society. The local Leader areas prioritise which projects they select to support.

Not all **Swedish Leader areas** work with Social Innovations and the multi-fund. Those Leader areas which do, select themselves which local stakeholders will participate in fostering social innovation interventions and which are most suitable according to the local preconditions. Stakeholders in Leader areas always consist of stakeholders from private (business associations), public (authorities often municipalities) and the non-public (associations, economic enterprises) sector. These stakeholders select and prioritise which projects will be supported, i.e. a bottom-up approach. Leader 3sam is one of several Leader areas involved in Social Innovations. Leader 3sam finances a project called "Grön skön rehab" (*Green comfortable rehab*), which targets people who have been sicklisted or unemployed during a long period. The project offers activities such as yoga, mindfulness, various crafts, nature path with stations for training, seminars by experts, building of a green house and cultivation of plants. It is run by an economic association in Hammarstrand and started in the early autumn of 2017 (until 2020). The aim of the project is to become a social enterprise if it turns out to be successful. The Leader area "Leader 3sam" has added a local target that 3 social enterprises shall start during the current programme period, of which, so far, the mentioned project, Grön skön rehab, has recently started.

There is a **complementarity/synergy** with other initiatives in the field and other funding instruments. The Leader areas work with four various funds within CLLD. Most Leader areas have several funds in their development strategy, a multi-fund. The local action groups (*LAG-grupperna*) are able to use money from each fund to start projects, which complement each other in a positive way. The tools that exist within the various funds are thereby complemented in a very efficient way, which makes it easier to reach the funds' targets together as well as face the challenges that exist in the various Leader areas' development strategy. It is e.g. thereby possible to complement ESF funding (aimed at

supporting the unemployed) with Leader funding (aimed at improving hiking paths) and Regional funding (for destination development) in a project where unemployed perform work by improving hiking paths which improves the destination. In this way it is possible to work with several targets and priorities simultaneously making it easier to achieve the targets, favour entrepreneurship, attract more people to the area and simultaneously decrease unemployment.

Each CLLD project shall produce itself an **evaluation final report** at the end of the project describing conducted activities, achieved results, successes and improvements. No external evaluator is being used. According to the respondent, most projects are still ongoing. This makes it difficult to draw conclusions concerning their results at the moment. An evaluation will however take place at programme level and is currently being planned but will still take several years to be conducted. The respondent is hence not able to describe its methodology at present.

The project "Grön skön rehab" started early in the autumn of 2017, which is too early in the process to draw any conclusions concerning results. The project will be followed by the Leader area as will the results of the participants. Leader 3sam has however noticed that many outcomes from the projects they finance take place after the project has ended and those results are never captured. If the project produces positive results the aim is to turn it into a social enterprise.

6.3 E-survey template to MAs

PREAMBLE

We highly appreciate that you are taking part in this e-survey on ESF and Social Innovation. It takes around 10 minutes to complete it and in most cases, you only have to tick a box. At any time you want to change your answer, simply click on the 'back' button.

The purpose of the questionnaire is about understanding how the ESF supports Social Innovation actions. By Social innovation it is meant products, services, processes aimed at addressing relevant social needs. For the purposes of the present survey Social innovation is characterised by the following five elements:

- Novelty: social innovations must be new to the context (field, sector, region, market or user) they are applied to, or should be applied in a new way
- Fulfilment of social needs: social innovations must be explicitly designed to address recognised social needs
- Implementation: there is a difference between new ideas that are not implemented, and innovations, which are new ideas that are put into practice
- Engagement and mobilisation of social actors: social partners, organisations involved in social economy and ESF stakeholders and beneficiaries should be involved or engaged in the *development* of the social innovation or in its *governance/implementation*, either directly or indirectly
- Transformation of social relations: social innovations should entail transformative processes which empower some groups, by aiming at a more just and balanced distribution of power and resources.

For the present questionnaires key concepts are the following:

- Social Enterprise: Any socially-driven organization (for-profit or non-for profit) that uses market-oriented approaches to improve human and environmental conditions.
- Social Entrepreneurship: The recognition of a social problem and the uses of entrepreneurial principles to create and manage an enterprise or develop an initiative for the purpose of achieving a desired social change.
- Social Economy: The social economy is a grass-roots entrepreneurial, not-for-profit sector, based on democratic values, that seeks to enhance the social, economic, and environmental conditions of communities, often with a focus on their disadvantaged members. Organizations that are usually considered to be part of the Social Economy are: co-operatives, non-profit organizations, volunteer organizations, charities, foundations, social enterprises, environmental groups.

COUNTRY:

Operational Programme:

A. YOUR ESF OP ACTIVITIES

1. Are the activities of the ESF Operational Programme (OP) for which you are Managing Authority concerned with Social Innovation?

[PLEASE TICK THE MAIN THAT APPLY]

- Yes (go to question 2)
- Yes, to a limited extent (go to question 2)
- No (go to question 9)
- Don't know (go to question 10).

2. If yes to question 1:

2a. What is the approach adopted to promote Social Innovation?

- Through a mainstreaming approach (all parts of the OP contribute to the promotion of Social Innovation)
- Through dedicated Priority Axes
Implementation of calls/projects specifically aimed at promoting Social innovation
- Other (please specify)

2b. Which are the main Thematic Objectives targeted?

[PLEASE TICK THE ONES THAT APPLY]

- TO8
- TO9
- TO10
- TO11

2c. What needs are addressed?

[PLEASE TICK THE MAIN THAT APPLY]

- Employability/access to employment
 - of unemployed
 - of most vulnerable groups
 - youth employment
 - employment services
 - social entrepreneurship
 - active ageing
- Social inclusion
 - Health inclusion
 - Housing inclusion
 - Welfare services
- Promoting equal access to good quality education
 - School-to-work transition
 - Reducing early school leaving
- Increasing capacities of public administration.
- other (please specify)

2d. What target groups are covered?

[PLEASE TICK THE MAIN THAT APPLY]

- Youth
- Unemployed
- Long-term unemployed
- Individuals at risk of poverty
- Elderly
- Migrants
- Ethnic minorities such as Roma
- Disabled
- Other (please specify).

2e. Which of the following innovations is the ESF OP supporting or planning to support in relation to Social Innovation, if any?

[PLEASE TICK THE MAIN THAT APPLY]		
Type of the intervention	Yes, currently	Yes, in the future
New outcomes		
Please list some examples, if possible:		
New processes		
Please list some examples, if possible:		
New relationships		
Please list some examples, if possible:		
Other (please specify)		

2f. In your view, has the ESF OP for which you are managing authority succeeded in promoting/fostering new relationships (establishment of cooperation between employment labour market actors/involvement of stakeholders in the design of services, etc)?
[PLEASE TICK THE MAIN THAT APPLY]

- Yes, to a large extent
- Yes, to some extent
- Only to a small extent
- No
- Don't know.

3. Does SI supported by the OP rely on effective partnerships?
[PLEASE TICK THE MAIN THAT APPLY]

- Yes mostly on horizontal partnerships (between peer organisations)
- Yes, mostly on vertical partnerships (i.e. between organisations belonging to different levels)
- No
- Don't know

4. Does SI promoted by your OP rely on the engagement and commitment of different actors in order to achieve its social mission?
[PLEASE TICK THE MAIN THAT APPLY]

- Yes, to a large extent
- Yes, to some extent
- Only to a small extent
- No
- Don't know

5. A key feature of Social Innovation is testing innovative solutions and evaluating them in view of upscaling them. Is the performance and results of SI evaluated using adequate metrics (i.e. number of applications, survival rate of ventures, gender balance of supported individuals, etc.)?
[PLEASE TICK THE MAIN THAT APPLY]

- Yes (please specify)
- No
- Don't know

6. Social Innovation consists of the following six stages, to which of the following Social Innovation supported by your OP is more pertinent?
[PLEASE TICK THE MAIN THAT APPLY]
- Diagnosis of the need
 - Generation of the idea for addressing the need
 - Prototyping/piloting and refining the idea
 - Sharpening the idea and ensuring long-term sustainability
 - Scaling and spreading the innovation
 - Achieving systemic change.
7. Do you implement/plan to implement activities of visibility and communication of Social Innovation actions?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
8. If yes to question 7, can you provide details on the type of visibility and communication actions implemented or planned?
If no to question 1
9. Why Social Innovation is not covered within the OP you are managing?
[PLEASE TICK THE MAIN THAT APPLY]-There is likely to be little support to develop SI actions
- There is a lack of awareness in the community about the goals and usefulness of SI
 - It is not seen as a policy priority by relevant public entities other than the Managing Authority
 - There is a lack of interest in participating by private/third sector organisations
 - None of the above.
- Yes or no to question 1***
10. Are you aware of the functioning and objectives of the EQUAL Initiative?
[PLEASE TICK THE MAIN THAT APPLY]
- Yes
 - No
11. If yes to question 4, do you think that EQUAL was better designed for promoting SI, compared to ESF in the current programming period?
[PLEASE TICK THE MAIN THAT APPLY]
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
12. What are the main criticalities identified with regard to the promotion of Social Innovation in the current programming period?
[FREE TEXT - PLEASE ANSWER IN 10 LINES MAXIMUM]
13. What lessons could be drawn for the remaining programming period and for the next one?
[FREE TEXT - PLEASE ANSWER IN 10 LINES MAXIMUM]

B. ADDED VALUE

14. With regard to the promotion of Social Innovation what added value of ESF with respect to national policies/strategies?

[FREE TEXT - PLEASE ANSWER IN 5 LINES MAXIMUM]

C. SUSTAINIBILITY

15. To what extent SI actions funded by your OP will be continued after the end of the ESF contribution?

[PLEASE TICK THE MAIN THAT APPLY]

- Yes, to a large extent
- Yes, to some extent
- Only to a small extent
- No
- Don't know

C. MONITORING & EVALUATION

16. Did you/ do you plan to evaluate the ESF OP activities relevant to Social Innovation?

[PLEASE TICK THE MAIN THAT APPLY]

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

17. If yes, what data sources are you using, in addition to ESF mandatory data, in order to monitor and/or evaluate ESF OP activities relevant to SI?

[TICK ALL THAT APPLY]

- Yes, ad hoc questionnaires, surveys etc...
- Yes, from administrative sources (ministries, registers)
- Yes, general statistics
- No
- Don't know
- Other (please specify)

PLEASE TICK THE BOX BELOW TO SUBMIT YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE!

Thank for your responses. Your time and effort to answer our questions is much appreciated.

The results of the survey will be analysed by the research team and will be included in the final report on the Contribution of the ESF to Social innovation. The analysis of results should be concluded in spring 2018. If you want to remain in touch with us and know more about the results of the study, please contact us at the following email address: esfperf@fondazionebrodolini.it.

Please click on the "Done" button to submit your completed questionnaire.

6.4 Research questions

Effectiveness

1. How is the ESF supporting social innovation? Through which approaches and interventions and programming choices/processes? Which are the main thematic objectives/sectors targeted?⁷⁰
2. Is support provided through the ESF effective/adequate in promoting social innovation, i.e., does it help address societal challenges/reach its target groups, including spurring the use of public-private partnership, testing initiatives with a view to upscaling them?
3. What are the main criticalities identified and what lessons can be drawn for the remaining of the programming period and, especially, for the next one? (lessons learned)
4. What are the main differences between EQUAL and SI in the 2014/2020 programming period? Are there any good practices developed within EQUAL that were not taken up in the current programming period?
5. Is there an adequate monitoring and evaluation system in place?

Relevance

6. Are the social innovation initiatives promoted by the ESF relevant to the most pressing societal challenges?
7. What is the level of fulfilment of EACs and latest CSRs related to SI (i.e. the elaboration of national or regional strategies covering SI related policy areas)?

Coherence

8. Is there a complementarity/synergy with other EU initiatives in the field and/or other funding instruments such as the EaSI, Horizon 2020, etc.?
9. Is there a synergic/coherent approach to SI in terms of matching ESF with ERDF interventions?

EU added value

10. What is the added value of promoting Social innovation at the EU level through the European Social Fund with respect for example to national policies? What is the role of mutual learning/territorial cooperation in this context? What is the role of Community Led Local Development?
11. How do public authorities and other SI relevant actors capitalise the mutual learning processes engendered by social innovation?
12. To what extent SI practices are covered within mutual learning activities carried out at the EU level (Peer learning, events and databased of practices)?

Efficiency

13. Is there any available evidence on whether methods employed in promoting social innovation are cost-effective? Is there an adequate monitoring system in place to check this?

Sustainability

14. Are the expected outcomes of SI funded ESF sustainable (both in terms of results and continuation of the actions)?

⁷⁰ The question will also focus on how is the ESF contributing to a process of de-institutionalisation through social innovation? If so, to what extent? What are its main consequences?

6.5 Bibliography

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