Social Innovation ⊕ Initiative

European Competence Centre for Social Innovation
ESF+ Social Innovation Community of Practice

Work Programme 2024

The activities of the Social Innovation Community of Practice (SI CoP) aim to enhance the ESF+ support for social innovation through transnational cooperation and mutual learning between Member States (MS) to further explore the various ways to design, manage, and implement ESF+ programmes efficiently to foster social innovations across Europe, from its emergence to its scaling-up and mainstreaming.

This 2024 Work Programme has been developed following the guiding principles of co-creation and needs-based approaches, taking into account the conclusions of the SI CoP workshop held in Brussels on 26/10/2023 as well as the responses to the online survey launched on 05/12/2023 to better assess the real needs of the SI CoP members after one year of activities (Annex 2). This proposal is shared with the EC and the SI CoP members for comments and validation and will be reviewed at mid-term.

The scaling-up and transfer of successful social innovations and experiments, the ultimate goal of the ESF+ Social Innovation Initiative, remains the overall objective of the SI CoP.

The detailed results of the 54 responses from 23 MS to the online survey can be found in Annex 2.

1. SI CoP Priorities for 2024 based on key lessons from 2023:

- **Collaboration between ESF+ bodies** (ESF+ Managing Authorities (MAs) and Implementing Bodies (IBs), i.e., the main target audience of the SI CoP): Specific needs will be addressed by organising events dedicated to their management issues, such as funding or call preparation and implementation. The Annex 3 is the Analysis of Social Innovation dedicated Priorities within ESF+ programmes (2021-2027), prepared as part of the activities of the SI CoP in 2023. The report is primarily meant to serve ESF+ MAs and Intermediate bodies, as well as other key ESF+ stakeholders such as the National Competence Centres, as a source of information and inspiration. This overview at EU level aims to create a better common understanding as well of showing different existing models and approaches, with similarities and differences, that each SI CoP member can use and adapt to its own context to improve the delivery of ESF+ SI priorities. It will thus facilitate and enhance mutual exchanges, collaboration and peer learning, notably among ESF+ MAs, within the framework of the transnational cooperation activities of the SI CoP.

- **Collaboration between ESF+ MAs and the National Competence Centres (NCC), the Social Innovation Match (SIM) validators, and the EaSI National Contact Points (NCP):** These three other categories of key SI ecosystem stakeholders are crucial to create a robust SI ecosystem. Other spaces and networks will support the internal collaboration among NCC (NCC Working Group (WG)), SIM validators (virtual space to be created), and EaSI NCPs (EC network).

- **Cooperation and complementarity between the SI CoP and its NCC WG:** Their objectives and activities will be closely linked and coordinated to ensure mutual support between their activities and outputs, benefitting the whole SI ecosystem across the EU. Particular attention will be paid to the new NCC missions (from June 2024) and the mapping of social innovation ecosystems. A regular exchange of information between the SI CoP and the NCC WG will be ensured, as well as joint work and collaboration, which is essential for the effective implementation of ESF+ programmes supporting social innovation and the promotion of social innovation across the EU.

The Work Programme of the NCC WG for 2024 can be found in Annex 1.

- **Collaboration with the other thematic CoPs**[1]: The SI CoP aims to support the other CoPs to better embed social innovation into their sectoral/thematic public policies in order to address complex challenges in these specific areas. Therefore, SI guidelines, tools, and methodologies applicable to each policy field will be collected and analysed during the SI CoP events to create a SI Toolkit, which will be updated and enriched during the CoP (from the preparation of SI calls to the results and social impact assessment, including approaches to transfer and scale-up of social innovations with the financial support of ESF+ thematic priorities). Projects and practices presented during the SI CoP activities will, as far as possible, relate to the other CoPs fields and priorities. A proposal to experiment with continued collaboration with the EES CoP in 2024, testing different practical modalities of cooperation, while remaining open to other CoPs. This model could be replicated with other CoPs in the following years.

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[1] Social Inclusion, Employment / Education / Skills, Migrant integration, material support.

- **Focus on practice-oriented activities:** The exchange of testimonies, experiences, and inspiring practices will be maintained and reinforced, drawing on the experience and knowledge of SI CoP members to nurture exchange and mutual learning. Examples will be selected from ESF+ programmes as well as from other EU funded programmes such as the ESF+ EaSI strand. Examples supported by national and regional programmes may also be used if they have the potential to be supported by ESF+.

- **Reinforcement of the SIM database:** A more systematic use of the SIM database will be encouraged to improve its content, scope and functionalities, notably its matching dimension to policy challenges and its link with the overall EU SI ecosystem.

DG EMPL ESF+ Geographical Desk Officers are encouraged to participate in SI CoP events and activities, including contributing to surveys and publications. With the aim of making better use of ESF+ programmes in support of social innovation, in particular the Social Innovation priorities, they are also encouraged to disseminate and use this information with the ESF+ national and regional Managing Authorities and relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of ESF+ programmes.
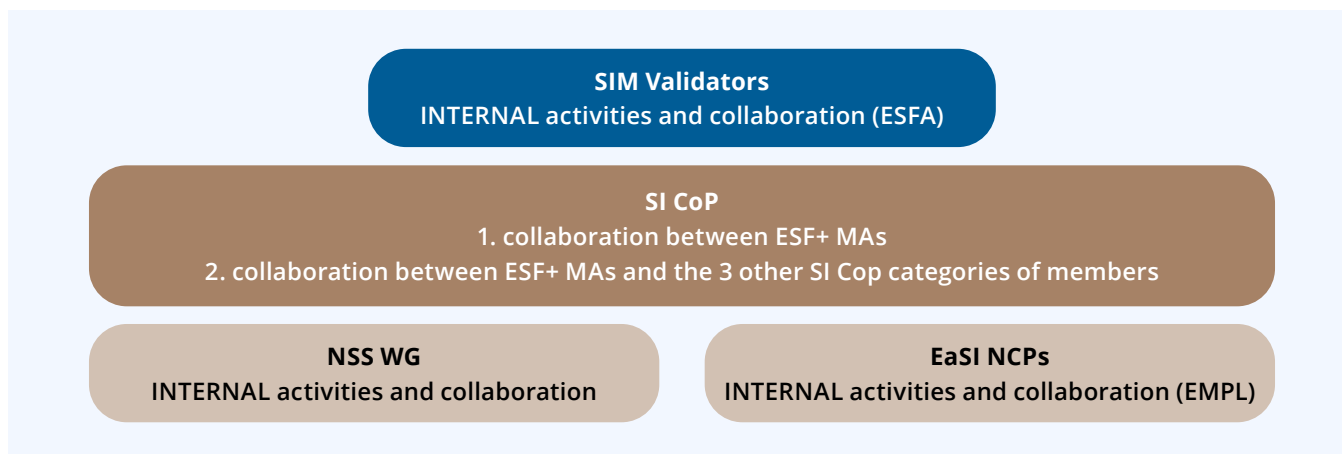
With regard to the formats of the events, the **duration of the** event **will generally be 2 hours, with possibility of break-out sessions** to allow for work in smaller groups and to deepen the **discussions**. Short online surveys will also be used between events to prepare events well-adjusted to the needs of participants, to take into account the diversity of situations, to collect practical information and to ensure that activities and results are co-created.

2. SI CoP governance

In order to ensure the best use of ESF+ to support social innovation, the **audience of the CoP is the ESF+ MAs (primary audience) as well as NCC, SIM validators, EaSI NCPs,** and other **key actors of the ESF+ social innovation ecosystem**. It should be noted that some participants (organisations or individuals) cumulate several functions (e.g., NCC, SIM validator, EaSI NCP). Depending on their topics and objectives, some events will target certain categories of stakeholders as a priority. **At the end of 2023, the SI CoP had 287 members:**

Type of Organisation	Number
ESF+ National Managing Authority	47
ESF+ Regional Managing Authority	13
National Competence Centre (NCC) for Social Innovation	35
Intermediate Body	21
Line Ministry	15
Implementing Organisation	27
NGO/Non-profit organisation	40
European Commission (including geographical ESF Desk Officers)	34
Other ESF Stakeholders	65
Total	287

Other spaces and networks will support the internal collaboration among NCCs (NCC WG), SIM validators (virtual space to be created), and EaSI NCPs (EC network).

SIM Validators
INTERNAL activities and collaboration (ESFA)

SI CoP
1. collaboration between ESF+ MAs
2. collaboration between ESF+ MAs and the 3 other SI Cop categories of members

NSS WG	EaSI NCPs
INTERNAL activities and collaboration	INTERNAL activities and collaboration (EMPL)

3. 2024 work programme activities

All SI CoP events aim at collecting, reviewing and sharing methods, practices and tools that can be applied to any thematic or policy field, thus supporting the development and scaling-up of social innovation in various policies and programmes from the other ESF+ CoPs.

All tools, methods, practices and examples analysed during the SI CoP events will be continuously collected in a practical toolkit/repository for SI stakeholders.

After each event, a summary report including presentation slides will be shared with all SI CoP members.

3.1. Online mutual learning workshop, 08/02/2024: 'How to manage and adapt ESF+ financial support to social innovation projects?'

Main target audience: ESF+ Bodies (ESF+ MAs and IBs).

Aim of the event: to assess the practical financial issues faced by ESF+ bodies when using ESF+ to fund social innovation projects, notably through the implementation of the ESF+ SI priority, due to the characteristics of SI projects (management issues related to forms of funding, simplification, payments, national co-funding, financial support from several partners, risk management, etc.).

- Review of situations in context, clear and detailed 'mapping of issues' in all their diversity.
- In-depth exchange between peers on problems common to many countries and solutions found that could be helpful to others.

Outputs and deliverables:

- Background note describing financial issues collected from MS related to ESF+ funding of SI.
- Practice report, reviewing issues, their origin (EU or national), existing solutions, practical recommendations for their use, training content, and recommendations to be taken up at EU level.

3.2. Online mutual learning workshop, 24/04/2024: 'SI Calls, projects selection, implementation and monitoring'

Main target audience: ESF+ Bodies, NCC.

Aim of the event: to follow up on the 2023 event dedicated to calls for proposals and to further explore some of the key issues shared by SI CoP members (i.e., call preparation, guidance and support to applicants, call promotion, selection criteria and procedures, and monitoring systems and indicators). The event will be prepared in collaboration with the EES CoP.

Outputs and deliverables:

- Background note describing management issues collected from ESF+ bodies.
- Practice report describing various models and practices tested in some MS to overcome some of the issues faced and to improve the overall delivery of the ESF+ SI priorities while simplifying ESF+ administration.
- Policy guidelines on effective SI implementation (TBC).

3.3. Study visit, 4-5/06/2024, Paris (France): 'Scaling-up/transfer: analysing one model'

Target audience: ESF+ bodies, NCC (EaSI NCPs on the topics would be welcome, if places are available).

Aim of the study visit: to discover one a scaling-up approach of a country with a strong expertise on this topic, with tested methods and tools, and to learn from the ground through scaled-up project visits. Through peer exchange, participants can increase their knowledge and use some elements to improve their own practices. Experiences from other Member States with different approaches will enrich this learning from a comparative analysis perspective.

Outputs and deliverables:

- Background note describing the model/approach promoted by the country to visit.
- Study-visit report, including peer-reviewers' insights and comments.
- Practical guidelines on scaling-up & transfer.

3.4. Online mutual learning workshop, 18/09/2024: 'Assessing and measuring social innovation results and impact'

Target audience: ESF+ bodies in priority + NCC, EaSI NCP, EMPL G3.

Aim of the event: to explore what do we mean by impact and impact measurement to agree on a common approach among ESF+ bodies, in particular to support the definition and analyses of impact indicators and the growth potential of social innovation projects funded, including their potential of transferability to improve public service delivery. Get familiar with multidimensional analysis of impact that goes beyond the mere achievements of goals, including criteria and methods that allow for the comparison of the impact potential among projects.

Outputs and deliverables:

- Background note with concepts, definitions, methods and relevant case studies.
- Report including MS perspectives to measure beyond quantifiable measures.

3.5. Study visit II, 5-6/11/2024, Torino (Italy): 'Collaboration models between key stakeholders of the ESF+ SI ecosystem'

Target audience: ESF+ MAs and NCC.

Aim of the study visit: to analyse the challenges of collaboration between ESF+ SI key stakeholders by debating and exploring one MS model, as well as exchanging practices and solutions and how to adapt them in other contexts in order to reinforce the SI ecosystem. Prepared in close collaboration with the NCC WG.

Outputs and deliverables:

- Study visit report.
- Practical guidelines on collaboration models.

3.6. Online mutual leaning workshop, 10/12/2024: 'Integrated approach & multi-fund approach for SI'

Target audience: ESF+ MAs, NCC.

Aim of the event: to explore various multi-fund approaches (ESF+, ERDF, EAFRD) to support social innovation in a more comprehensive way, including those adopted in some ESF+ SI priorities.

Outputs and deliverables:

- Background note.
- Practice report presenting multi-fund approaches and models to support social innovation.

Name of Activity	Format	Date	Topics/Options
Mutual learning workshop	Online	Feb. 08	How to manage and adapt ESF+ financial support to social innovation projects?
Mutual learning workshop	Online	Apr. 24	SI Calls, projects selection, implementation and monitoring
Study visit I	Onsite France, Paris	Jun. 04-05	Scaling-up and transfer – analysing one model
Mutual learning workshop	Online	Sept. 18	Assessing and measuring social innovation results and impact
SI Forum	Onsite Belgium	Oct. 1-2	TBD
Study visit II	Onsite Torino, Italy	Nov. 5-7	Collaboration models between key stakeholders of the ESF+ SI ecosystem
Mutual learning workshop	Online	Dec. 10	Integrated approach & multi-fund approach for SI

European Competence Centre for Social Innovation

Work Programme for the National Competence Centres for Social Innovations Working Group in 2024

Annex 1

This document presents a draft working programme proposal for the year 2024. The structure of the plan is designed on the basis of the theory of change elaborated by the community of practice (CoP) in 2023 and sets out 4 steps to support the development of the National Competence Centres (NCC) for Social Innovation (SI) in all EU member states (MS). It is also designed to be fully integrated with the ESF+ Social Innovation Community of Practice (SI CoP) Work Programme (WP) for 2024.

Taking into account that there will be significant changes in the composition of the teams powering this working group during 2024, this proposal suggests the iteration of the suggested steps during the whole year. Complementarily, all the activities of the work plan will begin with a summary of the process developed so that anyone joining during 2024 has the necessary information to be integrated into the collaborative learning process adequately. Finally, the proposal to work in teams with (MS with similar capacities and needs) will allow for personalized support for each country.

Step 1. Self-assessment.
January-March 2024.

The first step is to self-assess what capacities and tools exist in each member state. For this purpose, a self-assessment guide to be filled in by each NCC will be shared. The guide is built on the logic and basic elements of the theory of change. Once the strengths and needs have been identified, each member state will be offered a learning path and a support system to develop the competences and capacities they need.

As this is a process of collective experimentation, the support system will be channeled through a learning community that will bring together member states with similar strengths and weaknesses. This allows to gather a variety of practices and to develop different models under a common framework, providing each MS with the possibility to adapt support systems to its own context.

Step 2. Ecosystem mapping.
April-July 2024.

Once the learning community is in place, those centres that have a more advanced SI ecosystem mapping process will share their experience with the rest of the NCC. Ideally, work would be implemented in 3 or 4 groups. In parallel, the working group will explore the possibility of offering a digital tool to visualize this mapping in real time, in each member state and across the EU.

As previously discussed, this working programme will build on the challenges identified in the mapping process concluded in 2023 in the framework of the competence centres' six transnational partnerships (Consortia). A clear definition of the strategic goal and process of this exercise will be suggested. Examples will be provided of where ecosystem mapping has helped social innovation organisations previously address complex social challenges. More specifically, the mapping will be oriented towards agents, initiatives (including their co-creation, scaling up or evaluation needs and capabilities) that are focused on addressing complex challenges prioritized by the European Semester, notably under their ESF+ social innovation framework.

Step 3. Co-creation and prototyping.
August-October 2024.

After having built the basic capacities to map the social innovation ecosystem in each member state, the working group will focus on systematizing co-creation processes to address complex challenges. As outlined in Step 2, those centers that are more advanced in their co-creation proposal will share it with the rest of the NCC. In parallel, the working group explores the possibility of offering a digital tool to visualize this mapping in real time, in each member state and across the EU.

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Step 4. Scaling.
November-January 2025.

The last step of this work programme will focus on visualizing the experimentation portfolio in each MS and selecting those practices (and the processes) that can be scaled up at local, state or regional level.

Cross-cutting elements

Complementary to this process, it is proposed to hold online training seminars on the transversal elements of the process: (1) governance and evaluation, (2) communication and (3) financing of the NCC. The specific dates and the suggested content for these seminars will be coordinated with the SI CoP working program to avoid duplication and benefit from the collaboration and mutual support between all SI key stakeholders, ESF+ bodies in particular.

For instance, the planned 2024 SI CoP events related to SI call preparation and selection criteria, to social impact evaluation and evidence, to scaling-up and transfer as well as the last one dedicated to collaboration models between key stakeholders of the ESF+ SI ecosystem will require a strong collaboration between NCC and ESF+ Bodies, including for instance some preparatory work in the NCC WG to better assess NCC positions and challenges to be discussed and analysed during the SI CoP events.

Additionally, this WG will explore how to link NCC functions and activities with the ESF+ programmes and their policy priorities in specific policy areas and with the other CoPs fields.

This collaboration between the NCC WG and the SI CoP implies regular mutual information. Each NCC event will start by a short information point about the SI CoP activities and plans, and vice-versa. The NCC WG will collaborate very closely with the beneficiaries of the 'National Competence Centers for Social Innovation: Building-up and Consolidating the Capacity" Call for proposals.

Calendar

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Assessment	■	■	■									
Mapping				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Co-creation									■	■	■	■
Scaling											■	■
Webinars												

List of planned events

- Seminar for NCC WG (13/03/2024) (on-line)
- NCC beneficiaries Kick-off (12-13/06/2024) (on-site) – in collaboration with Call
- NCC beneficiaries learning mutual (16-17/10/2024) (on-line) – in collaboration with Call
- NCC beneficiaries learning mutual (04-05/12/2024) (on-site) – in collaboration with Call

European Competence Centre for Social Innovation

Detailed Results of the Online Survey on the Needs of SI CoP Members

Annex 2

The online survey was conducted in December 2023.

The online survey was launched to collect information from four key stakeholders of the ESF+ social innovation ecosystem: ESF+ Managing Authorities (MAs), National Competence Centres for Social Innovation (NCC), the Social Innovation Match (SIM) validators, and EaSI National Contact Points (NCPs). Its aim was to ensure that the SI CoP provides a space for transnational peer cooperation for ESF+ MAs responsible for the implementation of ESF+ programmes, in particular the Social Innovation priorities, and enhances the collaboration between all SI CoP stakeholders to ensure consistency and mutual reinforcement of their activities, and to achieve a greater social impact together.

In total 54 respondents from 23 different Member States took part.

SI CoP member responses by category

ESF+ MA	27.78%	15
NCC	18.52%	10
SIM Validator	1.85%	1
EaSI National Contact point	5.56%	3
ESF+ project	11.11%	6
Other	35.19%	19

Collaboration between key SI CoP stakeholders

Existing collaboration of ESF MAs with other key stakeholders and needs related to it (9 answers):

NCC	To be informed about new developments in the field of social innovation. Have a sparring partner who can provide guidance. Build a larger network through the competence center, as their network is often somewhat larger.
	To exchange practices and approaches with other countries.
SIM validators	Several ESF+ MAs are SIM validators themselves or already in collaboration. No further needs.
EaSI NCP	Where EaSI NCPs are nominated, deeper cooperation in mutual activities.

Existing collaboration of NCC with other key stakeholders and needs related to it (9 answers):

EaSI NCP	6
SIM validator	4
NCC	8

ESF+ MAs	Significant need for support for the development and implementation of NCC activities by ESF+ MAs, including political support, strengthening of NCC capacities, as well as to better integrate NCC in the programming and to have an effective use of ESF+ funding to support social innovation.
	Better communication and awareness by ESF+ MAs of the role, position, and approaches of NCCs in boosting social innovation and the need to strengthen their capacities. More time and resources to be dedicated to this collaboration.
SIM validators	The majority of NCCs are SIM validators. It takes time to fill in the SIM database.
EaSI NCP	Provide information on available funding opportunities and EU priorities and link EaSi funding with ESF+ funding.

EaSI NCPs needs for collaboration with other key stakeholders (3 answers):

With ESF+ MAs	Updates on funding calls that are open to civil society organisations, to better communicate and collaborate.
With NCC	Opportunities to collaborate on events aimed at civil society organisations.
With SIM validators	The majority of NCCs are SIM validators. It takes time to fill in the SIM database.

2023 Events

Most attended 2023 events (40 answers):

23/02: Interactive workshop: ESF+ programmes, social innovation in practice (online)	**37.50%**	**15**
29/03: Social Innovation Match (SIM) induction workshop (online)	30.00%	12
15/05: Joint consortia event between European and National Competence Centres for SI (online)	30.00%	12
21/06: National Competence Centres for Social Innovation (NCC) working group kick off (Portugal)	25.00%	10
01/06: Mutual Learning Lab session on ESF+ social innovation calls (online)	25.00%	10
25/10: Workshop of the NCC Working Group (Brussels)	**40.00%**	**16**
26/10: Workshop on SI priorities and NCC policy support (Brussels, SI Forum)	**55.00%**	**22**

The majority of respondents found the events interesting and useful (although sometimes only one was attended), with a **clear preference for on-site events**. Depending on the priorities in their MS, the progress of programming and the category of stakeholders to which they belong, participants' responses vary. The most attended and valued events are the **NCC WG and SI CoP workshops in Brussels in October 2023**. Other events specifically mentioned as useful: the *first workshop (February 2023) on social innovation in practice* was the most useful for five participants, proving the need for a better understanding of social innovation, the *events related to SIM* were highlighted twice. The *Mutual Learning Lab on SI calls* is specifically mentioned by one MS that is about to launch its own SI call.

Topics to be further explored in 2024

Topics to be further explored in relation to other areas of the CoPs (36 answers):

Social Inclusion	
Childcare poverty	Mentioned in 14 answers, including poverty in general and poverty among single-parent families (specific request for exchange of experience within the scope of the Local Contracts for Social Development 4th Generation (CLDS -4G) programme, namely at the level of the following axes: Axis 2: Preventive family and parental intervention against child poverty.
Disability	Mentioned in 10 responses.
Homelessness	Mentioned in 9 responses.
Others	Specific target groups are mentioned as priorities in several MS, in particular the elderly population (active ageing, social inclusion, loneliness), NEETs, and migrants.
	In terms of topics, the responses suggest: a toolbox to support social services in the context of independent living, gender equality, psychological support, inequalities, unequal access to education, limited employment opportunities, the digital divide, healthcare disparities, cultural exclusion, and insufficient infrastructure, social services at community level and work integration through the social economy.
	More link with new academic methods found in Horizon 2020 project (ex: you count project).

Employment, education and skills
EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Often mentioned **target groups**: disadvantaged youth and NEETs (including mobility programmes for young NEETs living in rural areas), people with outdated or unusable education degree, unaccompanied minors, and vulnerable learners.

- *Skills to match the evolution of society and labour market mismatches:* Skills and green jobs - digital and green skills (at all levels of education).
- *Upskilling and reskilling* pathways for adults (implementation in MS - examples from practice) - Updated European frameworks for upskilling and reskilling activities - Upskilling and professionalisation of NGO/civil society staff.
- *Dual Training, VET* training and the role of companies, *social entrepreneurship schools.*
- *Inclusive, supportive education systems* - Alternative pathways to education and lifelong learning – Hybrid education – New understandings and narratives of learning and education that are more meaningful.

EMPLOYMENT

Target groups mentioned: all vulnerable groups, in particular NEETs, people with mental health difficulties and disabilities, LTU.

- *Long Term Unemployment:* Zero LTU framework, long-term unemployment of 55+
- *Social entrepreneurship, social economy,* care work and gender roles
- *Inclusive hiring practices*
- *Novel collaborations* between educational institutions, businesses, and communities to design programmes that bridge the gap between education and employment

Migrant integration
– Migrants and housing challenges – Efficient launch of support for migrants, complementary to other sources of funding, e.g., AMIF – Social inclusion processes. Itineraries. Basic skills – Social entrepreneurship schools, mobility programmes for refugees, gender equality, financial education, social housing, upskilling and reskilling programmes based on individual skills assessment, digital literacy, open access to public universities (streamlining bureaucracy for recognition of qualifications for refugee citizens who no longer have access to papers from their home countries) – Integration of UA refugees into the labour market + school systems; psychological support – Welcome culture; cultural diversity – Integration of migrants for social cohesion - Peer work and integration of migrants in communities where there may be resistance - How to counter extreme nationalism – Employment and active citizenship – Children on the move - Unaccompanied minors

Material support
– Food poverty – Housing and social housing support - Psychological support - Digital literacy - School starter kits – SI distribution methods - role of NGOs and municipalities in voucher distribution – Voucher information exchange – Empowerment of food banks - Novel distribution methods or community gardens - Innovative solutions to distribute material support – Waste management in poor communities - Reusing waste materials for constructive purposes, contributing to both environmental sustainability and community development – Addressing root causes rather than consequences, setting the right targets – History of family in the EU – Collaborative efforts between businesses, non-profits, and local communities – Monitoring systems

Needs related to management issues (36 answers):

Most responses followed the ideas and topics suggested in the online survey for further exploration and exchange of practices about:

1. **Call preparation, promotion and support for applicants, guidelines and processes, and selection criteria for competitive SI calls**, including streamlining of administrative burden (18).
2. **Funding topics:** access to funding, new forms of funding, multi-fund approaches (23).

Others mentioned:

3. Monitoring and evaluation, impact measurement, and scaling up strategies.
4. Collaboration and involvement of key stakeholders (getting ESF+ MAs and other relevant government departments on board) and better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, including government.

5. Building an ecosystem of SI competences: at national level and regional level (tools, good practices used from different ecosystems) - governance models for the NCC.
6. Better involvement of academia in SI development and collaboration with practitioners.
7. Efficient collaboration on how to fill the SIM database.
8. Promotion and communication of SI to the general public and important societal stakeholders.
9. Regulations, such as those related to state subsidies.

SI dimensions with learning needs (36 answers):

Evaluation of social innovations and assessment of social impact	**80.56%**	**29**
Collaboration and mutual support between ESF+ MAs, NCC, EaSI NCP, and SIM validators	**66.67%**	**24**
Scaling up and transfer (source of inspiration, evidence, process, etc.)	63.89%	23
Role and involvement of stakeholders in the SI process (from projects to policy makers)	63.89%	23
Mapping of the social innovation ecosystem	36.11%	13

Other topics mentioned:

– How to get SI into policy priorities
– How to raise awareness and raise interest in social innovation and its benefits among the general public and decision makers.

Duration and format of online sessions

Preferred online event formats:

Short example-based training sessions	69.44%
Short inspirational talks on specific social challenges by external leading practitioners	55.56%
Guided peer learning based on good practice	50%

Smaller groups and fewer topics are also suggested to allow time for participants to exchange more deeply. The duration of online events will be shortened, with almost 50% of participants preferring **2-hour sessions** (instead of 3 hours in 2023).

On-site event topics and proposals

No need for additional small working groups (similar to the NCC WG) according to the majority of responses.

Note: mentioned once, for information only: a group for managing authorities only, Voucher Education, local spaces to support SI in all its diversity and approaches, validation criteria for SI, the SIM platform, donor engagement, refugees and third country nationals.

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European Competence Centre for Social Innovation:
Community of Practice on Social Innovation

Analysis of Social Innovation dedicated Priorities within ESF+ Programmes (2021–2027)

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the report

This report was prepared as part of the activities of the ESF+ Social Innovation Community of Practice (SI CoP) on Social Innovation, one of the five Communities of Practice that aim at facilitating transnational cooperation to boost the transfer and scaling up of social innovation within the ESF Social Innovation+ Initiative.

The report seeks to better understand how Member States (MS) have used the opportunity to dedicate a specific priority to supporting social innovation. The analysis of the range of identified approaches, including both similarities and differences, is expected to improve the understanding of each stakeholder. This, in turn, should facilitate and enhance mutual exchanges, collaboration and peer learning among ESF+ Managing Authorities within the framework of the transnational cooperation activities of the SI CoP.

1.2. Methodology

This report will exclusively review and compare the information provided in ESF+ programmes under their dedicated Social Innovation Priorities.

The report is based on the information collected from:

- A desk review of the dedicated priorities on social innovation within all national and regional ESF+ programmes adopted in MS, based on the information provided by DG EMPL geographical desk officers.
- Inputs gathered from ESF Managing Authorities through an online survey of 30/01/2023, to complement the desk review analysis.
- Additional information shared by participants during the first SI CoP event "ESF+ programmes: SI in practice – interactive online workshop" on 23/02/2023.

1.3. Social innovation in ESF+: Support strengthened at all levels

The ESF+ regulation introduces many changes to reinforce its support for social innovation for the 2021–2027 programming period, with multiple measures.

1.3.1. At Member States level

In addition to the EU-level actions, Member States are asked to support social innovation with ESF+ funding through specific actions in their own national and/or regional context.

While social innovation is not new to the ESF programmes in MS, significant changes exist between the prior 2014–2020 and the new ESF+2021–2027 programming periods:

- **Definitions are clarified in the regulation:**

    In the new ESF+ regulation, social innovation is now clearly defined: *"an activity, that is social both as to its ends and its means and in particular an activity which relates to the development and implementation of new ideas concerning products, services, practices and models, that simultaneously meets social needs and creates new social relationships or collaborations between public, civil society or private organisations, thereby benefiting society and boosting its capacity to act"[1].* **Social experimentation** is also defined as *"policy intervention that aims to provide an innovative response to social needs, implemented on a small scale and in conditions that enable its impact to be measured, prior to being implemented in other contexts including geographical and sectoral ones, or implemented on a larger scale, if the results prove to be positive"[2].*

    In the previous ESF regulation, the social innovation concept was referred to in the preamble as well as in Article 9 dedicated to this topic, but precise definitions were absent.

- **Member States' contribution to social innovation becomes compulsory:**

    In the new ESF+ regulation, for the first time, all Member States are required to dedicate at least one priority to social innovation in their national and/or regional programmes, with an ESF+ co-financing rate of up to 95%[3].

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1   Article 2.1. (8) of the ESF+ regulation
2   Article 2.1 (10) of the ESF+ regulation.
3   Article 14.4, REGULATION (EU) 2021/1057 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 24 June 2021 establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013

In the 2014–2020 ESF regulation, the promotion of social innovation had to be promoted in all areas falling under the ESF scope [4], with a derogatory possibility to allocate a whole priority axis to social innovation and an additional 10% of maximum co-financing in such cases. These priority axes could also combine ESF support for both social innovation and transnational cooperation. As a result, the specific ESF contribution to SI was more challenging or even impossible to identify.

Having priorities dedicated for social innovation across all MS allows us to better identify how ESF+ supports this area and to provide initial EU-level mapping and analysis, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. It is important to note that these dedicated priorities only partially represent the ESF+ contribution to social innovation, supported in a less visible manner under other programme priorities.

1.3.2. At EU level

New EU-level actions funded under ESF+ to foster social innovation have been adopted:

- The ESF Social Innovation+ initiativeimplemented by ESFA (creation of a European Competence Centre for Social Innovation (EUCCSI); the EU-level calls for proposals; 5 Communities of Practice (CoPs).
- The Social Innovation Match (SIM) database.
- The establishment of National Competence Centres for Social Innovation (NCCSI).
- The EaSI strand of ESF+.

This paper will exclusively focus on Member States' ESF+ support under the dedicated Social Innovation Priority in their national and regional programmes, not on the EU-level actions mentioned above. However, this renewed and strengthened EU context will be taken into account whenever it proves beneficial for analysis.

2. Social innovation Priority within ESF+ programmes: Financial analysis

This section provides financial information on the ESF+ investment under the Social Innovation priority as planned in the ESF+ programmes (source: EU SFC database).

2.1. ESF+ financial contribution to the Social Innovation Priority

During the 2021–2027 programming period, a **total investment of EUR 1 784 414 186 is allocated to the dedicated Social Innovation Priorities, from which the EU contribution (ESF+) represents an amount of EUR 1 564 429 911[5] (87.85%).**

For Member States in *italics* and with an asterisk (*), the Social Innovation Priority ESF+ amounts include technical assistance (TA), due to their choice to apply a flat rate to their ESF+ programmes.

	SI Priority EU amount (ESF+)	SI Priority -Total amount (national + EU)	MS Total EU amount (ESF+)6
*Austria**	13 870 990	14 601 043	409 668 103
*Belgium**	91 543 541	169 193 335	1 327 624 388
Bulgaria	9 714 696	10 225 996	2 625 192 711
*Croatia**	19 528 912	20 556 751	1 933 570 912
Cyprus	10 000 000	10 526 316	222 205 180
Czechia	36 463 536	38 382 671	2 430 902 368
Denmark	359 024	377 921	119 616 872
*Estonia**	5 200 000	7 428 572	534 157 337
*Finland**	30 120 795	31 706 101	604 674 883
*France**	200 651 662	211 940 552	6 674 708 658

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4   Article 9, ESF Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006

5   Total ESF+ investment to Social Innovation Priorities include technical assistance resulting from a flat rate.

6   ESF+ total amounts per MS include material deprivation investment and technical assistance.

	SI Priority EU amount (ESF+)	SI Priority -Total amount (national + EU)	MS Total EU amount (ESF+)[7]
*Germany**	245 378 515	288 366 396	6 562 556 905
Greece	23 750 000	25 000 000	5 560 449 773
Hungary	178 977 279	188 397 136	5 298 665 303
*Ireland**	25 419 000	26 756 843	508 380 024
Italy	106 731 462	135 243 645	14 808 620 616
*Latvia**	22 100 000	26 000 000	720 968 137
*Lithuania**	53 335 038	56 142 146	1 136 397 405
Luxembourg	699 353	999 076	15 541 177
Malta	2 400 000	4 000 000	124 421 656
*The Netherlands**	16 435 346	17 300 383	413 757 776
Poland	194 325 581	204 553 244	12 912 994 435
Portugal	5 000 000	5 882 353	7 776 520 960
Romania	15 000 000	17 483 369	7 332 965 756
Slovakia	68 153 000	71 740 002	2 356 298 319
Slovenia	9 260 000	12 123 824	665 364 995
*Spain**	144 677 253	152 291 849	11 295 696 991
*Sweden**	35 334 928	37 194 662	706 698 560
Total	**1 564 429 911**	**1 784 414 186**	**95 078 620 200**

2.2. ESF+ Social Innovation Priority budget by MS

The graphic below shows significant differences of the ESF+ amount allocated to the SI Priority among individual Member States, ranging from EUR 245 378 515 in **Germany** to EUR 359 024 in **Denmark**:

SI priority EU amount (ESF+) in MS (EUR)

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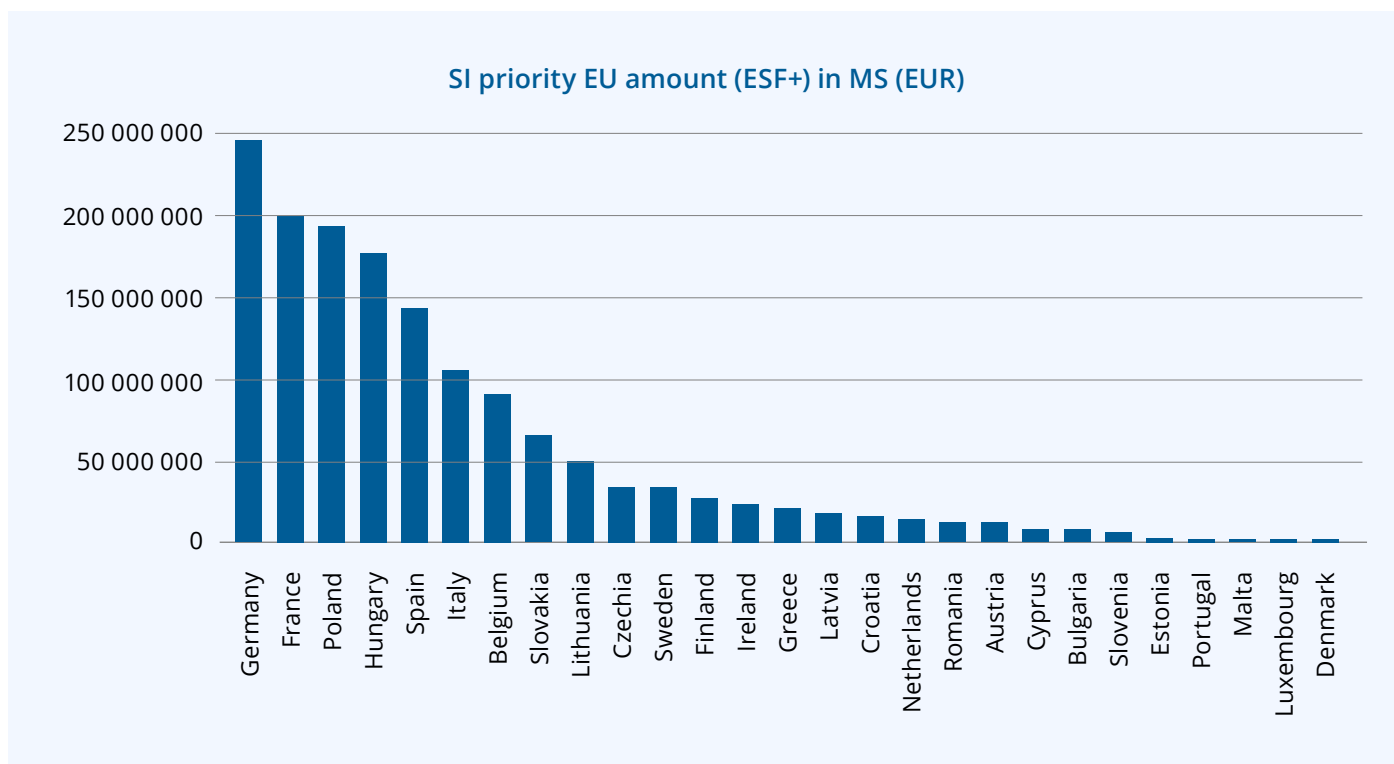
7   ESF+ total amounts per MS include material deprivation investment and technical assistance.

2.3. ESF+ Social Innovation Priority compared to total ESF+ contribution across Member States

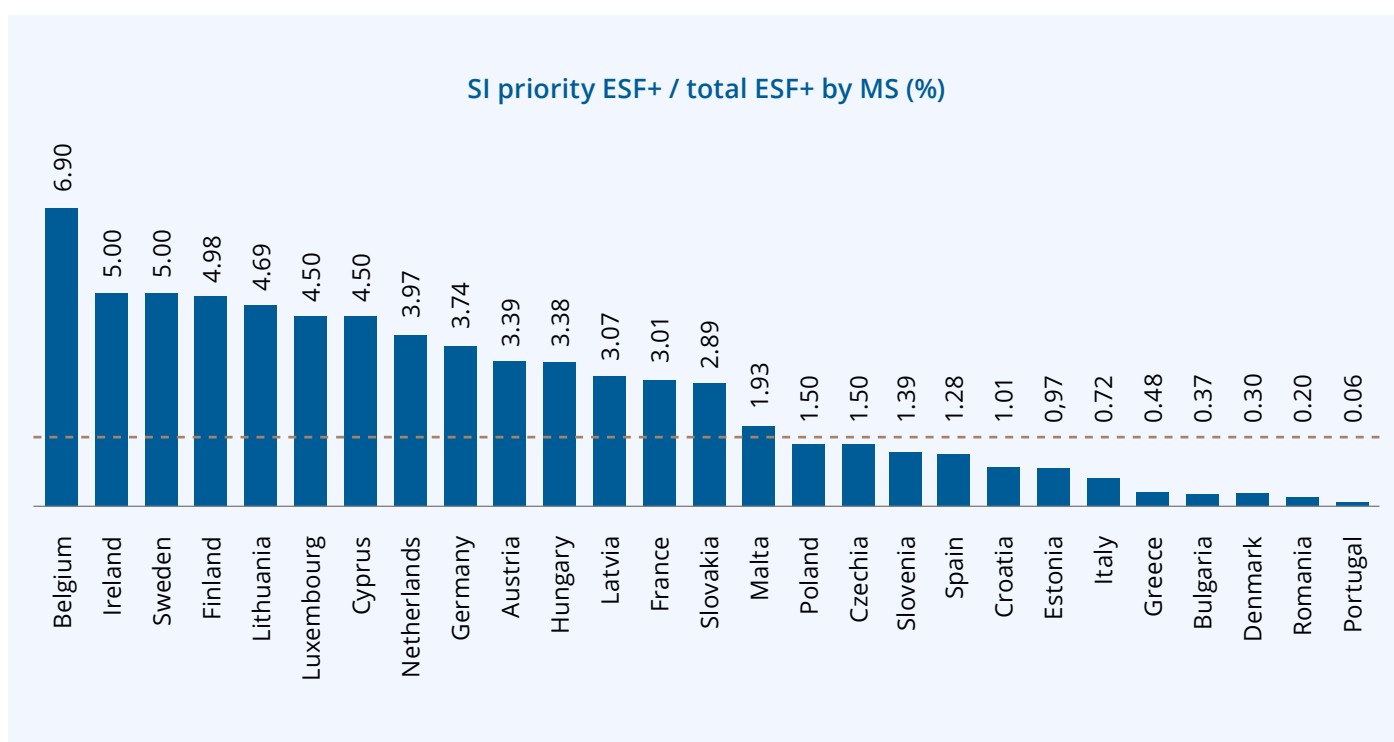**The EU amount (ESF+) allocated to the Social Innovation Priority (EUR 1 564 429 911) accounts for 1.65% of the overall ESF+ contribution (EUR 95 078 620 200).**

The graphic below compares the ESF+ budget dedicated to the Social Innovation Priority with the total ESF+ budget across Member States. This comparison offers a clearer insight into the degree of commitment by each Member State. Notably, 15 Member States have an ESF+ investment above the 1.65% average. However, it does not reflect the overall effort to foster social innovation through ESF+ in each country: additional support is provided under other priorities, which this analysis does not encompass. For instance, while Portugal has only attributed EUR 5 000 000 to the social innovation priority in the ESF+ Alentejo regional operational programme, it will invest further EUR 91 000 000, including EUR 70 000 000 from ESF+, in social innovation through a specific initiative: Portugal Social Innovation 2030, coordinated at national level and implemented via the five regional operational programmes not under the SI priority which diminishes its visibility in this review.

Note: The table below does not include the national co-funding.

SI priority ESF+ / total ESF+ by MS (%)

MS	%
Belgium	6.90
Ireland	5.00
Sweden	5.00
Finland	4.98
Lithuania	4.69
Luxembourg	4.50
Cyprus	4.50
Netherlands	3.97
Germany	3.74
Austria	3.39
Hungary	3.38
Latvia	3.07
France	3.01
Slovakia	2.89
Malta	1.93
Poland	1.50
Czechia	1.50
Slovenia	1.39
Spain	1.28
Croatia	1.01
Estonia	0.97
Italy	0.72
Greece	0.48
Bulgaria	0.37
Denmark	0.30
Romania	0.20
Portugal	0.06

2.4. ESF+ Social Innovation Priority at programme level

The EU amount (ESF+) supporting the Social Innovation Priority is **mainly allocated to national programmes with EUR 1 153 595 067 (almost 74%) and EUR 410 834 844 to regional programmes, as shown in the detailed table below**.

In the 2014–2021 programming period, 11 Operational Programmes from 6 Member States (BE, CZ, DE, ES, HU, PL) had a priority axis dedicated to social innovation and transnational cooperation. However, this comparison is limited and does not allow precise financial contribution[8] comparisons. This limitation arises from the merging of social innovation and transnational cooperation under the same priority axis in many ESF programmes.

For 2021–2027, 44 out of 170 ESF+ programmes submitted by all Member States include a priority entirely dedicated to social innovation: 24 at national level and 20 at regional level.

- Italy and Portugal have no Social Innovation Priority in their ESF+ national programmes, but in some of their regional programmes (2 in Italy and 1 in Portugal). All 3 regional programmes in Belgium have a Social Innovation Priority (no national ESF+ programme).

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8   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. Brodolini, F. G. (2018). ESF support to social innovation: final report.

- Germany, Spain and France have a Social Innovation Priority in their national ESF+ programmes, as well as in some of their regional programmes (7 in Germany, 6 in Spain, 1 in France).
- Out of these 44 programmes, 31 are exclusively funded by ESF+ while the others are multi-fund, combining ESF+, CF, ERDF and/or JTF.

These differences result from the diverse distribution of competences and fund administration between the national and regional levels in each MS. They also reflect some policy decisions responding to different contexts and challenges within individual Member States.

ESF+ Programmes with a dedicated social innovation priority

MS	National programmes – ESF+ SI priority (EUR)			Regional programmes – ESF+ SI priority (EUR)		
AT	2021AT05FFPR001	Employment – ESF+/JTF	13 870 990			
BE				2021BE05SFPR002	Brussels Capital Region – ESF+	
				2021BE05SFPR004	Wallonia-Brussels – ESF+	
				2021BE05SFPR005	Flanders – ESF+	
BG	2021BG05SFPR002	HR Development – ESF+	9 714 696			2 867 405
CY	2021CY16FFPR001	THALIA – CF/ERDF/ESF+/JTF	10 000 000			54 008 140
CZ	2021CZ05SFPR001	Employment Plus – ESF+	36 463 536			34 667 996
DE	2021DE05SFPR001	Bund – ESF+	118 639 690	2021DE05FFPR001	Nordrhein-Westfalen – ESF+/JTF	28 016 967
				2021DE05SFPR002	Baden-Württemberg – ESF+	1 560 000
				2021DE05SFPR003	Bayern – ESF+	20 800 000
				2021DE05SFPR005	Brandenburg – ESF+	16 546 400
				2021DE05SFPR012	Sachsen – ESF+	20 748 000
				2021DE05SFPR013	Sachsen-Anhalt – ESF+	19 686 680
				2021DE16FFPR005	Niedersachsen – DE – ERDF/ESF+	19 380 778
DK	2021DK05SFPR001	Education and Skills – ESF+	359 024			
EE	2021EE16FFPR001	Prog. for Cohesion Policy Funds	5 200 000			
EL	2021EL05SFPR001	HR and Social Cohesion – ESF+	23 750 000			
ES	2021ES05SFPR003	HR and Social Cohesion – ESF+	93 410 000	2021ES05SFPR010	Cantabria – ESF+	3 680 649
				2021ES05SFPR011	Cataluña – ESF+	11 065 600
				2021ES05SFPR015	Valencia – ESF+	3 378 960
				2021ES05SFPR017	Galicia – ESF+	14 924 000
				2021ES05SFPR021	Murcia – ESF+	16 416 400
				2021ES05SFPR022	Navarra – ESF+	1 801 644
FI	2021FI16FFPR001	Innovation and skills – ERDF/ESF+/JTF	30 120 795			
FR	2021FR05SFPR001	Employment, Inclusion, Youth and Skills – ESF+	171 097 899	2021FR16FFPR010	Hauts de France ERDF-ESF+-JTF	29 553 763

MS	National programmes – ESF+ SI priority (EUR)			Regional programmes – ESF+ SI priority (EUR)		
HR	2021HR05SFPR001	Efficient HR – ESF+	19 528 912			
HU	2021HU05FFPR001	HR Development – ERDF/ESF+	178 977 279			
IE	2021IE05SFPR001	Employment, Inclusion, Skills, Training	25 419 000			
IT				2021IT05SFPR003	Campania – ESF+	60 900 000
				2021IT05SFPR014	Sicilia – ESF+	45 831 462
LT	2021LT16FFPR001	EU Funds' Investments – ERDF/ESF+/CF/JTF	53 335 038			
LU	2021LU05FFPR001	Investing in the future – ESF+	699 353			
LV	2021LV16FFPR001	Material Deprivation ESF+	22 100 000			
MT	2021MT05SFPR001	HR and Skills – ESF+	2 400 000			
NL	2021NL05SFPR001	National Programme – ESF+	16 435 346			
PL	2021PL05SFPR001	Social Development – ESF+	194 325 581			
PT				2021PT16FFPR005	Alentejo Regional Programme	5 000 000
RO	2021RO05FFPR001	Social Inclusion – ERDF/ESF+	15 000 000			
SE	2021SE05SFPR001	National Programme – ESF+	35 334 928			
SI	2021SI16FFPR001	EU Cohesion Policy Programme	9 260 000			
SK	2021SK16FFPR001	ERDF/CF/JTF/ESF+	68 153 000			
	Total ESF+ SI priority National Programmes		**1 153 595 067**	**Total ESF+ SI priority Regional Programmes**		**410 834 844**

These important variations result from various factors, such as the size of the country, the number of ESF+ programmes with an ESF+ SI Priority, Social Innovation Policy in each MS and the strategy each MS adopted in using of the dedicated SI Priority.

2.5. Forms of funding under the Social Innovation Priority ESF+

Co-funding rate: For the Social Innovation Priority, the majority of Member States will use the maximum co-funding rate of 95% allowed by the new ESF+ regulation, which is an interesting opportunity for countries with limited national resources supporting Social Innovation Policies. Some Member States indicate the use of different co-funding rates depending on the territory. This is the case for both the national ESF+ programme (Bund) of **Germany**, which uses up to 70% for the target area of more developed regions, and up to 90% for the target area of transition regions.

Choice of forms of funding: The review shows that the vast majority of ESF+ programmes intend to use conventional grants to fund social innovation projects. However, some Member States will also try other forms of funding, such as Social Outcomes contracting. **Lithuania** will test out Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) for the first time, while **Portugal** will maintain and adapt this practice developed during the previous programming period. Some countries have expressed interest but still reserve final judgement, such as the Netherlands, where the Monitoring Committee will make the decision, or **Poland** that will decide after a study confirming the funding gap and the necessity of the intended financial instrument. Other examples of financial instrument combination can be found in some regional ESF+ programmes: for example, **Alentejo** will use grants, SIB and FNLC, and **Sicily** will use grants and loans (source: online survey).

3.   Social Innovation Priority in ESF+ programmes: Policy and measures

All Member States have included a Social Innovation Priority in at least one of their ESF+ programmes. However, depending on their legal, social, cultural and political contexts, **the way Member States will use ESF+ to support social innovation varies significantly.** These discrepancies encompass the overall approach and methodology, specific objectives and policy areas supported, territorial approach, target groups, partnerships, level of integration with other European Social and Investment Funds (ESIF), and the type of measures and actions foreseen. The level of detail provided in the ESF+ programmes also varies greatly, adding to these differences and limiting the comparability.

3.1.   Policy approaches: demand-driven versus supply-driven

The review of the Social Innovation Priority as described in the ESF+ programmes shows two main types of approaches to define the unmet social needs and the innovative solutions addressing them at programme level.

- **The "demand-driven" approach, top-down:** Using this approach, the SI Priority focuses on a specific policy area (sometimes several areas) where policymakers have identified unmet social needs at the national or regional levels. In these policy areas, there is a policy demand for innovative solutions. Depending on the MS programme, the policy area is more or less focused, and the target groups and types of actions are more or less clearly described.

> **Examples**: In national programmes, **Finland** (*child protection),* **Lithuania** (*service quality standards in the area of social services*), **Cyprus** (*Provision of home care services to persons with disability; Family Intervention and Support Centre for Autism),* **Croatia** (*community work centres for Roma population*). In regional programmes, **Navarra (ES)** (*artificial intelligence week*).

> The SI Priorities targeting specific schemes or programmes are also driven by policy demands and are very focused. For instance, this is the case for the support of **ALMA** in the ESF+ programmes' Social Innovation Priorities in **Greece, Slovakia, Galicia, Murcia, Valencia and Brussels Capital.**

- **The "supply-driven" approach, bottom-up:** The SI Priority is very open, with a broad policy area. Unmet social needs will be assessed and defined at a lower, grassroots level by local actors concerned, and through each call for projects. The focus is rather on the improvement of the social innovation eco-system than on the direct support of social innovation pilots and projects in a specific policy field.

> **Examples:** In some national programmes, in **Sweden, France, Austria, Poland and Denmark,** and in some regional ones, such as **Bayern** and **Niedersachsen**, where the thematic scope of support is deliberately open.

- **Various mechanisms will be used to detect and assess social needs on the ground:**

> CLLD is a typical example of the supply-driven approach, where unmet social needs are identified and prioritised by the Local Action Groups (LAGs). It will be applied in **Estonia** and in **Saxony-Anhalt** SI Priorities.

> In the **Austrian** national ESF+ programme, regional experimental spaces will be set up and will assess the needs in the context of regional development. They are open to the relevant ESF stakeholders, representatives of other EU funds and all citizens.

> In **Poland**, the unmet social needs will be identified by regional social innovation incubators, selected through an initial ESF+ Social Innovation call. These incubators look for innovators who have ideas for solving a social problem in the area of the incubator's operation (education, social inclusion etc.), and then support the innovators (individuals, NGOs or institutions) in working on this solution, refining and testing it, so that it meets the needs of people or institutions that will use these solutions; incubators are also responsible for selecting the most effective tested innovations and their dissemination. Here, social challenges do not have a territorial dimension (nationwide) but a "thematic" dimension (education, social inclusion...)

Both approaches are valuable, but they yield different possible consequences, notably in terms of identifying social needs, selecting projects and potential for further transfer and upscaling, as illustrated below in a table showing some potential strengths and weaknesses:

	Unmet social needs	Project proposals and selection process	Potential for scaling-up and transfer
SI Priority supply-driven approach	+ Open enough to adapt to social needs not yet identified or newly emerged. + Closer to reality of social needs at grassroots level. + Areas and topics can be narrowed down in calls for projects.	+ Potential coverage of a wide range of social needs. + Innovative solutions in areas where social innovation is not widespread. + Better access to ESF+ for new applicants, notably small organisations. + Systemic approach to tackle complex interrelated social challenges.	+ Availability of successful social innovation pilots and projects in new policy areas. + Depending on the mechanisms in place, possibility for scaling-up with ESF+ support under several other priorities.
	- Very open approaches can result in a lack of clarity and uncertainty for call preparation and for project applicants. Generally, it requires another step to identify social needs more precisely.	- Depending on the calls, open approaches can lead to either a high number of proposals or to a lack of proposals for potential applicants, including off-topic proposals. - Volume and heterogeneity of proposals can lead to a challenging selection process. - Relevant support for unfamiliar ESF+ applicants and a wide range of thematic expertise for the selection are critical.	- The lack of connection with policymakers at the beginning can lead to reduced engagement on their part, which in turn can lengthen and complicate the scaling-up of innovative solutions into policies. - Social impact and leverage effect might become diluted across an excessive number of projects that are too heterogeneous.
SI Priority Policy-driven or demand-driven approach	+ Precise policy demand often results in clear social needs to be addressed, facilitates calls design and is better understood by project applicants. + Stronger financial leverage effect and social impact potential on one policy area.	+ Increased likelihood of getting relevant and focused proposals effectively addressing well-identified unmet needs. + Selection process and criteria facilitated by available policy area expertise and well-targeted proposals.	+ The initial involvement of policymakers is a success factor for scaling-up positive proven results, as long as the involvement is at the right level of competencies and remains stable along the whole social innovation process. + Concentration and leverage effect on one policy field, better evidence for policy change. + Projects in the same policy area can also be interlinked to create more integrated new solutions.
	- No other policy area, apart from the one targeted, will benefit from social innovation responses that could improve it and generate positive change. - Lack of flexibility regarding adaptation to new needs (programme modifications)?	- Depending on the calls, the risk to remain in a "comfort zone" by engaging "usual suspects", potentially limiting access to newcomers, not fully realizing the full potential of calls. Thinking out the box is essential.	- Risk of failure if social outcomes and impacts are not sufficiently proven, including aspects like cost efficiency, or if they do not align with the policy agenda in a timely manner. Important changes in policies can also ruin years of investment in a single policy area.

Different ways of combining these two approaches can be found in ESF+ social priority, integrating a bottom-up approach even in extremely narrowly specialised policy fields or topics through the implementation model used.

For example, the ESF+ programme in **Hungary,** which is characterised by a strong policy-driven focus, supports a precise catching-up settlements programme (FETE) to promote the social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion. However, the choice of actions of the FETE programme to be supported follows a bottom-up approach. This entails diagnosing needs identified at the local level and mapping of services in cooperation with local actors, municipalities, other service providers and civil society organisations.

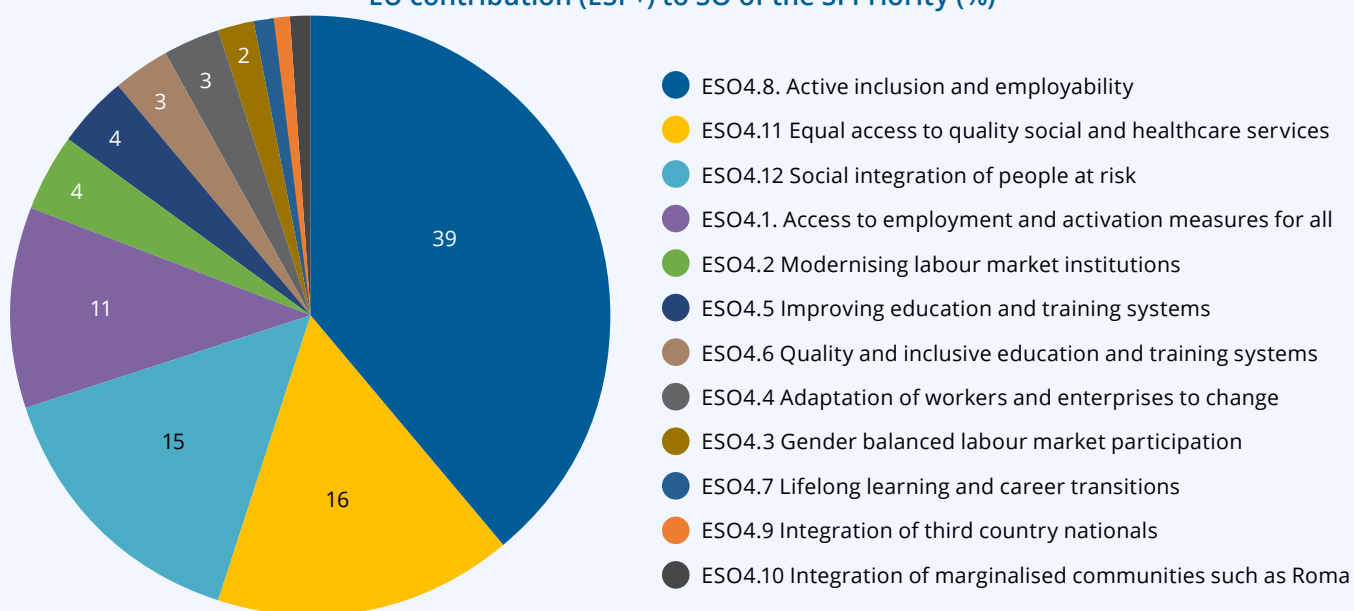## 3.2. Specific objectives supported in the Social Innovation Priority

In the context of shared management, the programmes of Member States must contribute to achieving ESF+ policy objectives in the areas of employment, education and training, and social inclusion. More specifically, 13 ESF+ specific objectives are listed[9], defining the scope of intervention for MS when they design their programmes. Member States could link ESF+ investments in Social Innovation Priorities to any specific objectives as needed.

Four specific objectives collectively account for nearly 82% of the total ESF+ SI Priority allocation: (SO) 4.8 – Active inclusion and employability (39% of the total ESF+ SI Priority amount); followed by **SO 4.11 – Equal access to quality social and healthcare services** (16%); **SO 4.12 – Social integration of people at risk (15%);** and **SO 4.1 Access to employment and activation measures for all (11%).**

These four main specific objectives reflect policy areas where important and urgent social needs have been identified and where the MS will invest to develop innovative solutions to address these societal challenges and needs.

Specific Objective	SI Priority EU amount (EUR)	SI Priority EU amount (%)
ESO4.8 Active inclusion and employability	611 593 883	39.09
ESO4.11 Equal access to quality social and healthcare services	249 194 962	15.93
ESO4.12 Social integration of people at risk	238 388 419	15.24
ESO4.1 Access to employment and activation measures for all	182 579 411	11.67
ESO4.2 Modernising labour market institutions	61 358 957	3.92
ESO4.5 Improving education and training systems	58 285 324	3.73
ESO4.6 Quality and inclusive education and training systems	47 275 097	3.02
ESO4.4 Adaptation of workers and enterprises to change	44 217 523	2.83
ESO4.3 Gender-balanced labour market participation	23 144 410	1.48
ESO4.7 Lifelong learning and career transitions	20 845 960	1.33
ESO4.9 Integration of third country nationals	17 665 961	1.13
ESO4.10 Integration of marginalised communities such as Roma	9 880 000	0.63
Total	**1 564 429 911**	

EU contribution (ESF+) to SO of the SI Priority (%)

- ● ESO4.8. Active inclusion and employability
- ● ESO4.11 Equal access to quality social and healthcare services
- ● ESO4.12 Social integration of people at risk
- ● ESO4.1. Access to employment and activation measures for all
- ● ESO4.2 Modernising labour market institutions
- ● ESO4.5 Improving education and training systems
- ● ESO4.6 Quality and inclusive education and training systems
- ● ESO4.4 Adaptation of workers and enterprises to change
- ● ESO4.3 Gender balanced labour market participation
- ● ESO4.7 Lifelong learning and career transitions
- ● ESO4.9 Integration of third country nationals
- ● ESO4.10 Integration of marginalised communities such as Roma

9   ESF+ regulation, Article 4(1).

The ESF+ Social Innovation Priority is predominantly centred on one single specific objective in the majority of Member States (CY, CZ, DK, EE, FI, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, RO, SE, SI). Conversely, **Poland** will support 11 specific objectives out of 13 in its ESF+ Social Innovation Priority.

Within individual countries, the choice of specific objectives varies between the national and regional levels, as well as among regions of the same country, showing the substantial influence of context on social innovation and social challenges addressed.

In **Spain**, the national ESF+ programme's SI Priority will focus on SO4.8 and SO4.11. In contrast, the six Spanish regional programmes are all different: three will support a single SO (**Catalunya** SO 4.5; **Valencia** SO 4.1; **Navarra** SO 4.6), **Cantabria** will focus on SO4.1 and SO4.12, **Galicia** on SO4.1 and SO4.11, and **Murcia** on SO4.8, SO4.11 and SO4.12. Similar trends emerge in **Germany** and **France**. In **Belgium**, the Social Innovation Priority will target SO4.1 for **Brussels Capital** and **Wallonia**, while **Flanders** will focus on SO4.2. In **Italy**, **Campania** will support SO4.1 and 4.8, whereas **Sicily** will link social innovation to SO4.8.

The table below shows the specific objectives chosen in each MS and programme. This table can help them identify other Member States that have chosen the same policy fields to implement social innovation measures, perhaps facing the same social challenges and needs. This information can thus facilitate collaboration among Member States through the exchange of knowledge and practices between ESF+ stakeholders, and ESF+ MAs in particular, encouraged by the CoP on social innovation. ESF+ allocation per specific objective and MS can be found in Annex 2.

	ESO4.1	ESO4.2	ESO4.3	ESO4.4	ESO4.5	ESO4.6	ESO4.7	ESO4.8	ESO4.9	ESO4.10	ESO4.11	ESO4.12
AT							■	■				
BE Flanders		■										
BE Brussels Cap	■											
BE Wallonia	■											
BG	■										■	
CY											■	
CZ								■				
DE								■				
DE Nordrhein-Westfalen								■				
DE Baden-Württemberg												
DE Bayern				■		■						
DE Brandenburg	■			■								
DE Sachsen	■							■				
DE Sachsen-Anhalt						■						■
DE Niedersachsen				■							■	
DK								■			■	
EE											■	
EL	■	■						■				
ES								■			■	
ES Cantabria	■											■

	ESO4.1	ESO4.2	ESO4.3	ESO4.4	ESO4.5	ESO4.6	ESO4.7	ESO4.8	ESO4.9	ESO4.10	ESO4.11	ESO4.12
ES Cataluna					X							
ES Valencia	X											
ES Galicia	X										X	
ES Murcia								X			X	X
ES Navarra						X						
FI								X				
FR								X				
FR Hauts-de-France					X							
HR										X	X	
HU												X
IE								X				
IT	X										X	
IT								X				
LT											X	
LU	X											
LV												X
MT								X				
NL			X					X				
PL	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
PT Alentejo								X				
RO								X				
SE								X				
SI	X											
SK	X					X		X				

However, the content of the Social Innovation Priorities descriptions reveals varying interpretations among MS of these specific objectives. These divergent interpretations are then translated into various types of measures in relation to their own national and regional policies, societal challenges and social innovation ecosystem.

3.3. Type of measures and target groups related to specific objectives supported in the Social Innovation Priority

Despite targeting the same specific objectives, the type of measures can vary considerably between MS programmes in terms of approach, activities, and target groups, as shown in the examples below.

The following sections provide an analysis of the information by specific objective [10], with some examples.

The SI priority of the ESF+ programme in Poland targets 11 specific priorities, that will not be analysed in detail due to the specific implementation process: a broad approach has been adopted, with the inclusion of SI in 11 specific

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10   ESF+ amounts dedicated to each specific objective include some technical assistance corresponding to the programmes applying flat rate (see the table with ESF+ Social Innovation Priority amounts by Member States p.4).

objectives and an identical amount of ESF for each objective, in order to guarantee the maximum flexibility at the implementation stage, a key factor for success. The amount eventually allocated to specific goals will depend on the challenges identified on an ongoing basis.

3.3.1. SO4.8 Active inclusion and employability (in particular for disadvantaged groups)

SO4.8 ESF+ SI Priority amount	Programmes concerned
611 593 883 EUR (39.09%)	22 programmes in total
	Single SO: CZ, DE Bund, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Baden-Württemberg, DK, FI, FR, IE, Sicilia, MT, PT, RO, SE (13 programmes)
	With other SO: AU, Bayern, Sachsen, EL, ES, Murcia, NL, PL, SK

This specific objective of a wide scope is the one most targeted by ESF+ Social Innovation Priorities in terms of both programme count and ESF+ financial investment.

- **Some measures planned are described quite broadly, aiming to create and develop an ecosystem favourable to social innovation,** with activities intentionally kept open at times, to better accommodate the diverse potential needs of various target groups and the evolving social and labour market context. **Several measures under this specific objective also support the activities of the National Competence Centres**.

Denmark's Social Innovation Priority follows this approach, stressing the importance of creating socially sustainable and inclusive solutions that, in addition to addressing social needs, bring about a positive change in the living conditions of those in need. Emphasis is placed on collaborating across sectors and societal cultures, while also prioritising socially sustainable and scalable solutions for defined needs. Eventually, support is foreseen to promote capacity building for social innovation, including support for mutual learning, creation of networks and promotion of good practices and methods through the **National Competence Centre for Social Innovation**. Potential actions reflect the social innovation process and characteristics, yet with no specific details. These include forging **partnerships** between public authorities, the private sector and civil society (potentially through bottom-up approaches), undertaking **social experimentation, scaling up tested and developed innovative concepts, devising innovative solutions for adapting to the employment, education and professional support system, promoting social inclusion**, and involving **social economy** enterprises and other social economy actors.

Spain has two measures contributing to this objective. The first one relates to **Social Innovation Projects promoted by the National Competence Centre for Social Innovation for the improvement of employability.** This measure is intended to promote bottom-up approaches based on partnerships with a multi-action participation of public authorities, social interlocution groups, social enterprises, the private sector and civil society. It will catalyse the experiences of pilot projects tested on a smaller scale and support wider application of successful cases. Furthermore, it aims to facilitate access to funding for socially impactful innovative initiatives. Many activities are planned, ranging from the provision of technical guidance in social innovation to support in project execution and scaling, or assistance for project start-up (for example, through seed funds), and training initiatives. **The second measure adopts a more targeted approach, focusing on actions that improve employability of individuals from vulnerable groups and reduce unemployment. This is achieved through engagement with of people from vulnerable groups through social economy entities and** the introduction of new methodologies to improve their social and labour market integration.

In **Austria**, ESF+ support will be provided through **activities of the National Competence Centre for Social Innovation by building up know-how and strengthening all relevant stakeholders, including project promoters. Additionally, experimentation spaces to support the development of socially innovative projects will be established. The term** 'social innovation' can encompass different degrees of 'innovation' in terms of novelty, and support will be provided to projects consisting of entirely new solutions, as well as to pilot solutions previously applied in a different region and/or context. **Under this specific objective, measures will focus on poverty reduction** based on the results of the EaSI SI Plus project highlighting the importance of addressing this current challenge.

Slovakia will support the **innovation ecosystem and develop tools to support social innovation in the regions** through innovation hubs and by supporting social innovators at different stages of the innovation cycle (hackathons, incubation, acceleration, mentoring and outreach programmes), as well as capacity building. In addition, **innovative projects addressing various social challenges** (household indebtedness, living conditions of persons with disabilities, children with non-standard development, lack of prevention and individualised, customer-oriented approaches for

active inclusion activities) **will target specific disadvantaged groups** (children with non-standard development, young adults transitioning from institutional care, people with disabilities, members of marginalised communities, victims of violence and single-parent families).

- Some social innovation priorities focus on the approach and methods to support the social innovation ecosystem, as well as social experimentation and social innovation projects without predetermination of sectors or precise measures, actions or target groups.

Sweden has a very open scope for social innovation, and focuses on **collaboration** between actors in the public, private and idea-driven sectors, aiming to meet societal challenges and needs regarding social inclusion, the labour market, education and capacity building. The measure distinguishes three levels of support: **at the individual level,** initiatives that contribute to more individuals entering workforce, education or approaching the labour market; **at organisational level,** efforts that enable organisations to better meet societal challenges such as segregation, digitisation and automation, economic vulnerability, the need for a career change, and the establishment, re-entry or safer employment within the labour market; **at structural level,** efforts that contribute to lasting social effects and to a developed labour market policy (initiatives with solutions for a widened labour market and strengthened opportunities for social entrepreneurship that generate economic, as well as social and environmental sustainability). Additionally, the focus includes testing and developing models that meet new needs linked to a labour market moving towards more flexible working conditions (e.g., platform-based job opportunities).

France will support three types of social innovation measures under this objective. **Actions to strengthen the conditions conducive to social innovation (ecosystem)** will support the emergence and development of social innovation (to support and equip social innovation operators before the project starts), ensuring project sustainability and security, and promoting valorisation and capitalisation to foster the transfer of knowledge and skills between social innovation actors. **Actions to support social experimentation** will cover the initial pilot phase and the analysis of the results. The last measure relates to **actions aimed at supporting the scaling up of social innovation projects, spanning from infra-regional level to transregional levels. Additionally, this measure covers innovative projects that have been financed by other European funds, in particular EASI/the EaSI component of the ESF+.**

- In other cases, the range of standard social innovation actions (ecosystem, social innovation and experimentation, scaling up and capacity building) is supplemented by detailed but non-exhaustive lists of possible thematic areas that indicate some already identified social challenges.

The Social Innovation Priority in the **Czech Republic** will contribute to this specific objective, featuring measures that remain quite open while providing some precise and comprehensive examples of innovative areas and activities, as well as a **detailed but indicative list of thematic areas in the four fields: social inclusion, employment, equal opportunities and the effective functioning of organisations**. The SI Priority will support **social experimentation in relation to public policies**, **improvement of the quality of public services through new approaches** (e.g., service analysis, development of clinical and systemic approaches); production and use of scientifically proven evidence for decision-making (evidence-informed policy making). Moreover, the priority involves training public sector personnel in public service development, policies and innovative approaches for their formulation and implementation). Lastly, it highlights the **scaling up of innovative solutions and approaches** (e.g., developed under the Employment and Social Innovation strand or other EU programmes).

In **Ireland**, this priority will support **social innovation and social experimentation** measures (development and testing of new ideas, approaches and policies) designed to address the **persistent social inclusion challenges**. It will also support the **scaling up of approaches tested on a smaller scale or in a different context**, as well as activities geared towards **raising awareness** of social innovation and **capacity building** of organisations involved in social innovation. Among the indicative types of standard action, a notable one involves harnessing the **potential of sports for the personal development and social inclusion of disadvantaged groups.**

The Netherlands' approach to social innovation, aimed at addressing and ensuring equal opportunities, sustainable and inclusive employment in the labour market, will be applied **in three calls. Rather than solely focusing on maintaining or securing employment, the main goal is to introduce new approaches in promoting equal opportunities and non-discrimination at work, with activities to be developed within Dutch companies** (bottom-up approach in companies). Additionally, the approach seeks to **encourage regional organisations and governments** to work together in innovative ways to ensure social inclusion at work, sustainable and high-quality employment for the vulnerable target group of the ESF+ program. **A list of indicative themes provides useful information about potential projects that could be supported.** For example, these themes cover social experimentation, increased access to decision-making processes and policy development for representatives of vulnerable groups, combating internship discrimination, or "development

partnerships" exploring what works to create a more inclusive and open culture within companies or industries, leading to policy adjustment on the basis of this research and scaling up of proven good and new approaches.

- **Most open social innovation measures under this specific objective promote bottom-up approaches to identify specific needs and projects. The selection of projects and activities will be based on the target group needs, and/or their territorial context, some measures being place-based (targeted geographical areas).** In some cases, projects will be selected by regional/ local committees representing all actors involved, or by social innovation incubators, as it is the case for the Social Innovation Priority in **Poland** mentioned previously.

Nordrhein-Westfalen (DE) is another example of a bottom-up approach, aiming to define innovative solutions adapted to social needs at the local level. The ESF+ programme implements innovative individual projects that test new approaches, particularly focusing on improving social participation and active inclusion of disadvantaged groups with a **quartier-based approach. Depending on the target group, the offer will be differentiated** to build and increase employability. A **holistic approach** is promoted to encompass employment, health, migration and care, as well as a **multi-actor approach** involving families and local social structures, as well as chambers and companies to offer a realistic perspective on the path to education and employment. It is also possible to include voluntary work in the neighbourhood, peer-to-peer approaches, and neighbourly support. An additional benefit lies in the inclusion of social enterprises, and particular attention must be paid to the group of persons with disabilities.

In **Baden-Württemberg (DE), innovative models are intentionally not predetermined. The aim is to support small-scale projects** and further enhance the implementation of model projects. By keeping a smaller **predetermined project size** and maintaining a co-financing rate, the intention is to support the promotion of less established approaches and smaller promoters and to fund innovative projects that could not be implemented in other ESF+ support due to the need for a high co-financing rate. Support for these particularly innovative measures is to be implemented by the **regional working groups**, which will increase project visibility among the relevant regional actors. The focus is on disadvantaged target groups facing multiple problems. Among other examples, new innovative projects with **digital and/or green building blocks** can also be tested.

Bayern's (DE) SI Priority is also open, focusing on individually and socially disadvantaged people who can only be activated via very low-threshold measures. **In addition,** innovative projects to prevent child poverty **can be implemented (e.g., through special integrative offers for children or family support measures).** The design of the projects should always be **based on the support needs of the target group or the individual.**

Sachsen (DE) will tackle the **risk of poverty in urban areas**, supporting municipalities and project promoters implementing **social inclusion, integrated, quarter-related, innovative projects for socially and labour market disadvantaged people in urban areas with particular development needs** in this policy area. This new funding approach is a focal point to support neighbourhood and community development and will involve networking of municipalities, promoters and civil society actors in disadvantaged urban areas. Additionally, databases, publications and research will help identify and disseminate innovative forms of civic participation and community work and provide opportunities for further training.

- **Other SI Priority measures and types of actions, however, can be very precise in terms of target groups, planned actions and sectors, thus portraying the differences between Member States on where and how they will use ESF+ to support this objective better.**

The **German Bund** ESF+ programme will support the **creation of new local or regional network projects for the active inclusion of older people aged 60 and over, including their spouses, civil partners or companions**, giving examples of activities (testing new ways of reaching target groups, strengthening the digital autonomy of older people to help them overcome loneliness, promoting appropriate participation methods, etc.). **For the first time, young men with specific difficulties in accessing education and employment will also be targeted** (immigrants and refugees from third countries, as well as young inactive people of working age). Here again, support will only be provided for **associations in cooperation with institutions** (municipalities, job centres, (migrant/social) enterprises, migrant organisations, welfare providers, etc.), depending on the problems and lives of the target groups on the ground. Different types of actions tailored to the target group will include training and employment in SMEs (migrant/social), intensive coaching/mentoring, qualification and training modules, including language support as part of (paid) "on-the-job training" and (re)employment or tailor-made placements in companies in the sector concerned. Financial incentives for participants and their families are intended to prevent early termination of activity, illegal employment or criminalisation. Measures are also planned to support the establishment and development of sector-specific business networks for the reception and (re)employment of participants. These measures will be integrated into overall municipal strategies and linked to local projects.

Finland has a very precise focus and will develop **open, fostering and after-care content, as well as structures for child protection** (children and adolescents under child protection, in particular those located outside a home). The goal is to enhance the quality of services and interdisciplinary staff skills, including digital skills, involving actors delivered locally through multi-actor networks known as "Safety nets for the future of young people".

Sicily's Social Innovation Priority, fully dedicated to this specific objective, contains several detailed measures based on the previous experience of a project funded by AMIF. Their **social experimentation will apply a model for the development of depopulated small villages in inland areas** by increasing employment opportunities and the availability and quality of services in inland areas for young people, including third-country nationals, along with minors. This model of sustainable local development can be replicated on a larger scale after testing its effectiveness. Numerous specific actions are listed, such as support measures for the creation of new (micro) enterprises, including social entrepreneurs, through easier access to finance, training and financial advice; the establishment of a system for certification of skills and qualifications held by the target audience, in particular migrants and refugees, including validation procedures for non-formal and informal learning; employment along with social and health services; learning pathways of Italian language for foreigners; digital innovation training processes; specific actions to strengthen the role of the third sector operating in marginalised communities or in support of migrants and refugees, etc. ESF + actions will complement the interventions of the Region of Sicily and the other ERDF, EAFRD and EMFAF funds, driven by the integrated territorial strategy.

In **Greece**, innovative actions and services financed for vulnerable and marginalised groups (Roma, refugees/migrants, etc.) can cover **social entrepreneurship in the areas of the blue and green economy, knowledge of Greek culture** in the context of actions for their social and cultural integration, and the **creation of new innovative tools and processes to increase participation and involvement of civil society, social partners and citizens**.

In **Malta**, Social Innovation Priority interventions aim to **foster independent living to improve the quality of life of various disadvantaged groups, including those affected by rare/uncommon diseases, the elderly and people with disabilities.** Actions will be directed towards new/improved ways to enhance well-being. ESF+ will support studies, training and development of programmes related to the establishment of new services as well as re-invention of current services, including the way they are implemented, monitored and rolled out. This SO will target the creation of new social relationships or collaborations between partners that make up Malta's health, care and social protection systems. These partnerships will be reinforced to address socioeconomic challenges.

Alentejo (PT), based on experience gained during the past programme period and the National Strategy for the Integration of Homeless People, will support two types of initiatives: **Support for homeless people** implemented at the district/regional level by Centres for Planning and Intervention for Homeless People (NPISA), tailored to the needs identified in their diagnosis (integrated framework to create less bureaucratic and faster responses; develop training/capacity building actions for technical staff working with this population). In addition, a wide range of initiatives promoting **social inclusion through culture** will be supported, ranging from the promotion of artistic practices by and for vulnerable groups, to digital inclusion-related initiatives, as well as the activation of integrating projects based on cultural and local development and through the integration into the labour market within socio-cultural areas.

Romania will support the **creation of an Innovation and Inclusion Cluster – a platform for the integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market** based on the principles of equal opportunities, non-discrimination, active participation and social inclusion, pursuing the objective of harnessing the scope of digitalisation and assistive technologies. The primary goal of the cluster is to **promote solutions, innovations, products, services and technologies for people with disabilities in terms of autonomy and employability for independent living while creating a platform for collaboration between relevant actors: universities, civil society, private organisations and public institutions.** A large and detailed range of actions is described, covering several training sessions on accessibility, the adaptation of products and services; the development of regional innovation and inclusion hubs; the creation of a methodological package to test products and services from an accessibility point of view; the provision of a mini-grant scheme to support the development, testing, patenting of products, solutions for product accessibility and services and/or development of assistive and access technologies, etc.

Target Groups under SO4.8

This specific objective focuses on "disadvantaged groups", wide enough to result in distinct target groups that may be selected under the Social Innovation Priorities.

- Some programmes remain very general (Sweden, France, Denmark), while the majority provide non-exhaustive lists of potential target groups.

- In some cases, very precise target groups are defined, notably for very focused measures and activities: in the German Bund, Malta, Finland and Portugal. Slovakia identifies eligible target groups in relation to its legal framework (Employment Act service, Social Services Act, Labour Code, Atlas of Roma Communities).

Young people constitute the largest represented target group in various programmes: in Czech Republic, Bund, Baden Württemberg (DE), Finland and Sicily (IT) (this does not imply that they are not covered by wider target groups mentioned in other programmes).

People with disabilities are targeted among other target groups by Nordrhein-Westfalen (DE), Alentejo (PT), Bayern (DE), Greece, Spain Slovakia, and are the final beneficiaries in Romania.

Roma communities/people are specifically identified in Greece, Spain and Slovakia.

Migrants (people with a migration and/or refugee background) / third-country nationals, asylum seekers, ethnic minorities, immigrants): in Nordrhein-Westfalen (DE), Sicily (IT), Alentejo (PT), Germany Bund, Greece and Slovakia.

Children are identified in target groups in Finland, Bayern (DE) and Slovakia, while **elderly/seniors** are targeted by the programmes in the German Bund, Alentejo (PT) and Slovakia.

3.3.2. SO4.11: Equal access to quality social and healthcare services

SO4.11 ESF+ SI Priority amount	Programmes concerned
249 194 962 EUR (15.93%)	12 programmes in total Single SO: CY, EE, LT, SI (4 programmes) With other SO: Niedersachsen (DE), EL, ES, Galicia (ES), Murcia (ES), HR, Campania (IT), PL

SO4.11 has a more precisely defined scope compared to SO4.8. It primarily focuses on housing, care and social protection systems, and identifies some specific target groups (children and disadvantaged groups, and persons with disabilities). Measures planned under this SO are also more specific in terms of policy field, target groups and the types of actions, with the exception of Estonia, which applies the CLLD approach.

Lithuania is the only country targeting the **modernisation of its social protection system as a whole, including promoting access to social protection,** by increasing the compatibility of social services with the individual needs of a person (family), by equipping service providers with the necessary competencies and carrying out accreditation of social care services, improving service quality through the implementation and adherence to service standards, and fostering social innovation through investments in social impact initiatives.

- **Several measures adopt needs-based and place-based approaches, aiming to develop new models and alternative forms of social services for vulnerable groups, supporting deinstitutionalisation and prevention.**

The particularity of the SI Priority in **Estonia** is that it will be implemented through **LAGs, using the LEADER/CLLD approach. This approach lends support to local initiatives** that improve the availability and quality of social services; support the integration and coordination of services; contribute to the provision of person-centred services; and increase people's daily living conditions and well-being at home. Additionally, it includes the development of a new support measure for older people who cannot cope alone but do not need full-time care facility support; new measures for new target groups (e.g., individuals with addiction and mental disorders, people with autism spectrum disorder, etc.). These initiatives also offer flexible working conditions for older people, people with special needs and people burdened with care responsibilities; support healthy and active ageing; contribute to a more effective response to complex problems and channel additional resources to address social issues.

Without using the CLLD approach, **Niedersachsen (DE)** also targets rural areas for developing and testing **regionally appropriate and forward-looking solutions for regional services of general interest**.

Campania (IT) will support the **experimental launch of integrated e-health place-based micro-systems** (digital health with the involvement of local communities, health professionals, the third sector, the family network, voluntary associations, spontaneous groups of organised citizens. These efforts take place in specific areas and are coordinated by relevant institutional and local actors. The goal is to promote a wider, more comprehensive and effective provision of care services at home, rather than in institutional healthcare places (clinics, hospitals, residential facilities).

Croatia will continue the process of **deinstitutionalisation** while **preventing institutionalisation**. The aim is to ensure **a more even regional distribution of innovative non-institutional services** in line with identified needs and priorities, including leave from care for family caregivers, peer-to-peer support, integration of health and social services. Additionally, innovative forms of psychosocial counselling, support to family collaborators, developing innovative programmes related to combating conflict in parenthood, enhancing parental competencies, fostering equitable parenthood, dispelling stereotypes about parental roles in childcare and family care will be covered. Furthermore, support for single-parent families will be strengthened, alongside capacity-building initiatives for professionals to develop these innovative programmes, and some capacity building for social service providers to enhance their capacity to deliver innovative services.

- Some measures target specific disadvantaged groups and/or types of vulnerability.

In **Cyprus**, the programme Thalia will provide **home care services to persons with disabilities, and Family Intervention and Support Centre for Autism.**

Slovenia will support the **strengthening of prevention programmes (including sports programmes) and the design of programmes adapted to the needs of older people,** with supporting measures to strengthen social innovation (prevention activities in health care and age fragility management).

Galicia (ES) aims to create a new model of community care for **severe mental health disorders.**

In **Greece**, the SI Priority measures aim at **strengthening mental health with non-traditional forms of support and actions promoting technological innovation** to address specific needs, which includes the use of AI language technologies (machine translation, text analysis, speech synthesis, interactive robots, voice technologies, etc.).

Spain's national programme will promote **family preservation and return to families** through social experimentation projects to prevent institutionalisation, creating a social innovation platform made up of municipal projects selected by open calls. Other measures involve the use of social experimentation to **detect risks or support needs that make it possible to identify situations that require early intervention.** The aim is to obtain intervention models to respond to attachment disorders and traumas stemming from early adversity and to repair the damages caused.

Several Social Innovation Priority measures target organisations (social service providers, professionals) instead of or in addition to individuals. These measures are implemented in Lithuania, Campania (IT), Slovakia, and Murcia (ES)

3.3.3. SO4.12: Social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion

SO4.12 ESF+ SI Priority amount	Programmes concerned
238 388 419 EUR (15.24%)	6 programmes in total
	Single SO: HU, LV (2 programmes)
	With other SO: Sachsen-Anhalt (DE), Cantabria (ES), Murcia (ES), PL

Half of the ESF+ SI Priority, including the two programmes from Hungary and Latvia that only target this SO, have the unique feature of addressing infrastructure and equipment needs in addition to social needs, combining ESF+ and ERDF resources to increase synergies and provide comprehensive and consistent support (cross-financing in Latvia). The same goes for Sachsen-Anhalt applying the CLLD approach to support 25 LAGs using cross-funding. They all adopt a very integrated, systemic and user-centred approach to address what seems to be perceived as a complex multi-challenges objective. They all focus on specific areas. Social needs are identified, assessed and determined at the grassroot level in a collaborative way involving end-users. Some similarities with measures supported under SO4.11 can be noticed.

Hungary will further develop the FETE programme, launched in 2019, focusing on **catching-up settlements.** This initiative aims to introduce **new services and models** (e.g., telemedicine-based health services) **and filling gaps** (e.g., intensive care for people under 3 years of age) through coordinated interventions. The actions follow a bottom-up approach, driven by local needs and developed in cooperation with local actors, municipalities, other service providers and civil society organisations. **The innovativeness of the programme is in its approach.** The programme provides gap-filling services that promote access to mainstream services (without creating parallel benefit systems) for those in need, the vast majority of whom suffer from challenges related to employment, livelihood and health, and those living in poor housing conditions. Access Points are operated in the municipalities, focusing on children and young

people, offering solutions from conception and early childhood to school-age, as well as employment interventions, and addressing housing issues that require social, health and non-infrastructure investment.

Latvia is developing and **testing innovative methods and solutions for providing social services to the target groups of most socially excluded and those at risk of poverty.** This includes measures such as infrastructure adaptation and purchase of equipment or technical solutions, evaluation of results, training for professionals working with these target groups in events and advisory support for social service specialists. The measures also include multiplication of innovative approaches (e.g., for reducing the consumption of addictive substances and processes, foreseeing social innovations in the provision of social rehabilitation services, both within institutions and in individuals' places of residence). The provision of social services envisages **integrated cooperation of health, education and internal affairs specialists, using a person-centred approach adapted to individual needs**.

Sachsen-Anhalt (DE) will support **innovative and integrated local solutions**, supporting projects developed by local actors (LAGs) using a bottom-up approach (CLLD) in line with the specific social needs of each region, to be defined by LAGs, driven and supported by the actors involved at the grassroot level.

Cantabria (ES) will promote an innovative community programme, "Comprehensive Family Support Programme", aimed at supporting families by training parents in the principles of "positive parenthood" in order to address and prevent conflict and promote social inclusion of families.

Murcia (ES) will support Community participation for social inclusion (transform vulnerable environments) through Weave networks that place the person in need at the centre of a partnership where all the actors are represented to reverse the situations of vulnerability detected. Upon an independent evaluation, the relevance of institutionalising these activities will be analysed.

3.3.4. SO4.1 Access to employment and activation measures for all

SO4.1 ESF+ SI Priority amount	Programmes concerned
182 579 411 EUR (11.67%)	6 programmes in total
	Single SO: Brussels capital, Wallonia-Brussels, Valencia (ES), SI and LU (4 programmes)
	With other SO: BU, Brandenburg (DE), Sachsen (DE), EE, Cantabria (ES), Galicia (ES), Campania (IT), PL, SK

This specific objective has a very broad scope related to the labour market, while specifying some specific target groups, the Youth Guarantee, as well as some particular ways to improve access to employment (self-employment and social economy).

- Many Social Innovation Priorities target **young people, including some dedicated to supporting the ALMA**[11] **initiative (AIM, Learn, Master, Achieve),** a cross-border youth mobility scheme that helps disadvantaged young people aged 18 to 29 not in employment, education or training (NEETs) finding their way to the labour market. Interestingly, ALMA is about the transfer and upscaling of a social innovation implemented by Germany since 2008, and a call for proposals was launched in December 2022 to support Member States integrating ALMA in their ESF+ programmes by piloting or scaling up ALMA type of operations.

In the **Brussels Capital Region**, social innovation is focused on young people and includes testing of mentoring as an innovative support method for certain groups of young job seekers in their career integration pathways (the bottom-up and partnership approaches), in addition to the support to **ALMA**.

Other SI Priorities supporting ALMA can be found in **Slovakia, Valencia (ES), Galicia (ES) and Greece**, and **Campania is considering this as a possibility.**

Wallonia-Brussels foresees testing and transferring the "Territoire zéro chômeur de longue durée" (territories without long-term unemployment) initiative developed in France with pilots to be developed in specific territories (maximum of 15 000 inhabitants). The objective is to enable the development of territorial initiatives aiming to ensure that everyone permanently unemployed has access to employment of indefinite duration, by developing an activity that is useful and not in competition with the existing one. This innovative approach is based on the needs of individuals and the unmet

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11   ALMA initiative.

needs of the territories (economic basin) and implies bottom-up dynamics in mobilising local actors with a strong link to the territory.

- **Social economy and entrepreneurship** contribute to improving access to employment for disadvantaged people, and the social economy is recognised as fertile ground for social innovations.

In Luxembourg, the whole Social Innovation Priority is dedicated to the promotion of the Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation. Several types of actions are foreseen for jobseekers with a focus on circular economy (training and retraining, creation of cross-border circular economy, social projects that create employment opportunities for low-skilled jobseekers), the establishment of mutual advice and services for start-ups in the ESS, and the implementation of a competence centre for the social, solidarity and circular economy. In addition, a cooperative digital platform will be created to ensure good working conditions and social insurance for digital trade workers.

Cantabria (ES) will create a **pilot programme for the mentoring of innovative projects for the creation of new social economy enterprises and the promotion of existing ones** to promote employment for people with more difficulties in entering the labour market, particularly in areas at risk of depopulation. These projects consist of assisting entrepreneurial initiatives in the creation of social economy formulas, supporting enterprises already set up in finding new management models that bring about the changes needed to advance and transform their activities. This pilot programme will target young people, women, people over the age of 45 who can transition their careers and the migrant population.

In **Greece, actions to create hubs and clusters will be financed to promote social entrepreneurship initiatives, prioritising the blue, green and circular economy** to promote employment, active ageing, education and training of the unemployed (with a special focus on sub-groups of unemployed/long-term unemployed and inactive individuals), vulnerable groups such as NEETs, vulnerable children, people with disabilities and/or chronic diseases, Roma, people with a criminal background, third-country nationals, single parents, etc.

Campania (IT) will support the establishment of **partnerships made up of universities, specialised in business incubation activities, for the implementation of innovative business start-up support plans in the cultural sector,** a driver for employment and inclusive growth. In addition, **new social partnerships between the public, civil society and third-sector organisations will be created for the management of assets confiscated from mafias; promoting the emergence of new social enterprises linked to their re-use.**

- **Other types of measures will also support this specific objective.**

In **Brandenburg (DE),** the measure is quite broad (development, testing and dissemination of innovative measures), with some examples of disadvantaged groups such as the long-term unemployed, people with a migrant background and the low-skilled. Technical and social skills (including digital ones), the integration of young people into dual education, or the promotion of sustainable social entrepreneurship or cooperation between market-oriented social enterprises and welfare care are also mentioned. In **Sachsen (DE)**, the social innovation measures aim to **improve access to employment for all jobseekers** by supporting relevant actors in the (further) development of social innovation, but with the **establishment of a future platform for social innovation in the themes of social work** at the heart of the support, to create a space for innovative approaches, developments, services and products, as well as business models of general interest with a strong focus on **networking between relevant actors, including practitioners, academia, administration, politicians and civil society.** In addition, **pilot projects** are planned to identify and develop innovative social solutions in order **to test them in real life.**

Slovakia, in addition to the support provided to ALMA, has two measures under this specific objective, including one related to the **National Competence Centre, aiming at the development of the social innovation ecosystem and tools to support social innovation in the regions**. The other measure will finance **innovative projects to support the entry of disadvantaged and inactive people into the labour market** (long-term unemployed, people with a low level of education and persons with disabilities, young Roma and Roma women, and young NEETs).

Young people are largely represented in the target groups under SO4.1, with a particular focus on NEETs, notably in the context of the ALMA testing initiatives (Brussels Capital, Valencia (ES), Galicia (ES), Campania (IT).

Social economy and social enterprises are another important category of actors to achieve this objective (Brandenburg (DE), Sachsen (DE), Spain, Luxembourg).

3.3.5. SO4.2 Modernising labour market institutions

SO4.2 ESF+ SI Priority amount	Programmes concerned
61 358 957 (3.92%)%)	3 programmes in total Single SO: Flanders (BE) With other SO: EL, PL

The modernisation of labour market institutions is only supported in three Member States (including the unique case of Poland) in two very different ways.

Flanders (BE) is dedicating the whole ESF+ Social Innovation Priority to this objective and using it in priority to set up and develop the **competence centre for social innovation which will take the form of a network of regional organisations**, already having premises where people can come together and brainstorm or work on new innovations (the basis for a competence centre for social innovation). It will be accompanied by the development and operation of a web platform that makes the supporting social innovation ecosystem dynamic, understandable and responsive to new social innovators, while helping to launch and grow promising initiatives. This will facilitate the transition programme for living, learning and working in 2050, with seven transition areas identified.

In **Greece** as well, support for the **institutional and operational strengthening of the Greek Social Innovation Competence Centre** (with other social innovation bodies). This support will be provided through a range of systemic actions such as an action plan, studies, legislative arrangements, etc. Other actions are envisaged, such as the establishment of a Greek ecosystem that adopts a gender-based approach to innovation, education, training, entrepreneurship and digital skills of women, particularly in the context of the post-Covid era (National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025). This will be complemented by competitions to promote social innovation, with funding for the best action plans, as well as the creation of a network of cities and regions for social innovation, etc.

3.3.6. SO4.5 Improving education and training systems

SO4.5 ESF+ SI Priority amount	Programmes concerned
58 285 324 (3.73%)	3 programmes in total Single SO: Catalunya (ES), Hauts-de-France (FR) With other SO: PL

Two regional ESF+ programmes fully allocate the Social Innovation Priority to improving quality, inclusiveness, effectiveness and labour market relevance of education and training systems.

In **Catalunya (ES)**, an experimental programme "Initial Teacher Residency/Intensive Program "SENSEI PILOT" promoting the quality professional development of teachers will be tested before the model can be scaled to the entire education system. This training and mentoring program aims at supporting 1 250 recently graduated teachers to give them complementary practice and learning support during five years. The experimental phase will be financed for two years under the Social Innovation Priority and consolidated for three more years under the Education Priority.

In **Hauts-de-France (FR)**, the SI Priority will address social and territorial disparities by supporting innovation and social experimentation projects (development and/or scaling-up of projects). This ranges from the deployment of travelling information devices (including orientation buses) to the implementation of innovative pedagogy adapted to groups in difficulty, including production schools ("Écoles de la production"), the development of a "do to learn" pedagogy, and the development of new, multimodal educational means. Other actions will foster the networking of training structures to meet the needs of the economic sector while developing the employability of young people in the region (e.g., support for the establishment of "Campus des métiers et des qualifications").

3.3.7. SO4.6 Quality and inclusive education and training systems

SO4.6 ESF+ SI Priority amount	Programmes concerned
47 275 097 (3.02%)	5 programmes
	Single SO: Navarra (ES)
	With other SO: Bayern (DE), Sachsen Anhalt (DE), SK, PL

Equal access to and completion of quality and inclusive education and training, particularly for disadvantaged groups, is promoted in five ESF+ programmes.

Navarra (ES) is the only SI Priority totally dedicated to this objective through a **pilot project "Artificial Intelligence Week"** that brings artificial intelligence closer to students of primary and secondary schools with two different modules to boost the technological skills of learners (informative module for teachers and parents; and training module aimed at students and teachers).

Sachsen Anhalt (DE) applies the CLLD approach with LAGs eventually choosing the specific actions and projects adapted to the territorial needs, giving some examples of actions: projects for the **further training of volunteers, coaching, cooperation between general schools and regional companies on career guidance and preparation**, and **cultural education projects that strengthen cooperation between cultural institutions and general school**s. Some of the projects on **environmental education and sustainability** can also contribute to the Green Deal.

Bayern (DE), despite intentionally keeping its thematic scope open, indicates that support will be given to innovative measures that relate **thematically to the promotion of equal access to general and vocational education and training, primarily addressing the needs of disadvantaged young people in the transition from school to work a**nd improve the quality of education. Moreover, special focus will be placed on improving the **digital skills** of children and young people. In addition, innovative projects will be implemented to promote **education for sustainable development** in schools and to **reduce gender-stereotypical career choices**. The implementation of transnational projects to support young people is to be considered within the framework of this specific objective.

Slovakia will support both the **innovation ecosystems and the development of tools to support social innovation in the regions and innovative projects in the field of education**. The **innovation ecosystem** entails innovative education infrastructure (innovation hubs), supporting social innovators at different stages of the innovation cycle (hackathons, incubation, acceleration, mentoring and outreach programmes) and capacity development. The priorities for **innovative projects** include promoting relationships among learners, enhancing the school/educational climate and promoting the mental and emotional well-being of all learners. These efforts are underpinned by an emphasis on innovative and activating methods, on the development of key competencies (digital, democratic and civic competencies), development of social and emotional skills and reduction of stigma, while promoting the mental well-being of learners. It also supports linking formal and non-formal learning and intergenerational solidarity education.

3.3.8. SO4.4 Adaptation of workers and enterprises to change

SO4.4 ESF+ SI Priority amount	Programmes concerned
44 217 523 (2.83%)	4 programmes
	With other SO: Bayern (DE), Brandenburg (DE), Niedersachsen (DE), PL

No SI Priority is fully dedicated to this objective. 3 German Lander will contribute to the adaptation of workers and enterprises to change alongside other specific objectives.

In **Bayern (DE)**, the thematic scope of support is intentionally kept open, but projects that can be funded are thematically related to the funding of Employment participation of women, an age-appropriate working environment, company health management and the adaptation of employees, companies and entrepreneurs to change, with the focus on the digital transformation and digital skills (development and use of AI-supported language technologies or training courses on digital accessibility). The promotion of Electromobility as well as sustainability and environmental protection will also contribute to the Digital Europe strategy and Green Deal. The measures will target employees, businesses and entrepreneurs.

Brandenburg (DE) measures will address employment challenges for the small-scale economy caused by transformation processes, such as the safeguarding of skilled workers, work 4.0, good working conditions and the organisation of work

(pilot projects to reduce involuntary part-time work, reorganisation in the context of digitalisation processes, sustainable development of businesses, improving health protection at work or old-age work at the company level, with a particular focus on SMEs or social partners involvement). There is an important dimension of transfer and dissemination.

Niedersachsen/Lower Saxony (DE) will focus on the changing world of employment, with the objective of contributing to the adaptation of workers, including women, businesses and entrepreneurs, to the challenges posed by digital and green transitions. This will be achieved through the development and testing of specific and appropriate solutions for tailoring and adapting to the changing world of work. The measure is intentionally maintains a broad scope to create the right framework conditions for social-innovative approaches. Potential topics for social-innovative policies are those aimed at creating a healthy and attractive working environment, promoting lifelong learning or managing/shaping the digital and environmental transformations.

3.3.9. SO4.3 Gender-balanced labour market participation

SO4.3 ESF+ SI Priority amount	Programmes concerned
23 144 410 (1.48%)	2 programmes Single SO: NL With other SO: PL

The Netherlands is the only MS contributing to activities aimed at providing equal opportunities and combating discrimination, enabling the reconciliation of work and care, promoting social inclusion and helping people in vulnerable labour market positions. An initial phase is programmed under social innovation to experiment and test, followed by further support under the specific objective 4.8 "Active inclusion". The initial phase related to social innovation is under preparation in consultation with the ESF+ monitoring committee and the College for Human Rights, focusing on promoting gender equality within work organisations. A programme will be set up to help both employers and employees within the organisation in identifying their own specific approaches to one or more of the five identified objectives: 1. Increasing the employment rate of women or men in positions (at different levels) and sectors where they are under-represented; 2. Increasing working hours for women; 3. Promoting equal pay between men and women by making existing differences understandable and negotiable; 4. Raising awareness of gender inequality and gender identity; 5. Improving reconciliation of work and caregiving responsibilities. Examples of experimentation topics are outlined, as well as types of activities, ranging from problem orientation to design for scaling up positive results and sharing knowledge and experience.

3.3.10. SO4.7 Lifelong learning and career transitions

SO4.7 ESF+ SI Priority amount	Programmes concerned
20 845 960 (1.33%)	2 programmes With other SO: AU, PL

Promoting lifelong learning is one of the two specific objectives targeted by the SI Priority in **Austria**, designed to reduce structural disadvantages in educational processes, increase educational opportunities for disadvantaged people and reduce barriers hindering access to education. This includes innovative strategies to effectively reach and motivate target groups, to promote the development and implementation of low threshold offers that take into account the individual needs of the target groups, and to improve the quality and accuracy of the offers already implemented in this area.

3.3.11. SO4.10 Integration of marginalised communities, such as Roma people

SO4.11 ESF+ SI Priority amount	Programmes concerned
9 880 000 (0.63%)	2 programmes With other SO: HR, PL

Croatia will contribute to the integration of marginalised Roma communities through the **establishment of five functional centres to work in local communities with a majority of Roma population**. This will build on and ensure

the sustainability of the previous project "Phase III: Testing the Guarantee for Every Child in Croatia"[12]. The aim of the centres is to empower the local population (advisory work and activities to strengthen personal skills of the Roma population), to address problems and needs in the Roma community and to ensure timely and functional communication between the local population and key stakeholders of the wider local community (local and regional self-governments, public institutions, etc.). Good practices developed under the project "Testing the Guarantee for Every Child in Croatia" will be used by the Centres (early detection system for families/individuals at risk). Five Community Work Centres (Young and Family Centres/Community Services Centres/Resources Centres) will be established according to selection infrastructure availability and local site survey results.

3.3.12.SO4.9 Integration of third-country nationals, including migrants

No Social Innovation Priority directly tackles the specific objective of Integration of third-country nationals, apart from Poland, which addresses 11 of the 13 specific objectives in the same open and general way, as explained earlier. However, third-country nationals and migrants are part of the target groups mentioned under many other specific objectives, in particular under SO4.8.

3.4. Specific support to National Competence Centres for Social Innovation

With the objective to establish a competence centre for social innovation and drive innovation in each EU Member State, a series of six consortia[13] were selected to set up national competence centres and drive social innovation—locally, regionally, nationally and transnationally, investigating national ecosystems for social innovation. National Competence Centres will focus on some key functions, such as:

- Building a joint strategy and action plan for promoting social innovation in the country.
- Linking different kinds of stakeholders, helping them to find synergies and pool together their expertise, and develop joint advocacy work.
- Providing capacity building to stakeholders depending on their needs.
- Helping stakeholders to make good use of available EU funding (ESF+ and other EU funds and programmes).
- Helping social innovation stakeholders to connect transnationally to exchange and cooperate with their peers across the EU.

Competence centres will establish different organisational structures or networks depending on what is most suitable for their country. They are expected to become a reliable source of knowledge and expertise and will play an important role in the successful implementation of the Social Innovation Priority.

Although each Member State is in the process of creating a National Competence Centre for Social Innovation (NCCSI), only a few have explicitly integrated them in the ESF+ Social Innovation Priority and plan to support its establishment and further development.

Denmark will support its NCCSI to promote capacity building for social innovation, including support for mutual learning, the creation of networks and the promotion of good practices and methods. The role devoted to the NCCSI in **Spain** is crucial, intended to promote bottom-up approaches based on partnerships, to catalyse the experiences of pilot projects and support their scaling-up, as well as to facilitate access to financing for innovative initiatives with a social impact. Many activities are planned, ranging from the provision of technical guidance on social innovation to providing support in the execution and scaling of projects, or support for the start-up of projects (for example, through seed funds) and training activities. In **Austria**, the activities of the National Competence Centre for Social Innovation will also be supported to build up know-how and strengthen all relevant stakeholders, including project promoters. **Flanders (BE)** is employing its ESF+ Social Innovation Priority to set up and develop the competence centre for social innovation which will take the form of a network of existing regional organisations. In **Greece** as well, support to the **institutional and operational strengthening of the Greek Social Innovation Competence Centre** (with other social innovation bodies) will be provided through systemic actions such as an action plan, studies, legislative arrangements, etc. **Slovakia** stresses the role of the established NCCSI as a central contact point for stakeholders, experts, academia, NGOs and local organisations to strengthen partnerships, networks and capacity building. **Luxembourg** has a clear plan and will support the implementation of a competence centre for the social, solidarity and circular economy.

Other Member States might have plans to support their NCCSI activities, without mentioning the NCCSI explicitly. Member States applying a flat rate might also envisage allocating a portion or the entire technical assistance budget associated with the Social Innovation Priority to support NCCSI activities.

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12   Project carried out by UNICEF's Office of Croatia in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy.
13   Covering 25 countries and mobilising 148 organisations.

3.5.   Scaling-up and transfer dimensions in Social Innovation measures

One continuous challenge in the field of social innovation is how to scale-up the innovative solutions and their impact. The ESF+ Regulation refers to scaling-up but does not formally define it. However, a broad EC working explanation for the concept provides clarification: *'Scaling-up means a process of transferring proven social innovations to other actors or contexts thus creating a wider impact'.* As recalled in the Scaling-up social innovation Toolkit[14], "the assumption is **growing impact**, not **growing an organisation;** secondly, the social **innovation has to be proven".** The distinction between scaling-up and transfer is often blurred, but in all cases, **the aim is to produce a wider positive social impact, benefitting more people, organisations and/or territories, at the scale of the social needs.**
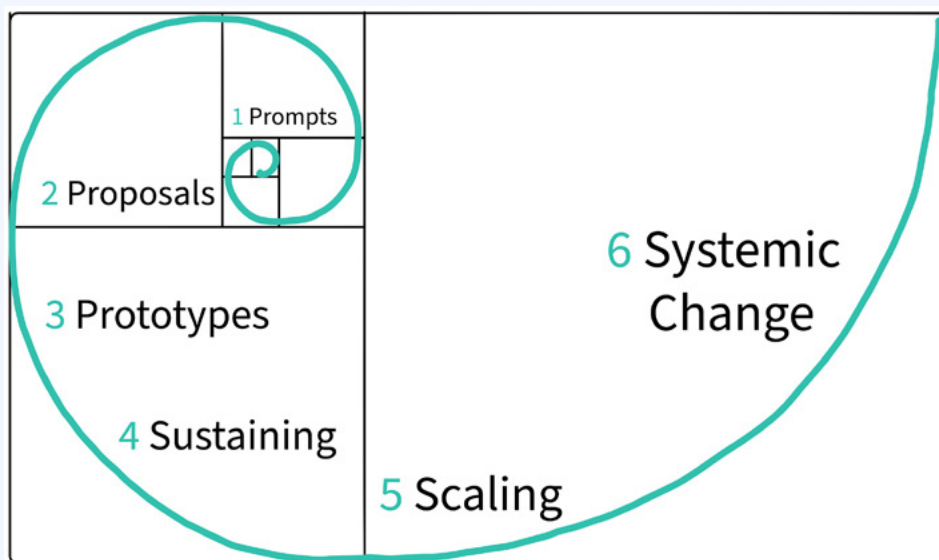
Stages of innovation, Murray, Caulier-Grice, and Mulgan (2010)

Nearly all Social Innovation Priorities refer to the scaling -up and transfer of social innovations and experimentation, from mere mentions to providing more valuable information on how to accomplish this, including consideration regarding funding.

Scaling-up is mentioned in a general manner, with no further indication by Denmark, Ireland and Slovakia.

It is referred to as an explicit, but general, objective for the experimentation measure supporting youth mentoring by **Brussels Capital (BE)**, *"the conclusions and lessons learned will be taken into account in the context of a possible generali-sation of this project".* **Baden-Württemberg (DE)** also clearly indicates the possibility to *"scale-up small-scale innovative approaches",* similarly to **Sicily (IT)** where *"the use of experimentation will allow replication of the innovative approach on a larger scale".*

- **Five countries explicitly link Social Innovation Priority measures and projects to other ESF+ priorities in their programmes, in view of expanding (scaling -up/transfer) social innovations' positive results and social impact and further support them under "mainstream" priorities.**

Mentioned as a possibility for **Austria** *"The results of this priority can, in turn, feed into the actions implemented in the other ESF+ priorities to address these challenges with proven innovative approaches",* while for **Sweden** it is *"An ambition with program area E … to, where possible, scale up the projects to efforts in other program areas within ESF+".* "Scaling up innovative solutions and approaches, e.g. developed under the Employment and Social Innovation strand or other EU programmes, smart transfer of good practice and promoting learning from others' experiences, including the use of foreign and home-based records"* is one of the main activities of the **Czech** ESF+ Social Innovation Priority.

In **Flanders (BE)**, social innovations with solutions tested on a small-scale, once evaluated positively, will *"consider ESF + calls from other appropriate specific objectives and mainstreaming into mainstream policies initiated by other (policy) actors… looking for ways of implementing the (innovative) solutions (scaling up) under other circumstances or on a larger scale",* notably a **strategy to extend the implementation of the solutions with new partnerships. Finland** has different

14   Scaling-up social innovation

and interesting way of "mainstreaming" social innovation, by using *"co-ordination project supporting and evaluating the (Social Innovation Priority) projects, whose expertise can also be used, where possible, **for the development of social innovation in other specific objectives of the Programme".***

The Netherlands takes an additional step by **precisely planning the transition from the Social Innovation Priority to another ESF+ priority for a measure supporting Gender-balanced labour market participation. During the programming period,** *"the first period will be programmed under Objective 4c, gender-balanced labour market and for the next periods under 4h, active inclusion".*

- **Some ESF+ Social Innovation Priorities provide useful information about the way they will support transfer and scaling -up.**

Scaling -up and transferring require a careful planning well in advance of achieving results, including considerations regarding **funding**. The **rigorous evaluation** of social innovation projects and initiatives condition the capacity to demonstrate the positive results obtained, and therefore also requires meticulous planning and financial support.

In the **German Bund** ESF+ Social Innovation Priority, it is the **role of programme management and evaluation to monitor the innovation content of the measures**, *"in order to identify particularly promising approaches and, where appropriate, **to transfer them to the regulatory toolbox".***

In **Spain**, this role is entrusted to the **NCCSI** that will *"catalyse the experiences of pilot projects tested on a smaller scale and support the application on a larger scale of the successful cases among them".* More specifically, for the social experimentation aiming to detect risks or support needs that allow to identify situations that require early intervention, *"the **meta-evaluation of these measures will make it possible to establish guidelines and better standards that will later be scaled to the system as a whole".***

Sweden has planned that *"to enable an effective evaluation of results and effects, **the program can finance initiatives regarding evaluation and analysis as well as dissemination activitie**s. The program can also **finance initiatives aimed at streamlining program implementation".***

In **Brandenburg (DE)**, the Social Innovation Priority is even clearer and states that *"the **systematic assessment** of the pilot projects implemented and the **transfer of successfully tested solutions** are an **integral part of the support".** In addition, the **funding** is also intended to **support the exchange of experience with other Länder and EU Member** States on a topic-specific basis".*

One of the three actions planned under the SI Priority in **France** is fully dedicated to actions aimed at supporting the scaling-up of Social Innovation Projects for projects that have led to a positive result in the initial phase (evaluation). **Support will be provided and differentiated according to the three levels of transfer/scaling -up of innovation projects:** *(1) at the infra-regional level (e.g., extension to another department or municipality), (2) at transregional level (e.g., extension to one or more other regions), and (3) for projects that have been financed by other European funds, in particular EASI/the EaSI component of the ESF+ 2021-27.* Projects that have already received funding for transfer/scaling and have a sole objective of ensuring the sustainability of the system do not come under this priority. This approach should allow to better adapt the support to the various types of transfer and scaling -up.

Eventually, the whole Social Innovation Priority approach in **Poland** reflects a **systemic way of planning and supporting transfer and scaling -up**, from the start aiming at public policy change and focusing on two levels:

Macro-innovations, developing, testing, disseminating and taking actions to incorporate selected new solutions into policy or practice (policy innovations); micro-innovations is searching for innovators (by the incubators) who have ideas for solving a social problem, supporting them in working on this solution (refining and testing) and disseminating the most effective tested innovations.

- Scaling-up Social Innovations: Seven steps for using ESF+ should be a valuable resource in assisting ESF+ MAs to design calls for proposals and other initiatives aimed at making a good use of already existing social innovations.

It is important to note that **some measures or specific schemes supported under the ESF+ Social Innovation Priority are themselves the result of successful social innovations implemented in other contexts, transferred, adapted and scaled-up**, such as ALMA, initially developed in Germany and now tested in several EU Member States, and the "Territoire Zéro Chômeurs" initiated in France and now tested in Wallonia Brussels. Cyprus' "home care services" intervention is an extension of a pilot project, implemented on a small scale in the 2014–2020 programming period with great success.

- To discover more successful social innovation projects and social experimentations with a strong potential for transfer and scaling-up, consider consulting the Social Innovation Match (SIM) database and Social Experimentations: A practical guide for project promoters featuring examples from EaSI social experimentations.

4. ANNEXES

1. ESF+ budget for Social Innovation Priority per Member States and ESF+ programmes

	SI Priority EU contribution (ESF+)	SI Priority total amount (EU & national)	ESF+ SI Priority TA allocated by flat rate use	Total EU contribution (ESF+) by MS from PA (TA and material deprivation included)
AT	**13 870 990**	**14 601 043**	**785 150**	409 668 103
BE TOTAL	**91 543 541**	**169 193 335**	**3 520 900**	1 327 624 388
BE Brussels Capital	2 867 405	7 168 513	110 284	
BE Wallonia-Brussels	54 008 140	108 016 280	2 077 235	
Flanders	34 667 996	54 008 542	1 333 381	
BG	**9 714 696**	**10 225 996**		2 625 192 711
CY	10 000 000	10 526 316		222 205 180
CZ	**36 463 536**	**38 382 671**		2 430 902 368
DE TOTAL	**245 378 515**	**288 366 396**	**9 361 633**	6 562 556 905
Bund	118 639 690	134 664 837	4 563 064	
Nordrhein-Westfalen	28 016 967	29 491 545	1 077 575	
Baden-Württemberg	1 560 000	1 950 000	60 000	
Bayern	20 800 000	35 378 000	800 000	
Brandenburg	16 546 400	17 417 264	636 400	
Sachsen	20 748 000	21 840 000	722 000	
Sachsen-Anhalt	19 686 680	20 722 822	757 180	
Niedersachsen	19 380 778	26 901 928	745 414	
DK	**359 024**	**377 921**		119 616 872
EE	**5 200 000**	**7 428 572**	**200 000**	534 157 337
EL	**23 750 000**	**25 000 000**		5 560 449 773
ES TOTAL	**144 677 253**	**152 291 849**	**5 564 508**	11 295 696 991
National	93 410 000	98 326 317	3 592 691	
Cantabria	3 680 649	3 874 368	141 563	
Cataluna	11 065 600	11 648 000	425 600	
Valencia	3 378 960	3 556 800	129 960	
Galicia	14 924 000	15 709 474	574 000	
Murcia	16 416 400	17 280 422	631 400	
Navarra	1 801 644	1 896 468	69 294	
FI	**30 120 795**	**31 706 101**	**1 158 491**	604 674 883
FR	**200 651 662**	**211 940 552**	**7 717 370**	6 674 708 658
National	171 097 899	180 103 053	6 580 687	
Hauts-de-France	29 553 763	31 837 499	1 136 683	
HR	**19 528 912**	**20 556 751**	**751 112**	1 933 570 912

	SI Priority EU contribution (ESF+)	SI Priority total amount (EU & national)	ESF+ SI Priority TA allocated by flat rate use	Total EU contribution (ESF+) by MS from PA (TA and material deprivation included)
HU	178 977 279	188 397 136		5 298 665 303
IE	25 419 000	26 756 843	1 438 810	508 380 024
IT TOTAL	106 731 462	135 243 645		14 808 620 616
Campania	60 900 000	87 000 000		
Sicilia	45 831 462	48 243 645		
LT	53 335 038	56 142 146	2 051 346	1 136 397 405
LU	699 353	999 076		15 541 177
LV	22 100 000	26 000 000	850 000	720 968 137
MT	2 400 000	4 000 000		124 421 656
NL	16 435 346	17 300 383	632 127	413 757 776
PL	194 325 581	204 553 244		12 912 994 435
PT	5 000 000	5 882 353		7 776 520 960
RO	15 000 000	17 483 369		7 332 965 756
SE	35 334 928	37 194 662	1 359 035	706 698 560
SI	9 260 000	12 123 824		665 364 995
SK	68 153 000	71 740 002		2 356 298 319
Grand Total	1 564 429 911	1 784 414 186	35 390 482	95 078 620 200

2. ESF+ budget by specific objective and by Member States

	ESO4.1	ESO4.2	ESO4.3	ESO4.4	ESO4.5	ESO4.6	ESO4.7	ESO4.8	ESO4.9	ESO4.10	ESO4.11	ESO4.12
AT							3 180 000	10 690 990				
BE Flanders		34 667 996										
BE Brussels Cap	2 867 405											
BE Wallonia	54 008 140											
BG	7 654 033										2 060 663	
CY											10 000 000	
CZ								245 378 515				
DE								118 639 690				
DE Nordrhein-Westfalen								28 016 967				
DE Baden-Württemberg								1 560 000				
DE Bayern				6 933 334		6 933 333		6 933 334				
DE Brandenburg	6 618 560			9 927 840								
DE Sachsen	18 772 000							1 976 000				
DE Sachsen-Anhalt						5 906 160						13 780 520

	ESO4.1	ESO4.2	ESO4.3	ESO4.4	ESO4.5	ESO4.6	ESO4.7	ESO4.8	ESO4.9	ESO4.10	ESO4.11	ESO4.12
DE Niedersachsen				9 690 389							9 690 389	
DK								359 024				
EE											5 200 000	
EL	9 025 000	9 025 000						3 800 000			1 900 000	
ES								14 880 001			78 530 000	
ES Cantabria	1 560 000											2 120 649
ES Cataluna					11 065 600							
ES Valencia	3 378 960											
ES Galicia	3 640 000										11 284 000	
ES Murcia								2 792 400			9 880 000	3 744 000
ES Navarra					1 801 644							
FI								30 120 795				
FR								171 097 899				
FR Hauts-de-France					29 553 763							
HR										9 880 000	9 648 912	
HU												178 977 279
IE								25 419 000				
IT	20 900 000										40 000 000	
IT								45 831 462				
LT											53 335 038	
LU	699 353											
LV												22 100 000
MT								2 400 000				
NL			5 478 449					10 956 897				
PL	17 665 961	17 665 961	17 665 961	17 665 961	17 665 961	17 665 961	17 665 961	17 665 961	17 665 961		17 665 961	17 665 971
PT Alentejo								5 000 000				
RO								15 000 000				
SE								35 334 928				
SI	9 260 000											
SK	26 530 000				14 968 000			26 655 000				
Total	182 579 412	61 358 957	23 144 410	44 217 524	58 285 324	47 275 098	20 845 961	820 508 862	17 665 961	9 880 000	249 194 963	238 388 419
Number of programmes	14	3	2	4	3	5	2	22	1	1	12	6