



Final Assessment Study

Assessing and disseminating the results of the social innovation calls financed by the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) 2014-2020

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Preamble

The Final Assessment Report addresses and complies with the requirements of the Contract Number VC/2020/0241 between the European Union ('the Union'), represented by the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and the consortium composed by INOVA+ - Innovation Services, S.A; Visionary Analytics UAB; Association Européenne pour l'Information sur le Développement Local and Fundación Platoniq, selected to perform the assignment of "Assessing and disseminating the results of the social innovation calls financed by the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) 2014-2020".

The service consists of an evaluation study to identify the favourable conditions and factors hindering the development and mainstreaming of the social innovations/experimentations carried out under the EaSI Programme¹ and analyse the potential synergies between the future two ESF+ strands², guiding and facilitating the upscaling and transfer of successful projects. Additionally, the assignment covers the dissemination of the results of the social experimentations financed through the EaSI Programme as well as the development of a practical guide.

The service includes:

- assessing the calls and projects and making methodological recommendations on how to further support the transferring/upscaling of the tested social innovations, particularly as regards the new programming period;
- supporting the communication and dissemination of the project results in view of their scaling up or transferring to other contexts;
- preparing a practical methodological guide on social innovation for future project promoters (also taking into account the work of DG JRC, DG GROW and other relevant DGs);
- organising a major closing dissemination seminar for all the EaSI social experimentation projects mentioned in the tender specifications as well as some important ESF³-financed social innovations. The seminar should also address the role of the EU in social innovation in general.

The main objective of this document is to present the results of the assessment of the seven calls of the Programme and respective projects, considering different angles.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on a European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI") and amending Decision No 283/2010/EU establishing a European Progress Microfinance Facility for employment and social inclusion Text with EEA relevance, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32013R1296> (no longer in force).

² 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, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R1057>.

³ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32013R1303>.

Executive summary

Throughout the 2014-2020 programming period, social innovation has been a strong priority, which has most prominently been channelled through the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) Programme. The programme has been providing financial support to social innovators seeking to test experimental solutions to the most pressing social issues. There have been seven thematic social innovation calls that covered areas of social need as varied as work-life balance, migration, pension reform, or integrated employment and housing solutions and protection of individuals in particularly vulnerable situations. This study evaluates the social innovation calls along with criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and EU added value and provides recommendations for further improvements in the future programming period. These will help to improve future EU actions in the area of social innovation and help prepare the future EaSI calls for proposals.

Data collection and analysis have followed the developmental evaluation approach. This approach differs from standard summative evaluation approaches in four ways. First, developmental evaluation places more emphasis on supporting project and programme managers in developing and improving interventions. Second, it provides more nuanced insights on what works, for whom, in what ways and under what conditions. Furthermore, it is guided more by broad questions that are adaptable to a variety of contexts than by predetermined indicators. Lastly, developmental evaluation is more focused on a long-term perspective that considers developments past the completion of the project or programme, rather than restricting itself to outcomes in a pre-defined period.

The study has employed a variety of data collection and analysis methods based on the principle of evidence triangulation. First, all projects funded under EaSI have been mapped and grouped by general descriptive data (e.g. project title, budget, methodology), innovativeness criteria (e.g. social need addressed, the scale of innovation) and transferability and scalability criteria (e.g. status of mainstreaming/embedding, pilot success). Then, based on the available evidence, individual case studies were drafted about each EaSI-funded project along with the five evaluation criteria. Necessary data were collected using desk research which drew upon available project documentation as well as targeted stakeholder interviews. At least one interview with project implementers was conducted for every project, while further interviews with policymakers were conducted, whenever there was evidence of upscaling or transfer of the project results. All interviews followed pre-set questionnaires to ensure data comparability.

The **case studies** formed the basis of the horizontal analysis of the five evaluation criteria across all projects and calls. The purpose of the horizontal analysis has been to understand the general preconditions and mechanisms of successful project implementation as well as transfer and scale-up of projects. The main conclusions, as summarised below, are based on the findings of the horizontal analysis.

Evaluation of **relevance** focuses on whether the intervention was pertinent to the needs and challenges faced by the respective target groups of projects as well as society at large. Guiding questions focus on the extent to which the social innovation (SI) intervention in question remains relevant and to what extent EaSI original objectives have proven appropriate for the SI intervention in question. Results show that the intervention's original objectives have indeed largely corresponded to the needs of end-beneficiaries, project implementers and policymakers. In addition, the intervention remains highly relevant to the lack of similar EU-level funding alternatives.

However, there is still some space for further conceptual alignment of definitions and concepts used across different calls and documents (e.g. social experimentation, social innovation, etc.). Thus, we have recommended practical steps on how to better align the existing EaSI conceptual frameworks with that of the ESF+. Furthermore, we have

recommended enshrining the goal of providing support for project implementers at the stage of mainstreaming/embedding their results in the broader strategic framework of the intervention. We suggest that the administration of these guidelines and provision of consultative functions could be delegated to the ESF+ National Contact Points.

Evaluation of **effectiveness** elaborates upon whether and how the intervention delivered expected results and impacts at the individual (end-beneficiary), organisational (project implementers) and policy levels. Even though most projects tested solutions that were only new to either their region or target group, rather than being innovative for the social area globally, the intervention did generally meet the needs of end-beneficiaries, project implementers, and policymakers alike. Indeed, most finished projects achieved all their objectives and have proceeded to mainstream and embed their solutions.

However, some project promoters struggled to do so, despite a successful pilot, because they often lacked immediate resources and, sometimes, national support in the policy context. Furthermore, some projects, despite the programme recommendations and/or initial plans have not produced convincing evaluative evidence. There is still a share of finished projects that has not produced convincing quantitative evaluative evidence on their effectiveness (18% of the projects) and, especially, efficiency (55%). Some projects also lacked the necessary knowledge about how to proceed with upscaling/transferring, which caused delays and made long-term policy impacts on individual projects unclear. Therefore, we recommend strengthening the push in the direction of providing stricter evaluative requirements for the project implementers along with better guidance when it comes to evaluations (also see the Social Innovations Guide produced together with this assessment study). We have also made a suggestion about how EaSI could further strengthen its efforts at helping the project teams in transitioning from the social experimentation stage to the stage of scaling/transfer through some of the existing/emerging mechanisms (such as, for example, the ESF+ National Contact Points). To ensure better transitioning to the upscaling/transferring phases we also suggest considering a slightly longer period of project implementation.

The section on **efficiency** examines the extent to which the desired effects were achieved at a reasonable cost. Guiding questions focus on the proportionality between the intervention's costs and benefits, the cost-effectiveness of project implementation, and internal/external factors affecting efficiency. The findings suggest that the benefits of successful pilots, once adopted at scale, could largely justify the total costs of the initial investments made, as the individual EaSI success stories and the amount of generated investment demonstrate (ca. €2 of additional investments were attracted per €1 invested by the programme as of late 2021). There are several factors contributing to this positive development: a rather high number of projects currently mainstreaming or embedding, projects' moderate success in generating additional investment, the sustainable nature of some projects and their outputs, and some unquantifiable positive effects such as knowledge spill overs and positive cross-border and transnational effects.

Project implementation, too, has generally been efficient, although there is space for improvement in terms of monitoring and communication. In more recent 2019-2020 projects, efficiency has been very seriously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme's management has demonstrated a relatively liberal approach to (re)allocation of internal project costs. This has allowed project implementers to improve the efficiency of the intervention, especially in light of the pandemic. This approach should be explored further in the context of future calls as a potential good practice. We also propose to improve the programme-level communication by, for example, connecting projector implementors with the National Contact Points (NCPs) or former EaSI participants through an online database. Finally, the requested examination of introducing a 'payments by results' condition to improve efficiency shows that the condition could potentially undermine the social experimentation nature of the programme, which is why another alternative ('staged funding') was proposed.

The section on **coherence** is concerned with how well the intervention has worked internally as well as its external synergies with other EU actions on social innovation. The section relies on the analysis of synergies, complementarities and duplications among EaSI-funded projects as well as between EaSI projects and other social innovation actions. The findings demonstrate that there are moderate levels of financial as well as non-financial complementarities internally. Exchanges of both thematic and cross-cutting expertise between different projects, especially within the thematic framework of the same calls, are an important part of the learning synergies generated by the calls.

However, such synergies were constrained by a lack of active and consistent exchange between projects, constrained cooperation among project teams and thematic and contextual differences between projects. Even though the intervention is externally coherent with and conceptually complements other EU policy initiatives at a broader level, the assessment did not discover many synergies, mostly due to differing objectives of the initiatives and the EaSI programme. Factors that constrain the potential for external coherence include a lack of time and resources to conduct in-depth analyses of relevant interventions and a lack of understanding of how these actions or programmes work, both on part of project teams. To alleviate this, we propose to institutionalise the processes of learning and cooperation between the projects and/or between the calls, among other things. Finally, there was no evidence of duplications, neither internally nor externally.

Finally, **EU-added value** focuses on the value that was additionally generated from the EU intervention (as opposed to if the intervention had been implemented by the Member States). The assessment approached this aspect from three angles: resource additionality (no implementation without EU intervention), process additionality (EU-effected acceleration of social experimentation and innovation) and result additionality (attainability of similar results without EU intervention). The intervention's resource additionality was the highest because most projects could not have been implemented without it. The intervention also accelerated the process of social experimentation and enabled projects to be more robust with more traceable results, if compared to national-level programmes.

However, not all project teams could use the programme's European nature actively. This somewhat limited cross-border effects and project teams' ability to start new social innovation projects. Finally, withdrawing the EaSI intervention would have negative financial impacts as it would significantly limit social experimenters' and social enterprises' access to EU funding. To strengthen the EU added value of the intervention and further increase learning synergies, we proposed the idea of developing an online database of the developed solutions with concrete information categories on individual projects. Apart from general descriptive information, the database should contain summaries of the effectiveness and efficiency rate of the developed solution and contact details of the implementers as well as an in-depth description of lessons learned (i.e. analysis of the key barriers and success factors and the upscaling/transfer strategy).

Most immediately, the findings of this study fed into concrete recommendations that are aimed at improving future social innovation calls and other EU actions on social innovation. Both recommendations and detailed findings can be found in the last chapter of the report. The findings of the assessment study on the results of the programme, however, are only one part of a broader campaign to improve public exposure of the intervention and to facilitate upscaling and transfer of successful EaSI-funded pilots. These, among other things, also include a practical methodological guide on social innovation as well as project fiches and various communication materials.

1. Introduction

This chapter briefly presents the conceptual framework designed for the assessment approach (described in detail in the Inception Report), as well as the relevant theoretical/methodological considerations. The chapter, which is supplemented by Annex I (EaSI Social Experimentation Project Mapping), Annex II (Mapping of other EU actions and programmes on social innovation) and Annex III (Case studies), additionally provides an update on the plans for the conclusion of the first task. The evaluation focuses on the seven social innovation calls launched under the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme throughout 2014-2020, to which we also refer as ‘the intervention’ in accordance with the project Terms of Reference and for the purpose of simplification.

EaSI is an EU financing instrument that aims at promoting high-quality sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions. The calls have been launched under the EaSI PROGRESS axis. Article 14 of the EaSI Regulation states: ‘From the overall allocation for the PROGRESS axis, and within its different thematic sections, 15 % to 20 % shall be allocated to the promotion of social experimentation as a method for testing and evaluating innovative solutions with a view to up-scaling them’. As such, PROGRESS was designed to create ‘an enabling framework’ to test and promote new approaches, and as a means of financing experimentation. ‘Support for social innovation, including designing and implementing social experimentations’ is one of the four types of actions funded under PROGRESS.

The PROGRESS programme started to support social experimentation since the first social experimentation call in 2009. Additional support was provided under the PROGRESS axis of the EaSI programme to complement the European Social Fund (ESF) starting from 2014. Over the entire 2014-2020 programming period, around EUR 540 million was allocated to PROGRESS, out of which around EUR 48 million has been spent so far on grants for social experimentation projects under the analysed seven calls. The calls have provided financial support to test social and labour market policy innovations, as well as to build the design and implement social policy initiatives in 44 projects.

The calls have been conceived with the main objective of complementing the ESF and helping the Member States in testing social innovations (social experimentations) before implementing them on a larger scale. This allows policymakers and social service providers to gather robust evidence on the effects of given policy innovation, and to determine what works and what does not. Producing objective empirical evidence on the impacts and outcomes of a social policy innovation is therefore extremely important in view of making decisions on whether or not to pursue or scale up these policies.

The topics of the projects conducted under these calls have varied significantly, which can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 – Social innovation calls under the EaSI Programme (2014-2020)

Call reference number	Topic	N. of financed projects	Allocated budget (based on grant lists)	Period
VP/2014/008	Integrated delivery of social services	7	€10,489,387.51	2014-2017
VP/2015/011	Integrated social services for the integration in the labour market	8	€10,528,298.70	2015-2018
VP/2016/015	Fast-track integration into the labour market for third country nationals, targeting exclusively asylum seekers, refugees and their family members	5	€9,177,891.35	2016-2019
VP/2018/005	Innovative work-life balance strategies	4	€4,270,675.87	2018-2021
VP/2018/003	Access to social protection and national reform support	4	€4,751,940.29	2018-2021
VP/2019/003	Social innovation and national reforms - long-term care	7	€8,870,942.05	2019-ongoing
VP/2020/003	Establishing and testing integrated interventions aimed at supporting people in (the most) vulnerable situations	9	€9,604,717	2020-ongoing

Source: Consortium (2021) based on Terms of Reference and EaSI lists of awarded grants.

The next section aims to provide conceptual foundations for the evaluation of the social experimentation projects. First, we discuss the nature of social innovation interventions and the theory of change, which outlines how such interventions should produce social value. Second, we explore a variety of modes and channels for scaling up and transferring the newly developed solutions – these are essential preconditions for capturing the societal value of social experimentation interventions.

1.1. Theoretical considerations and conceptual models

Conceptualisation of innovativeness

‘Social innovation’ is a widely used concept that has acquired several meanings over the past decade. Some define social innovation broadly as new ways of addressing societal challenges⁴. Others emphasise distinct purpose, process and outcomes. Box 1 provides some of the most widely used definitions. The diversity of conceptualisations can be explained by the multiplicity of objectives, forms and types of activities that are branded as social innovation and by its relative newness.

Box 1 – Defining social innovations.

- European Commission: ‘Social innovation means activities that are social both as to their ends and their means and in particular those which relate to the development and implementation of new ideas (concerning products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations, thereby benefiting society and boosting its capacity to act.’
- Philis et al.: ‘A novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals.’
- Mulgan et al.: ‘Innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and that are predominantly developed and diffused through organisations whose primary purposes are social.’
- Svensson et al.: ‘New process or product aimed at achieving social good by enabling actors to collaborate across conventional boundaries, to alter relationships and/or other resourcing to make positive change.’
- Rehfeld et al.: ‘A novel combination of ideas and distinct forms of collaboration that transcend established institutional contexts with the effect of empowering and (re-)engaging vulnerable groups either in the process of social innovation or as a result of it.’

Source: Consortium (2021).

Given the diversity of social innovation meanings and conceptualisations, it appears more fruitful to focus on common criteria that distinguish social innovation from other types of interventions. These key characteristics of social innovation are discussed in the Table 2.

⁴ Godin, B. (2015). *Innovation contested: The idea of innovation over the centuries*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Table 2 – Key characteristics of social innovation

Characteristics of social innovations	Delineation from other interventions or activities
<p>Purpose – address unmet societal challenges and needs.</p>	<p>Emphasis on creating social value and societal impacts clearly delineates social innovations from business or technological innovations, which typically focus on economic/financial benefits, market opportunities and technological progress.</p>
<p>Experimentation, innovation, and risk-taking – develop new solutions (services, processes, ways of working, etc.) that are new to the users, field or region. The solutions do not need to be unique or original, but they should involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) an element of uncertainty and risk-taking; b) produce outcomes that are markedly superior (more effective and efficient) in comparison to the established approaches. 	<p>Focus on innovative solutions clearly differentiates social innovations from well-established interventions. Innovations <i>per se</i> do not need to be more efficient and effective. However, successful innovations have to demonstrate markedly superior outcomes in addressing relevant challenges/needs (obvious improvement, social value creation).</p>
<p>Governance – development of partnerships that transcend institutional ‘silos’ as well as the involvement of target groups throughout all different phases (from design, piloting, implementation to assessment).</p>	<p>Social innovation aims to distinguish itself from traditional (Weberian) models, characterised by hierarchies, clear separation of functions and treatment of vulnerable groups as passive beneficiaries of services / financial transfers. In contrast to that, social innovation emphasises networks of governmental agencies and third sector organisations. Furthermore, social innovation focuses on the development of new solutions with and by the target groups, rather than for them (as in more traditional approaches).</p>
<p>Embedding – integrating newly developed capacities and solutions into established policies and practices. At the organisational level, this includes the development of innovative organisations and innovation networks, i.e. sustainability of networks that developed social innovations as well as innovation capacities within respective organisations in order to address other unmet needs and challenges in the future. At the level of specific policy intervention, this includes mainstreaming and adoption of innovations at scale so that the new solution becomes a sustainable and established approach to addressing unmet challenges/needs. At the level of target groups, the innovation should lead to sustainable empowerment of the end beneficiaries, so that they have the capacity and resources to take positive action.</p>	<p>Focus on the long-term sustainability of outcomes differentiates social innovation from one-off interventions. Social innovation aims to do so by embedding the results into mainstream policies. Ideally, this should lead to wider and more sustainable outcomes.</p>

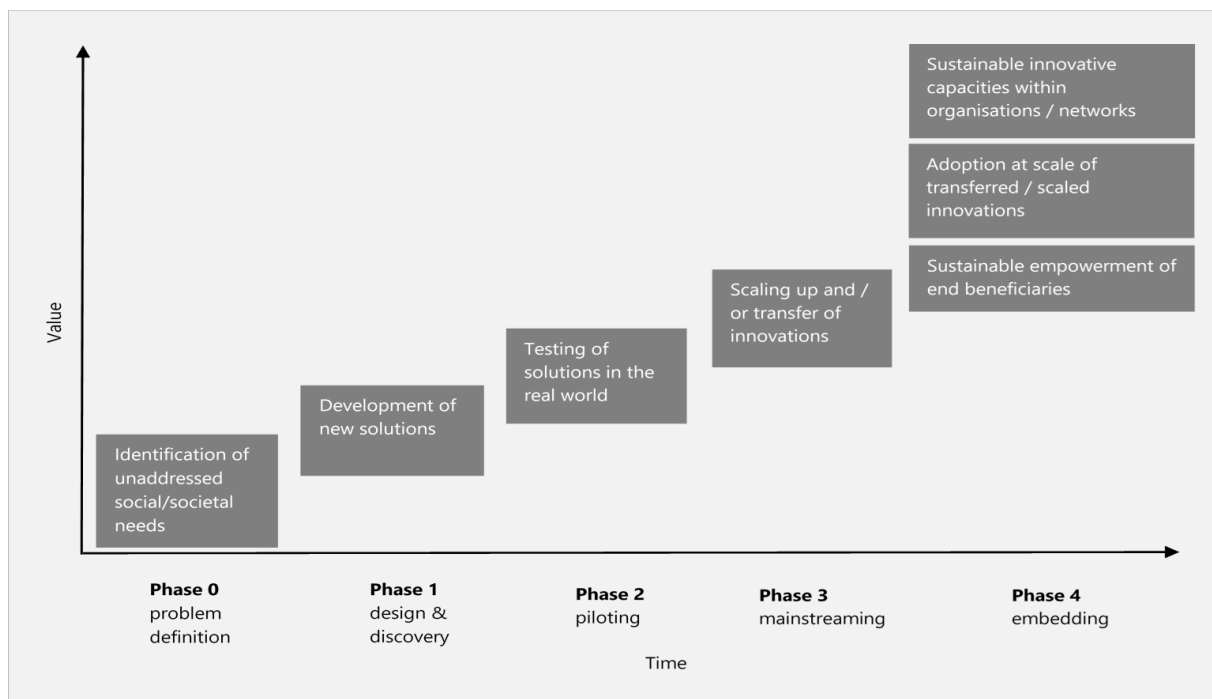
Source: Consortium (2021), based on Avise, 2007; Kaderabkova and Saman, 2013.

Theory of change

The unique characteristics of social innovation interventions discussed above imply that standard approaches to reconstructing and testing the theory of change may be of limited relevance.

- The innovative nature of such interventions implies that some attempts are likely to fail, but that does not necessarily imply that the intervention as such failed to achieve its objectives, i.e. was not effective.
- Developing, testing and mainstreaming new solutions is inherently less efficient than the implementation of established policies. This, however, ignores the possibility that once the new solutions are mainstreamed, they could become significantly more efficient than established approaches. Accordingly, the assessment of efficiency should focus on the ratio of resources and medium or long-term outcomes, rather than simply comparing the costs per output.
- Performance measurement of established programmes is typically structured around a standard set of output, result and impact indicators. Social innovation, on the other hand, aims to develop, test and mainstream a variety of new solutions; since their approaches inherently differ, they do not follow the path of standard indicators. Furthermore, social innovation interventions typically have a dual task of addressing the needs of target groups and developing new approaches; both of these strands of actions would require a different set of indicators.

Figure 1 – Social innovations: generalised theory of change.



Source Consortium (2021), based on Bacon et. al. 2018⁵.

⁵ Bacon, N., Faizullah, N., Mulgan, G., Woodcraft, S. (2018) *Transformers. How local areas innovate to address changing social needs*, Research report for NESTA.

Accordingly, the theory of change applied to social innovation should be closely related to the process of how such interventions create the desired outcomes (see Figure 1 for a generalised theory of change). This includes five phases.

- **Phase 0. Problem definition** – a problem is understood as a gap between the needs/challenges faced by specific groups and the potential of existing solutions to address them.
- **Phase 1. Design and discovery** – search for new solutions to address the problem. These could emerge as part of intentional design or through the bottom-up discovery of what works. This phase also includes filtering out a number of potential solutions that are either inadequate, irrelevant or potentially noneffective.
- **Phase 2. Piloting** – testing of potential solutions in the real world. It is natural to expect that many innovations will fail at this stage. This will lead to repeating the iterative process of problem definition, solution design and discovery and piloting. Once the pilot is successful, the key output of social innovation emerges a new solution, which addresses the societal needs/challenges by producing markedly superior results to those of prior interventions. Baseline studies and evaluation of the new solution are important to ascertain the results of the pilot/piloting phase.
- **Phase 3. Mainstreaming** – taking action to scale up successful pilots and/or transfer them to other regions, organisations or in addressing other similar problems. This would correspond to immediate outcomes/results of successful social innovation projects or interventions.
- **Phase 4. Embedding** – the newly developed capacities and solutions are embedded in established policies and practices. This corresponds to the impacts of social innovation interventions. The impacts could materialise at three levels:
 - Organisational level: innovative capacities of network and organisations that developed, piloted and scaled the new solution. This ensures that these networks and organisations continue to innovate in the future.
 - Level of specific policy intervention: adoption of a new solution at scale so that it becomes a sustainable and established approach to addressing respective challenges/needs over time. If embedding of the new solution is successful, it might still differ from the original pilot, given different requirements for interventions implemented at scale and/ or different social/legal ecosystems within which they are transposed.
 - Target group level: the beneficiaries who ‘graduated’ from the intervention should have sufficient capacities and resources to take positive action and no longer depend on the relevant intervention to address their needs.

Social innovation interventions are not necessarily implemented in a linear manner, whereby Phase 1 leads to Phase 2 and so on. In practice, such interventions are carried out in an iterative (feedback loop) manner and therefore, sometimes, difficulties and failures at one stage require taking a step back and repeating (some of) the previous phases. Due to their innovative and experimental nature, the effects of social innovations are also not necessarily linear. For instance, failures in piloting or mainstreaming the new solution can still yield positive effects, if the involved organisations used the lessons learned to develop other innovations.

Types of social innovation

Since social innovations are used to address a variety of unmet social/societal needs/challenges in multiple fields and contexts, there is no single typology of innovations. Possible dimensions could include:

- types of social needs addressed by the new solutions;
- types of target groups;
- scale of innovation: incremental (continuous / gradual improvements in existing solutions) or radical (development of absolutely new solution);
- types of new solutions, including:
 - product/service innovation;
 - process innovation: changes in how the provision of services is organised;
 - target group innovation: provision of services/products to new target groups;
 - organisational innovation: changes in the functioning, structure and processes within the organisation that works with the target groups.
- scope of innovation: is this solution new to the organisations adopting it, to the target groups, to that region or to that social area globally?

The dimensions outlined above were used for the analytical mapping of the funded social innovation projects, to better understand the types of innovations that have been developed. The set of criteria used for classifying the innovative content of the projects is summarised in the next Table.

Table 3 – Summary of criteria for classifying the innovative content of EaSI projects

1. Social need/issue addressed (Policy area)	2. Target group	3. Scale of innovation	4. Type of innovation	5. Scope of innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth employment Combat long-term unemployment Fight against poverty and social exclusion Promotion of equality between women and men Promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment Guarantee adequate and decent social protection Combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation; pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people - Transnational dimension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National, regional and local authorities Employment services Specialist bodies provided for under Union law Social partners Non-governmental organisations Higher education institutions and research institutes Experts in the evaluation and impact assessment National statistical offices Media Others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incremental-Radical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product or service innovation Process innovation Target group innovation Organisational innovation Others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New to the organisation New to the target groups New to the region New to the social area globally

Source: Consortium (2021).

Conceptualisation of scalability/transferability

Upscaling a project means expanding or replicating an innovative pilot / a small-scale social experimentation project to reach more target groups and/or broaden the effectiveness of an intervention⁶. Transferring a project, on the other hand, means that the key features of a social experimentation project are implemented in a different context (normally, in a different country). However, in the academic literature, transferability is also often referred to as one of the types or dimensions of upscaling as innovations can be transferred not only from

⁶ See e.g. Agapitova, N., & Linn, J. F. (2016). Scaling Up Social Enterprise Innovations: Approaches and Lessons. WHO (2016). Scaling up projects and initiatives for better health: from concepts to practice.

country to country but also between communities and organisations⁷. Thus, while we conceptually differentiate the two terms, we also recognise a major theoretical overlap, which is the reason why we refer to them together throughout the study.

Upscaling/transferring the results of a social experimentation project is a process that covers Phases 2-4 of the theory of change outlined in Figure 1. In that respect, the EaSI intervention follows a clear logic: the project needs to achieve its objectives in the piloting phase; then aim for a 'supply push' during the mainstreaming phase and finally adopt the social experimentation results at scale during the embedding phase. Naturally, different EaSI projects find themselves in various phases within this framework (also because some of them have been recently started). Below we briefly discuss the key conditions within each phase that should be satisfied for successful upscaling/transferring of the result of social experiments. The conditions are also summarised in the next table.

Table 4 – Summary of transferability/upscaling criteria

Phase	Phase 2: Piloting	Phase 3: Mainstreaming	Phase 4: Embedding
	The project is testing its solution(s) in the real world	Taking action to upscale successful pilot and/or transfer it	The project has been transferred/adopted at a scale
Criteria	<p>Pilot's potential for upscaling/transferring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the piloted innovation is successful in providing an effective and efficient solution to a societal need, as demonstrated by the evaluative evidence; the piloted innovation (or its core elements) is replicable at a larger scale or in different contexts. 	<p>Implementation of a pilot mainstreaming strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge of the core elements of SI has been codified and transferred; clear demand/need to adopt the SI at scale has been identified; the pilot has developed detailed (preliminary) upscaling / transfer plans and established a proactive dissemination strategy. 	<p>Uptake of the pilot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the pilot provides a relevant solution to a pertinent (social) problem; users of the pilot have allocated (are able and willing to allocate) resources for implementation at scale / in a different context; the pilot is (can be) adapted to the local social/economic/ legal ecosystem.

Source: Consortium (2021).

In Phase 2, the analysis of a project's potential to be upscaled/transferred will focus on how well the experimentation went or is ongoing. To measure a project's potential to be upscaled/transferred, we will examine whether it has achieved positive observable results as demonstrated by the evaluative evidence (e.g. final reports; stakeholder interviews). The project must clearly address an urgent (social) policy issue as defined in its initial goals and have clear, positive social/societal impacts⁸. Furthermore, to succeed as a social experimentation project, the pilot should possess basic replicability mechanisms. According

⁷ Tamarack Institute (2018). Evaluating Efforts to Scale Social Innovation, p. 1.

⁸ Agapitova, N., & Linn, J. F. (2016). Scaling Up Social Enterprise Innovations: Approaches and Lessons, p. 5; Save the Children (2018). Toolkit: Scalability Assessment and Planning (SAP). Available at: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/14187/pdf/scalability_assessment_and_planning_toolkit_eng_2018.pdf.

to the Tamarack Institute, even if a project is structurally complex, it should have at least some replicable ‘minimum specifications’ such as programme features or best practices⁹.

In Phase 3, analysing what strategies the beneficiaries employ to mainstream their projects will help us understand which approaches to upscaling/transfer exist and how well they work at the programme level. When mainstreaming their project after their initial success in piloting, the implementers should first start codifying the knowledge of the innovation’s core elements so as to make it more replicable in other contexts (e.g. produce reusable datasets; implementation manuals). Furthermore, the implementers should also be proactive in identifying demand gaps for their project and, consequently, establishing new collaboration networks with partners and donors outside of the project framework¹⁰. Thus, we will specifically look at the dissemination of results and whether it was done in a targeted and proactive manner (e.g. through the usage of a comprehensive dissemination strategy).

Finally, the projects in Phase 4 that have already been upscaled/transferred will be closely examined to understand the key success factors in which these particular projects were embedded at different levels¹¹. Such projects have to provide a relevant solution to a pertinent social problem at a broader scale (or in a different context). Furthermore, the project team has to demonstrate serious internal capacity in terms of resources and implementation of their scaling/transfer plans (e.g. securing the necessary funding for scaling; hiring additional project implementers). Furthermore, the projects should consider the characteristics of the adopting community when scaling/transferring the project (e.g. political will, socio-economic and legal environment as well as local priorities and motivations)¹².

To conclude, the proposed conceptual framework will help us define a flexible but credible framework for the evaluation criteria. In that respect, comparing projects in different phases will help us to better identify the key drivers and barriers as well as mechanisms used for successful upscaling / transferring of the results of social experiments.

1.2. Approach and operationalisation of the evaluation criteria

The above discussed theoretical considerations have several implications on the design of the evaluation of social experimentation calls. First, developmental evaluation (DE) appears to be the most relevant approach for the intervention in question. Developmental evaluation primarily aims to support learning and continuous improvements in innovative interventions that are carried out in dynamic and complex environments¹³. It differs from standard summative evaluation approaches in the following respects¹⁴:

⁹ Tamarack Institute (2018). Evaluating Efforts to Scale Social Innovation, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰ Zamboni, K. et al (2019). Assessing scalability of an intervention: why, how and who? p. 549-550. Tamarack Institute (2018). Evaluating Efforts to Scale Social Innovation, p. 1. Institut Jean-Baptiste Godin (2015). Les Capteurs d’innovation sociale, pp. 4-5.

¹¹ Organisational level; target group level; or level of specific policy intervention.

¹² Zamboni, K. et al (2019). Assessing scalability of an intervention: why, how and who? p. 549-550. Tamarack Institute (2018). Evaluating Efforts to Scale Social Innovation, p. 1.

¹³ Patton, M. (2010). *Developmental evaluation applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

¹⁴ Ibid.

- **Purpose:** more emphasis on supporting project/programme managers in developing and improving the interventions and less on accountability and stock-taking.
- **Outcomes:** developmental evaluation aims to provide nuanced learnings on what works, for whom, in what ways and under what conditions. This can be contrasted with the attempts to provide definitive judgments of success or failure (on whether the programme works) in standard summative evaluations.
- **Design and methods:** developmental evaluation is guided by broad questions that are adapted to a variety of contexts and needs as the evaluation proceeds. This can be contrasted with up-front design and predetermined indicators of standard evaluations.
- **Time perspective:** developmental evaluation takes a long-term perspective on the developments that were set in motion and that span beyond the completion of a project/programme. Summative evaluations are primarily concerned with taking stock of outcomes that occurred within a pre-defined period.

Second, the above conceptual discussion and the development evaluation (DE) approach have important implications for the operationalisation of evaluation criteria, which are discussed in a separate annex (Annex IV).

1.3. Data collection and analysis

While conducting the evaluation, we relied on a variety of data collection and analysis methods. Specifically, we have mapped and grouped the EaSI projects as well as other EU social innovation actions through the method of desk research. In parallel, we have proceeded with the development of case studies of individual projects. The case studies largely rely on desk research and interviews with both project implementers and relevant policymakers at national and European levels. After finalising the cases, we have analysed their findings horizontally (at the cross-case level). The concluding section provides a comprehensive evaluation of the intervention under each angle, in accordance with the operationalisation criteria.

The subsections below describe each of these methods in greater detail and provide step-by-step instructions on how they are implemented.

Mapping and grouping of the EaSI projects and other EU social innovation actions

This section outlines our methodological approach to mapping EaSI projects and other relevant social innovation actions. The data collected through the mapping process allow us to better classify projects, identify the cases' key success factors and summarise the information through a range of key categories. We have mapped the social experimentation projects using the following categories:

- General descriptive data
 - Reference number
 - Project title
 - Budget
 - Project promoters and co-promoters (incl. their contact data)
 - Countries of implementation
 - Methodology
- Innovativeness criteria

- Social need addressed (Policy area)
- Target group
- Scale of innovation
- Type of innovation
- Scope of innovation
- Transferability and scalability criteria
 - Pilot
 - Unsuccessful
 - Successful
 - Mainstreamed
 - Embedded

We have used the method of desk research to map the projects and to produce a **long list of other relevant EU social innovation initiatives**. The mapping exercise largely focuses on going through the available project documentation (incl. final/interim project reports and project applications provided by the DG EMPL) as well as the information available on the official project websites. Mapping is further complemented by the findings of individual case studies, which also include interviews with project teams and policymakers. The end outputs of our mapping can be found in Annexes I and II.

Case studies

Case studies for the relevant EaSI social experimentation projects constitute a key part of the evaluation process and particularly focus on examining the innovativeness and scalability components of the individual projects. First, case studies serve as an important ‘repository of knowledge’ that provide information for the evaluation of the intervention and finalisation of mapping – effects of the individual projects, information on their innovative content. Second, they uncover the key factors hindering the development and mainstreaming of the developed social innovations and experimentations (e.g. reasons for the lack of follow-up, such as upscaling or transfer). Third, the cases substantiate our judgement for the action as a whole and support our overall findings and recommendations.

The contents of case studies are based on qualitative and quantitative **desk research** and **targeted stakeholder interviews** (with project implementers and policymakers). All completed case studies undergo a thorough process of review. This process includes three main steps: (1) internal quality control; (2) external quality control; (3) improvement and finalisation of the case studies. The end output of the case studies can be found in Annex III.

Horizontal analysis of case studies and validation of the findings

The horizontal analysis of cases aims to uncover the general preconditions and mechanisms for the successful scale-up and transferability of social experimentation projects. It also demonstrates what factors stimulate and hinder the innovative content of these projects. The findings of horizontal analysis serve as the main foundation of our recommendations on how the EU should conduct its social innovation policy most effectively. We have focused on two key areas when drafting the recommendations:

- **Strategic recommendations for the EU's future social innovation policy (focusing on innovativeness/upscaling/transfer) in view of the future ESF+ programming period** – We provide these recommendations based on the results of the horizontal analysis. The recommendations aim to help with the preparation of future calls for proposals (e.g. by providing guidelines on how to identify successfully tested projects and by providing lists of factors facilitating/hindering upscaling of such projects) and the development of the EU social innovation policy at a broader level.
- **Recommendations on information sharing regarding completed and evaluated EaSI projects** – We explain what specific information about the

dissemination methods policymakers need. We also outline the most effective means of sharing such information (i.e. questions related to format, structure, frequency). A special virtual group discussion (a focus group) was organised in order to provide additional substantive evidence for these recommendations.

Finally, to validate the findings and recommendations with a broader circle of stakeholders, we have conducted a **validation webinar** with the representatives of the EC, ESF+ MA, selected national policymakers and several project promoters, to seek feedback and improve the quality of the assessment's findings.

2. Assessment of the EaSI Social Innovation calls: horizontal analysis

In the next sections, we present the key evaluation results for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value of the EaSI intervention.

While conducting the evaluation, we relied on a variety of data collection and analysis methods. Specifically, we have mapped and grouped the EaSI projects, as well as the other EU social innovation actions through the method of desk research. In parallel, we have proceeded with the development of case studies for individual projects. The case studies have largely relied on desk research (i.e. examination of the available evaluative evidence for individual projects) and interviews with both project implementers and relevant policymakers at national and European levels. Only after finalising all the cases, have we proceeded with the horizontal analysis of their findings.

The results of the study were complemented with results of the virtual discussion on the best modes of information sharing about effective projects with high scalability/transferability. Having collected these data, the team proceeded with the drafting of recommendations and the study's final findings. These were then validated through a special webinar, which involved representatives of all relevant stakeholder groups (incl. EC, project implementers, national policymakers, ESF+ National Managing Authorities, as well as representatives of other relevant EU programmes on social innovation).

2.1. Relevance

Relevance refers to the extent to which an intervention is pertinent to the needs and challenges faced by the target groups and society at large. The examination of relevance strives to understand how relevant the initial objectives of the intervention were at the time it was developed, and to what extent these objectives remain relevant until now. It also strives to outline the main emerging challenges – both thematic and cross-cutting – which could have been better reflected in the intervention's objectives.

Table 5 below discusses our approach to operationalising these questions, while Box 2 summarises the key messages of this section.

Table 5 – Operationalisation table: Relevance

Evaluation questions	Operational questions
Relevance	
1. To what extent have the original objectives proven to be appropriate for the intervention in question?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the original objectives of the intervention? • To what extent did they correspond to the needs and problems of the stakeholders?
2. To what extent is the social innovation intervention still relevant?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is there still a need to continue the social innovation intervention in question? Are there any viable alternatives to it? • Is there evidence of unforeseen/emerging issues that should have been taken into account? Should the unforeseen/emerging issues have been reflected in the intervention's objectives?

Source: Consortium (2021).

Box 2 – Relevance: key messages

- The intervention's original objectives have largely corresponded to the needs of the key stakeholders involved: i.e. project implementers, end beneficiaries and policymakers.
- The intervention remains highly relevant, especially in the light of its unique status at the EU level as a funding scheme aimed at the support of social experimentation. National governments are rarely eager to experiment using their own budgets, while there is a lack of EU programmes that fund experimentation at this scale.
- The intervention's relevance could potentially be maximised even further by sharpening the definitions used at the programme level, as well as by updating its objectives through a stronger focus on the preparatory steps for upscaling/transfer. Specifically, putting more emphasis on the need to transfer and upscale and on the informal learning/networking components of the programme could help to satisfy the needs of policymakers and especially project implementers even better. The latter could be implemented both by the project implementers themselves or in greater cooperation with the EC (e.g. encouraged by the DG COMM/DG EMPL).

Source: Consortium (2021).

Relevance of the intervention's original objectives

Social innovations are new ideas that meet social needs, create social relationships and form new collaborations¹⁵. These innovations can be products, services or models addressing unmet needs more effectively and efficiently. Before social innovations are adopted at the policy and/or other levels (e.g. by third-sector organisations, NGOs and social partners), they are usually tested through the process of social experimentation, which can showcase their effectiveness and efficiency.

Unfortunately, today the social sector in Europe faces many challenges in the area of accessing funding to test innovative solutions at a smaller scale (i.e. social experimentation). Based on the literature review and case study interviews, we have summarised these challenges in the following non-exhaustive list:

- The nature of most social problems is often difficult and multifaceted, requiring both extensive financial and human resources to address¹⁶.
- Overly high reliance on traditional solutions to address the existing challenges faced by the target group/region and a lack of trust in social innovations.
- The network of stakeholders that has to be involved in addressing a challenge is very wide¹⁷ and, hence, hard to coordinate (e.g. stakeholders do not have contact with each other).
- Low level of awareness about social innovation and especially social experimentation, causing risk-aversion sentiments shared by both target groups and policymakers (i.e. scepticism about whether social experimentation is feasible and relevant to address their challenges¹⁸).
- Social experimenters often have to address the needs of two entirely different categories of customers – end beneficiaries and funders – making it more difficult to create tight feedback loops¹⁹. This means that some funders/donors may have idiosyncratic priorities, which can be at odds with the optimal path to have social/economic impact.
- Lack of skills on the side of some social experimenters to properly design and conduct social experimentation projects with robust evaluations, showing quantifiable results.
- Failure to identify and gain access to the partnership and support networks (e.g. new target groups and potential investors) that could facilitate future success of their social experimentation projects²⁰.

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/innovation/social_en

¹⁶ Chalmers, D. (2013). Social innovation: An exploration of the barriers faced by innovating organizations in the social economy. *Local Economy*, 28(1), p. 21.

¹⁷ Lettice, F., & Parekh, M. (2010). The social innovation process: themes, challenges and implications for practice. *International Journal of Technology Management*, 51(1), p. 155.

¹⁸ Chalmers, D. (2013). Social innovation: An exploration of the barriers faced by innovating organizations in the social economy. *Local Economy*, 28(1), p. 21.

¹⁹ <https://leanstartup.co/what-makes-lean-impact-harder-top-10-challenges-for-social-innovation/>

²⁰ Ibid.

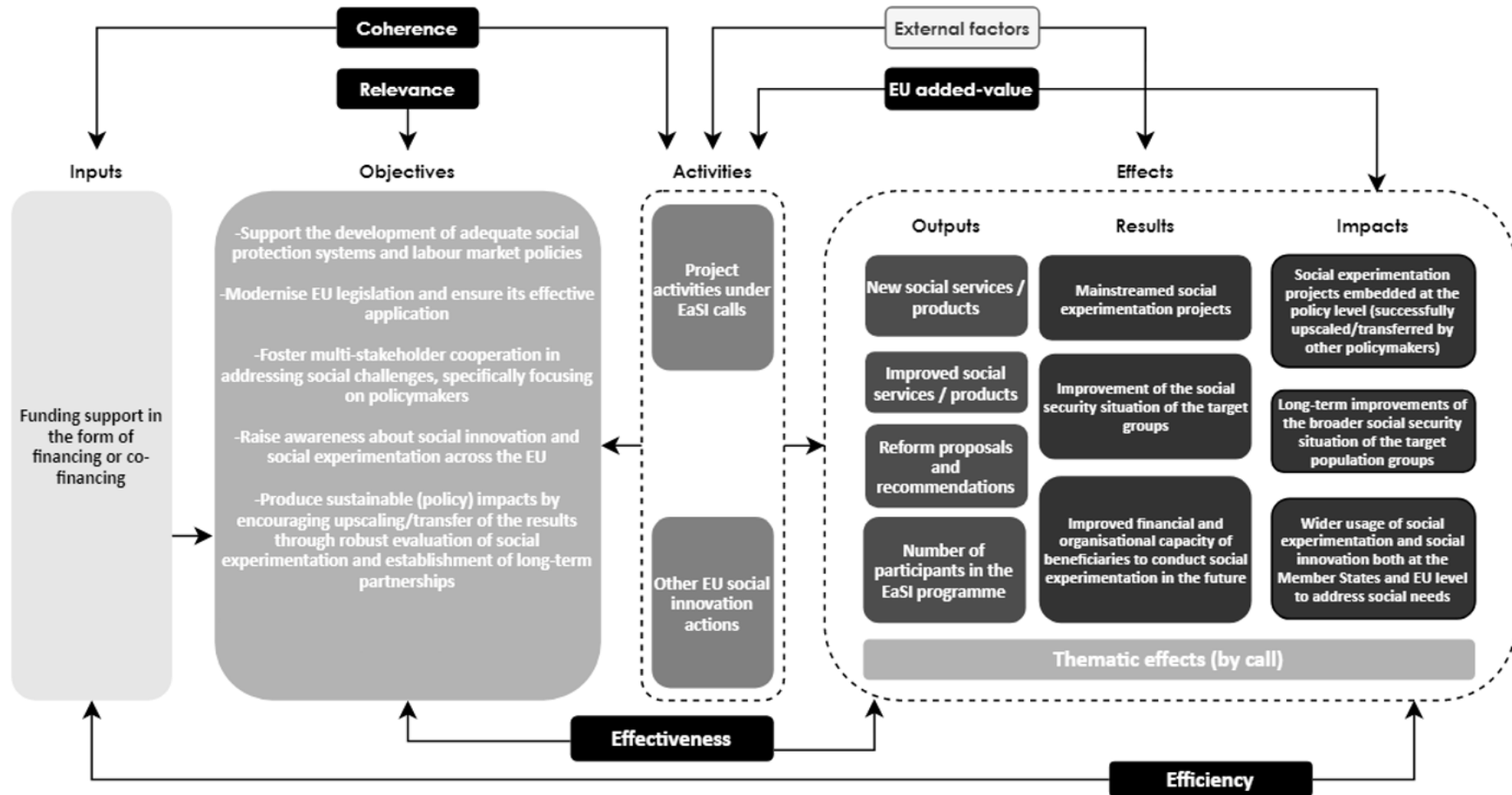
To address some of these challenges, the EU has designed several funding and support schemes for social innovators and social experimenters²¹, aiming to encourage the market uptake of innovative solutions and to support the development of adequate social protection systems and labour market policies (e.g. ESF, EaSI and Social Innovation Competition, among others – see Annex II for more details). The EaSI programme itself, among other things, aims to foster social innovation and mutual learning in that field across the EU. It also strives to *‘strengthen ownership among policymakers at all levels, and produce concrete, coordinated and innovative actions at both Union and Member State level’*²². Bearing in mind both the broader goals of the EaSI programme as a whole, as well as the specific objectives of the individual project calls, we have reconstructed the intervention logic in Figure 2 below.

As it can be seen, **the EaSI intervention is highly relevant since it has successfully identified many of the challenges outlined above**, which were reflected in its original goals. Social innovation calls pursue a comprehensive three-dimensional approach toward fostering social experimentation and innovation across Europe. First, the social innovation calls provide a unique funding opportunity for social experimenters across the EU to pilot their innovative solutions. Second, the intervention aims to foster multi-stakeholder cooperation (especially between policymakers and NGOs, but also with social partners, representatives of the academia, etc.). This approach ensures better coordination, contributes to the development of sustainable partnerships and contributes to raising awareness about the concepts of social innovation and social experimentation. The last element is particularly important as it aims to alleviate risk-aversion sentiments shared by the policymakers at the national level, which hamper the development of social innovations. Third, the intervention partially addresses the need of the project stakeholders to further facilitate the future success of their social experimentation projects by exposing them to a broader array of stakeholders at the EU level and encouraging them to robustly evaluate their projects’ results. This is also supported by the conducted interviews, where both policymakers and project implementers have universally agreed that the intervention’s initial objectives were highly relevant.

²¹ For the full list of EU actions and programmes on social innovation, see Annex II.

²² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0238:0252:EN:PDF>, p. 8.

Figure 2 – Generalised intervention logic of the EaSI Social Innovation calls



Source: Consortium (2021) based on the review of EaSI documentation and individual project calls.

EaSI touches upon a variety of stakeholders: end beneficiaries, project implementers and policymakers. Therefore, below we also analyse the satisfaction of the needs of these individual stakeholder groups in greater detail. A necessary methodological clarification is that **in some cases there has been a strong overlap between the stakeholder groups** that we are trying to distinguish. This trend has been particularly strong in the 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support, where policymakers' roles have overlapped with those of project implementers and end beneficiaries too. The national public administration bodies under this call are responsible for conducting the projects, which also aim to develop new social policy tools for policymakers (i.e. for themselves). Nevertheless, developing more advanced policy tools can also benefit the broader population and not only policymakers (Box 3 below seeks to illustrate that).

Box 3 – Example of the benefits of developing policy tools for the broader population overall in the framework of the 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support

- In recent years, many European countries including Italy have experienced growth of the so-called 'non-standard' contracts – including temporary, casual or platform work contracts. Such contracts bring more flexibility to people, but non-standard workers also face problems when exercising their fundamental rights at work or accessing social security benefits. The MOSPI project fits into this context with the goal to support the modernisation of the Italian social protection system; adjust it to the needs of such workers as well as respond to the challenges of digitalisation, population ageing, and globalisation.
- The MOSPI project aims to update the 'T-Dymm' – Treasury DYnamic Microsimulation Model (which is currently in use by the Italian Ministry of Economy). It does that through a significant review of the database and broadening its scope of analysis, with a particular focus on workers with discontinuous careers. Apart from that, the MOSPI draws closer attention to the issue of non-standard workers in Italy and aims to produce policy recommendations on the necessary adjustments to the Italian social protection system in order to better suit their needs and protect their rights through the involvement of the Italian Ministry of Economy. Thus, the EaSI intervention, which supports the project's implementation, is becoming relevant not just to policymakers but also to the broader population of non-standard workers.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the MOSPI case study

First, based on the results of the in-depth interviews with project teams, as well as the examination of the available project documentation (including final and interim evaluation reports), **the intervention successfully addresses most of the needs of project implementers** (see Figure 3 and the section on 'Effectiveness' for more results). Specifically, the intervention empowers them to (i) develop and test new services/products at a scale large enough to have control groups²³; (ii) reach a wider circle of target groups and new sources of funding; (iii) influence policy reforms or contribute to the development of national legislation; (iv) engage in cross-border and transnational exchange of best practices.

Nevertheless, there have been two partially unsatisfied needs referenced by the project teams. The first relates to the absence of post-pilot support from the programme management for the upscaling and transfer of the developed products/services. The EaSI programme was initially designed as a scheme to support social experimentation. Yet as more and more

²³ Although not all projects (can) use this opportunity for evaluations (see 'Effectiveness' for more details).

projects successfully conclude and have to progress to the stages of mainstreaming and embedding their results, the project teams realise that they do not have the necessary financial and human capacities to proceed (see the section on 'Effectiveness' for more details). The second applies to some learning needs by the project implementers which are still only partially addressed. Specifically, some project teams lack the skills necessary to properly design and conduct social experimentation projects with methodologically robust evaluations, showing quantifiable results.

Second, with regard to the **end-beneficiaries**, their **needs** seem to be **generally addressed** based on the evaluation reports provided by the project teams (see more details on the actual effects on end-beneficiaries in the section on 'Effectiveness'). The key stimulating factor here is that the intervention encourages the project participants to pay careful attention to the needs of end-beneficiaries both in the programme's call application and evaluation requirements. For example, in the 2014 call, a project undertook an effort to conduct the first-ever comprehensive pan-European needs survey of people with rare diseases. Furthermore, the connection of the calls to the EC's key policy documents has further helped the project implementers to pinpoint the needs of the target population in their individual projects. For example, the 2014 and 2015 calls have reflected on the Social Investment Package, while the 2016 call has reacted to the challenges of the European migration crisis. The later calls starting from 2018 have been designed in accordance with the key priorities of the European Pillar of Social Rights has further.

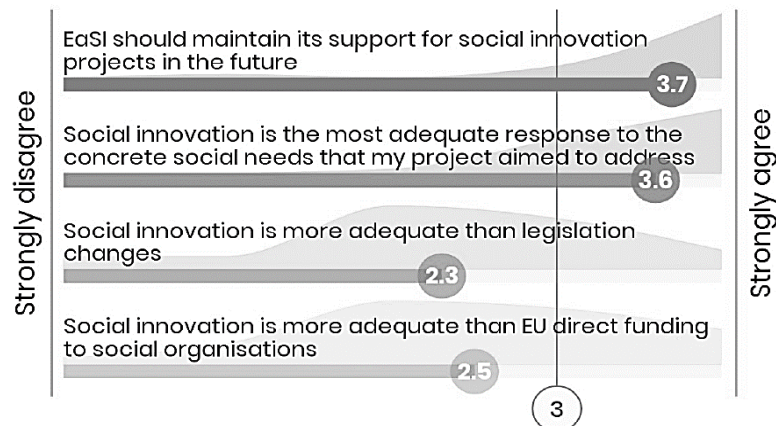
Third, with regard to the satisfaction of the **policymakers' needs**, the evidence is somewhat **mixed** and, in some cases, **unclear due to the ongoing nature of many projects** (especially from the 2018-2020 calls). On the one hand, based on the interviews, the intervention adequately reflects their need to discover and implement more effective and/or efficient tools for better decision-making. The intervention also allows them to expand their existing networks and participate in the experimentation process. An essential factor here is the requirement for some type of multistakeholder cooperation in the form of consortia, under almost all project calls.

On the other hand, this perception of relevance somewhat correlates with the scope of individual calls. The perception of the intervention's relevance for the policymakers' needs was particularly high in the 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support, which was largely dominated by public institutions as the main applicants. In that case, policymakers had an opportunity to both update their policy toolboxes with new microsimulation models, software, studies and recommendations; and exchange experiences with their colleagues/network partners across the EU. By contrast, under the broader 2014 and 2015 calls, as well as the 2016 call, the level of relevance for policymakers varied by project. It largely depended on their level of involvement in the implementation process or on whether the project provided adequate proof of their solutions' effectiveness and efficiency²⁴. Furthermore, some policymakers still believe that other forms of policy actions (e.g. direct funding of social service providers) could have been more relevant for addressing the social needs in their regions/countries. They argue that social experimentation does not guarantee a 100% result and can only be used once upscaled/transferred, which might take a lot of time and effort, while they need immediate solutions. This also correlates with the findings of the project implementers' survey in Figure 3 – Assessment of relevance of the EaSI support for social innovation by the project implementers (from 0 to 4)

. Some of the implementers thought that other forms of policy actions (e.g. direct funding, legislative changes) could have been relevant alternatives too.

²⁴Remains valid as long as the policymakers' needs and objectives are stable. When changing, like in the case of migration, their interest in social experimentation can change too, which makes their involvement dependent on the type of challenges and their sensitiveness to political contexts.

Figure 3 – Assessment of relevance of the EaSI support for social innovation by the project implementers (from 0 to 4)



N = 27 project representatives, 0 – strongly disagree, 4 – strongly agree.

Source: Survey done by the Consortium (2021).

That said, the EaSI programme has also **satisfied the need for information through awareness-raising about social innovation in general and social experimentation in particular** across different target groups (especially national and regional policymakers and participants of the project implementers' teams). The intervention demonstrates the EU's commitment to social innovation as a policy tool, aiming to further encourage the Member States to proceed and/or continue with their support of social innovators at the national and regional levels. As one of the policymakers has admitted during an interview, if there were no such European initiatives, the regional and national governments would probably not get interested in performing social experimentation or prioritising social innovation in the first place. However, the intervention's effects in this area could have been even stronger (see more details in the section on 'Effectiveness'; also, for the statistical data on mainstreaming/embedding projects).

The current relevance of the EaSI programme's intervention

This subsection presents the intervention's current relevance through two main questions. First, it examines whether the EaSI intervention in question still remains relevant as perceived by the stakeholders. While doing so, the subsection provides arguments about why there is still a necessity to continue the intervention. Second, it also outlines the key emerging challenges, which have occurred in the course of implementation and which could be taken into account in the light of the next ESF+ programming period.

As evidenced by the interviews and survey, both project implementers and policymakers agree that EaSI should maintain its support for social innovation projects in the future (also see Figure 3 – Assessment of relevance of the EaSI support for social innovation by the project implementers (from 0 to 4))

). Furthermore, from a comparative perspective, the evaluative evidence shows that **the intervention's relevance is also reflected in its relatively unique status at the European level when it comes to supporting social experimentation as of 2021**. The project teams admit that in most instances they could not have implemented their projects without the intervention and that **they do not see any comparable alternatives to it at the national and European levels**. The key arguments supporting these statements are outlined below:

- First, there is a lack of programmes of similar scope and thematic profile at the national and European level (see also the section on ‘EU added value’ for more details). In some cases, projects were eligible for social experimentation funding at the national level, but at a much smaller scale and on an ad hoc basis. This usually happens only under either of the two conditions (i) development of the project under the auspices of a regional/national social innovation policy strategy; (ii) urgent need of the regional/national policymakers to develop a specific policy tool.
- Also, most of the existing European and national funding sources do not prioritise social experimentation or support only tested solutions. In cases when the projects actually managed to secure additional resources from alternative European programmes (such as e.g. ESF; Erasmus+; EEA/Norway grants), they would already pass the stage of social experimentation and proceed to mainstreaming and/or embedding. Such schemes do not provide any space for experimentation and failures.
- Furthermore, the EaSI application conditions are straightforward and simple to process as perceived by project implementers. This, as the result, creates less ‘red tape’ for them and makes the programme more attractive. By contrast, applying for national funding is often way more conditional and subject to the short-term political will of the national and regional governments, rendering it unsuitable for longer-term projects (particularly involving constant monitoring or complex impact evaluations).
- In addition, although many of the aforementioned national and European programmes encourage multi-stakeholder cooperation, they usually do not provide access to the networks that could facilitate the future success of their social experimentation projects. EaSI, on the other hand, ensures a broad pan-European exposure to a diverse group of stakeholders, which could potentially help the project implementers to further upscale/transfer their project (see the section on ‘Effectiveness’ for more details).
- Moreover, the EaSI social innovation calls have also been relevant for the EC itself, providing it with a mechanism to test social experiments before implementing them on a large scale. The calls serve as an important channel of the EU policy priorities in the social area, helping to implement the key policy themes and needs at the European level. Finally, the EC has also received an opportunity to broadly spread the good practices developed during the projects’ implementation across different EU MS.

While the programme’s relevance is indisputable, several **challenges**, which have occurred in the course of its implementation, **could be taken into account in the light of the next ESF+ programming period**. First, the project implementers think that **the programme**, despite its requirements for sustainability, **lacks a specialised part dedicated to post-pilot scaling/transfer** (i.e. many project implementers see assistance with upscaling/transfer as one of the key needs, despite not paying sufficient attention to the sustainability requirements outlined in individual project calls). Indeed, the intervention has not initially foreseen any specialised objectives for upscaling/transfer due to the fact that initially upscaling or transfer within the same country were supposed to be the tasks of the European Social Fund’s (ESF) national Managing Authorities (MAs). Nevertheless, even though many finished projects had established contacts with the local/regional policymakers, some could not connect with the ESF MAs for objective reasons (see the section on ‘Effectiveness’ for more details). Thus, some projects have struggled to progress from the experimentation stage to mainstreaming and embedding. It is worth mentioning, however, that those projects that were able to establish contacts with local/regional policymakers (e.g. MISSION, ERSIS) benefitted from those contacts when moving into the mainstreaming and embedding phases.

Second, **a share of finished projects has failed to produce convincing quantitative evaluative evidence on their effectiveness and/or efficiency.** This, in turn, hinders the policymakers' need to see how effective/efficient the produced solutions are. The problem has occurred despite the respective mandatory conditions on conducting evaluations outlined in their project calls. The reasons for that tend to vary. Most projects cite the allegedly short time span of the programme or the lack of knowledge/learning support in the field of evaluation. That said, representatives of other evaluated projects with net positive results argue that all projects should also undergo stricter evaluations. They also believe that the quality of evaluations should be kept in check by the EC. This factor has already been taken into consideration by the EC project management and has been reflected in the design of the last 2020 call. The call foresees a mandatory submission of a detailed evaluation plan already at the stage of the project application.

Third, **representatives of many finished projects argue that the duration of the projects should have been somewhat longer** to better account for their evaluation-related needs (and/or help them with the upscaling and transfer). Since the programme requires the project implementers to evaluate their outputs, results and impacts, the average duration of 2-3 years is sometimes not enough for the project implementers to evaluate the long-term impacts of their project interventions. Quite often the experimentation process starts after several months of set-up and usually lasts until the late stages of the project. The time gap between the project's finalisation and the deadline for the submission of evaluations, however, can be too short for the assessment of long-term impacts. Thus, by the time the evaluations are available, the grant agreement has usually expired. The ERSISI project funded under the 2015 call, for example, has not been able to submit a full evaluation report as of mid-2021, despite the project agreement ending in 2019. The reason for that was that the last end beneficiaries received treatment in mid-2019, while the observation period for mid-term results was one full year. As for the potential connection between the evaluations and conditions-based funding for upscaling/transfer, see the section on 'Efficiency' (specifically, examination of the 'payments-by-result'-condition).

Fourth, the evaluation results also show **a strong geographic dimension of relevance; i.e. relevance varies across different EU regions.** This is especially true with regard to the need of improving access to finance for social experimenters. For example, representatives from Italy and Spain dominate the project lists, together constituting approximately 40% of the main beneficiaries (18 out of 44)²⁵, while other countries (e.g. Estonia) have not found their way in at all. A key determining factor here is the degree of support provided to social experimenters and innovators in the individual Member States. For example, some Member States like Portugal²⁶, Ireland²⁷ or Germany²⁸ have special public funds allocated at regional or national levels. Others, like Spain and Italy, do not, which creates a stronger demand in these Member States for programmes like EaSI, making its objectives even more relevant. Another important factor is the low level of awareness in some Member States about the social innovation/social experimentation concepts generally and about the EaSI programme in particular.

Fifth, a systemic challenge that has reoccurred in many projects was the issue of **political change(s) in national or regional administrations.** Specifically, a change in the administration would often result in a change of the policy priorities, thus, undermining the upscaling process. While this is not a challenge that is directly related to the intervention itself, it could also potentially be reflected in the intervention's objectives. One of the proposed measures to address this issue was to require the national public bodies participating in EaSI

²⁵ Project mapping, Annex I. The programme as of August 2021, has managed to cover a significant share of Member States (22 out of 27), but not all of them. Specifically, Lithuania, Estonia, Portugal, Malta, and Croatia are still missing despite the absence of major social innovation funding initiatives in these Member States (with the exception of Portugal, which has its own national Social Innovation programme).

²⁶ E.g. <https://inovacaosocial.portugal2020.pt/en/about-us/portugal-inovacao-social/>

²⁷ E.g. <https://rethinkireland.ie/> (also known as the Social Innovation Fund Ireland).

²⁸ See e.g. https://www.arl-lq.niedersachsen.de/startseite/forderung_projekte/forderprojekte/foerderprogramm-soziale-innovation-173963.html

at the stage of application to incorporate positive elements of the pilot results after the pilot implementation if those pilots are successful.

Thematic relevance of the social innovation calls

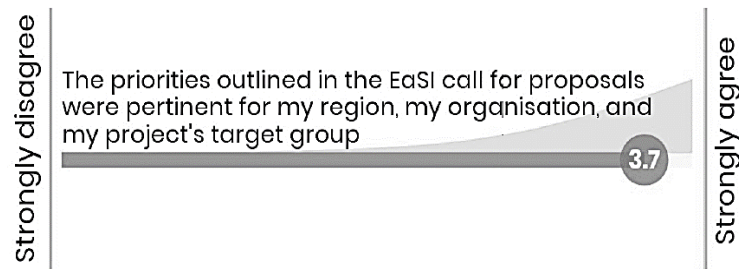
This section provides a supplementary overview of the thematic relevance of the individual social innovation calls launched throughout 2014-2020. Specifically, it examines whether the topics of the calls were relevant and if they addressed the key challenges of the Member States in the social area. It also provides some brief insights with regard to the current socially relevant policy priorities in Europe based on the results of the policy documents and literature review.

Thematically, the calls could be grouped into calls with a broader thematic scope (2014 call, 2015 call) and with a narrower thematic scope (2016 call, 2018 call on work-life balance, 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support, 2019 call and 2020 call). **The calls with a narrower scope limit the thematic choice for project implementers, but at the same time seem to better address the needs of policymakers** by allowing them to take up issues relevant to their national political contexts (i.e. matching the broader EU challenges with the national ones remains difficult at times). For example, the topics of the 2018 call on work-life balance are still high on the political agenda both in many Member States and at the broader EU level. Large-scale reforms and laws in this area have been recently presented or are under development, which is what adds even more significance to the EaSI support for social experimentation in this area. The 2016 call on migration was very relevant for local and regional policymakers, who have been trying to establish cooperation networks in the area of migrant integration. A different example is the 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support, which has allowed the public bodies to acquire the much-needed up-to-date social policy tools (e.g. microsimulations models). Despite the positive perception on the side of the policymakers, the total number of applicants under these calls (in particular the 2018 call) was much lower due to their thematic specifics, as evidenced by interviews with the EC representatives.

Overall, the **priorities and objectives of the individual calls were perceived as highly relevant both by project implementers and interviewed policymakers** based on the interviews' results and survey as well (see Figure 4 below). However, the **perceived relevance of social innovation/social experimentation as an effective means to address social challenges remains moderately high**. Almost all interviewed project implementers and policymakers agree that the concept of social innovation remains a relevant solution to addressing the challenges and needs faced both by end beneficiaries of the relevant social experimentation projects and by policymakers. Nonetheless, some of them have also stressed that social innovations alone cannot address the issues at hand (or are too slow in addressing those). Some stress that social innovations have to be combined with additional policy measures such as direct funding for social providers, new legislation in respective social policy areas, and national reforms among other things as evidenced in Figure 3 – Assessment of relevance of the EaSI support for social innovation by the project implementers (from 0 to 4)

above.

Figure 4 – Assessment of the priorities outlined in the EaSI social innovation calls by the project implementers



N = 26 project representatives, 0 – strongly disagree, 4 – strongly agree.

Source: Survey done by the Consortium (2021).

With this in mind, there was some degree of **confusion with regard to the concepts of social innovation/social experimentation themselves due to the lack of uniform criteria defining those concepts**. Some implementers are not even aware of the official EaSI-established definitions of both concepts. This has been a systemic issue across several projects, especially with the 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support as well as the 2019 call, where some of the implementers of projects financed under this call did not consider themselves 'purely socially innovative'. This anomaly is, however, well explained by the fact that the relevant calls did not strictly require all funded projects to be socially innovative. You can find more details on the innovative content of the projects in the section on 'Effectiveness'.

With regard to the **emerging topics of potential future relevance**, we have largely relied on the analysis of 'grey' literature²⁹ complemented by some insights from the interviews. Specifically, the EU social policy has been paying ever-increasing attention to issues faced by vulnerable groups, childcare issues, financial poverty and the ageing European society; with these topics becoming even more important in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. Some of these areas are also a part of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which has been a guiding umbrella document for the more recent EaSI social innovation calls since its introduction in 2017³⁰. Below we outline each of the topics:

- Protection of the **most vulnerable groups** (including people with disabilities, youth, migrants and women) has been increasingly coming into the focus, especially in the light of the major economic downturn caused by the 2008 financial crisis and again by the 2020-2021 coronavirus-induced recession. Specifically, key policy developments in respective areas involving each of these groups are discussed below:
 - Issues faced by **people with disabilities** were reflected in the European Disability Strategy (2010-2020). It seeks to empower people with disabilities and builds on the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. The strategy is aiming to make improvements along eight pillars: accessibility, participation, equality, employment, education and training, social protection, health and external action. As part of the efforts in terms of education and training, the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education has been

²⁹Information produced outside of traditional publishing and distribution channels, such as reports, policy literature, government documents, white papers, etc.

³⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en

founded.³¹ The successor of the 2010 to 2020 strategy has been the Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030 adopted by the European Commission³². The Strategy involves three main themes: EU rights, independent living and autonomy, non-discrimination and equal opportunities. Despite the progress made in the past decade in this area, people with disabilities still face barriers and have a higher risk of poverty, social exclusion and limited access to public services (mostly due to financial and transportation issues)³³. The COVID-19 pandemic has further aggravated these challenges, as people with disabilities face difficulties in accessing social and healthcare services, which were detained due to quarantine restrictions. Moreover, people with disabilities suffer from self-isolation (due to a higher vulnerability to the virus) and, therefore, are more likely to encounter mental health issues³⁴.

- The EU has also been streamlining its policies toward **young people**. Based on the 2009 EU Youth Report – the first of its kind – the EU launched the Youth Strategy 2010-2018 as well as the broader ‘An EU Youth Strategy – Investing and Empowering’. Both have been drafted having in mind the economic challenges which the 2008 financial crisis entailed for young people. As such, the main goal of EU youth policy during that time was to ensure more and equal job and education opportunities as well as to encourage young people to participate in society more actively. Both strategies sought to realise these aims by focusing on eight fields of action: education, employment, creativity and entrepreneurship, health and sport, participation, social inclusion, volunteering and youth around the world.³⁵
- Building on the 2010-2018 strategies, the more recent EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 aims to foster the participation of young people in civic and democratic life, as well as voluntary engagement, learning mobility, solidarity and intercultural understanding and also to support youth empowerment. Significant steps towards achieving these goals are the European Solidarity Corps initiative; enabling people aged 18-35 to participate in solidarity activities via volunteering, traineeship or job, the new DiscoverEU initiative in the Erasmus programme for 2021-2027 and the reinforced Youth Guarantee scheme, which supports young unemployed people. The COVID-19 pandemic had strong repercussions on the young people who faced high levels of unemployment and lower quality of education as well as mental health problems due to isolation³⁶. To respond to this the European Commission has launched a Youth Employment Support package in 2020 supporting young people in entering the labour market³⁷, as well as extending the support available via the Youth Guarantee to all under the age of 30.
- As the result of migration crises happening in the EU’s immediate neighbourhood and in the Middle East, there is increasing political attention to the topics of **refugee and migrant integration**. The EU has been trying to establish an effective, humanitarian and safe migration policy since the 2015 migration crisis. It has since adopted rules and frameworks to manage legal migration flows and established common rules for processing asylum

³¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Aem0047>

³² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_810

³³ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8406&furtherPubs=yes>

³⁴ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15265161.2020.1779396>

³⁵ https://europa.eu/youth/strategy/strategy-2010-2018_en

³⁶ <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/supporting-young-people-s-mental-health-through-the-covid-19-crisis-84e143e5/>

³⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_1193

requests³⁸. Moreover, in the light of the most recent developments in Afghanistan in 2021 and Ukraine in 2022 as well as the increasing flows of climate refugees, further political attention to the topic can be anticipated.

- **Gender equality** and namely the well-being of **women** is another topic of high relevance. Through the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, the EU has committed to strengthen its efforts of securing women's rights as well as to end gender-based violence, challenge gender stereotypes, close gender gaps in the labour market, achieve equal participation of genders across the economy, address the gender pay and pension gaps, close gender care gap, and achieve gender balance in decision-making³⁹. In 2019 the European Parliament approved the Work-Life Balance Directive that the Member States must adopt by August 2022, with the view to reduce the pressure on women as primary caregivers and foster equal treatment of men and women thus, supporting women's employment. These more recent strategies build on the tenets of and experience from the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality, the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015 as well as the 2011-2020 European Pact for Gender Equality.⁴⁰
- **Childcare.** The establishment of the European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC) following the EC's 2013 recommendation on investing in children was an important milestone. This was part of the Social Investment Package which was launched in response to the 2008 financial crisis⁴¹. EPIC provides information about policies that can help children and their families face the challenges that exist in the current economic climate in Europe⁴². Its main aim is to help children and their families address the challenges such as poverty, housing issues, and healthcare. These challenges became even more relevant during the pandemic since children switched to remote learning and would spend more time at home, thus becoming more vulnerable to existing childcare issues.
- **Financial poverty.** In the aftermath of the financial crisis, the EC named combating poverty as one of the key targets for 2020, as part of its 2010 Europe 2020 strategy.⁴³ More recently, the EU has begun to focus especially on poverty reduction – particularly among the older-aged population. Such a thematic shift is determined by the long-term issues related to income inequality in the EU and the high risk of poverty among the elderly. The older-aged population is more likely to suffer from financial incapacity, and therefore from lower affordability of needed goods and services. The European institutions are initiating research works to overview recent pension reforms, analysing the main challenges to the adequacy of future pensions. Also, they provide recommendations for the EU Member States on how to address such issues⁴⁴.
- Finally, **the ageing society** remains one of the biggest societal challenges in Europe. As fertility rates decrease and life expectancy increases, the share of working-age people is decreasing while the share of older people is increasing⁴⁵. To address this problem, the EU has introduced multiple policies and initiatives, with some of the key

³⁸ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-migration-policy/>

³⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>

⁴⁰ <https://charter-equality.eu/the-charter/the-eu-and-gender-equality.html>

⁴¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1246&langId=en>

⁴² <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15265161.2020.1779396>

⁴³ <https://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

⁴⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8397&furtherPubs=yes>

⁴⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/soc-prot/ageing/intro_en.htm

ones including the 1990 Council Decision on Community action for older people⁴⁶, the 2020 EU Green Paper on demographic change⁴⁷, the 2016 White Paper entitled 'An agenda for adequate, safe and sustainable pensions'⁴⁸, and the 2020 Green Paper on ageing⁴⁹. The European Commission continues to promote active and healthy ageing mostly by enabling the older population to access employment. An example of the EU's efforts is the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing. It can be foreseen that the EU will continue its efforts in addressing the implications of the ageing population further, especially in the context of digitalisation (i.e. skills required for older people to participate in the digitalised labour market or access any remote services [e.g. healthcare during the pandemic]).

2.2. Effectiveness

The evaluation of the effectiveness aims to assess, to what extent, why and how the intervention has delivered the expected results and impacts. According to our conceptual model, social innovations can produce effects at three different levels (i) individual level – effects for the end beneficiaries; (ii) organisational level – increased innovation capacity of the project implementers; (iii) policy level – embedding of social innovation into mainstream policies. We examine both the actual effects of the intervention and the potential ones (with relation to the scalability/transferability) at all three levels.

Overall, when evaluating the effectiveness of the finished projects, we have relied on analysing the final technical reports and other available project documentation (e.g. interim project reports, project websites). We have cross-referenced this evidence in targeted interviews with project representatives and policymakers both at the EU and MS levels. With regard to the currently ongoing projects, however, we have used only preliminary data sources available, such as interim reports or project application documents. Some of the questions related to the effects (i.e. to the long-term results and impacts) have not been applied to the projects under the 2019 and 2020 calls, which are only recent and have not produced any interim results so far.

All six subsections in this section will cover the respective questions pertaining to effectiveness. First, we will briefly present the innovative content of the individual projects developed in the EaSI framework. Secondly, the three following subsections will present the intervention's results at three respective levels – policy, organisational and end beneficiary levels. The following subsection will examine the adoption of the developed solutions at scale, specifically aiming to determine what its barriers and drivers are. The final subsection will present evidence on the attribution of the identified effects to the intervention. Table 6 below discusses our strategy to assess the effectiveness, while Box 4 summarises the key messages of this section.

⁴⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:31991D0049&rid=1>

⁴⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12722-Demographic-change-in-Europe-green-paper-on-ageing>

⁴⁸ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/32eda60f-d102-4292-bd01-ea7ac726b731/language-en>

⁴⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12722-Demographic-change-in-Europe-green-paper-on-ageing_en

Table 6 – Operationalisation table: Effectiveness

Evaluation questions	Operational questions
Effectiveness	
1. What have been the (quantitative and qualitative) effects of the social policy experimentation? What have been the concrete, factual impacts of the action (actual or expected) on the population (local, national or EU), on the organisations that are part of the consortia and on the policy (at the local, regional, national or EU level)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the intervention in question helped the end beneficiaries by providing effective and efficient solutions to their social needs, as witnessed by the counter-factual evidence? • Have the overall/specific/operational objectives of the individual projects been met? (Are they likely to be met?) What has helped/hindered the progress?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the project teams allocated/planned to allocate additional resources to developing new social innovations beyond their EaSI projects? • Have the project teams developed sustainable networks and partnerships (internal or external) during the project? Is the project team intending to further develop and scale innovation(s)?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the developed social experimentation projects been adopted at the policy level within the same MS or in another MS to address pertinent (social) problems? (Are they likely to be adopted?) What were the factors that helped to upscale/transfer the projects? • Do the project teams have the necessary resources for the upscaling/transfer of the developed innovation? • Has the project been adapted to the local ecosystem? (Can it be adapted?)
2. To what extent can these changes/effects be credited to the intervention? (see Annex IV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the intervention led to changes/effects at the individual level of projects as witnessed by the counterfactual evidence? • To what extent has the intervention empowered the capacity of project implementers to innovate and upscale/transfer their pilot at the organisational level? • To what extent can the policy changes claimed by embedded projects be attributed to the intervention?

Source: Consortium (2021).

Box 4 – Effectiveness: key messages

- In terms of innovative content, only less than a quarter of the launched projects have developed solutions that are innovative for the social area globally, with most of them being new either to the region or to the target groups.
- Overall, the intervention has so far been to a large extent effective with regard to the end beneficiaries, project implementers, and policymakers. Most of the finished experimentation projects have successfully achieved their objectives and proceeded into mainstreaming/embedding phases. However, the intervention's long-term policy impacts remain unclear so far because the embedding process takes a lot of time even after the experimentation process is finished and because many projects are still ongoing.
- Even successful social experimentation projects sometimes struggle to mainstream and then embed their solutions due to the lack of immediate financial and human resources. Furthermore, some projects attempting to upscale/transfer their results lack the necessary knowledge on how to proceed, which delays embedding their results.
- Overall, project implementers and, in some cases, policymakers face financial challenges or lack supporting policy context, when trying to better embed their results. This, consequently, undermines their attempts at making the long-term impacts of the intervention more pronounced and visible.
- The developed solutions do not necessarily have to be picked up by policymakers, but can be embedded by other actors as well (e.g. local social partners, NGOs, civil society organisations), which can also result in effects at the regional and local levels.

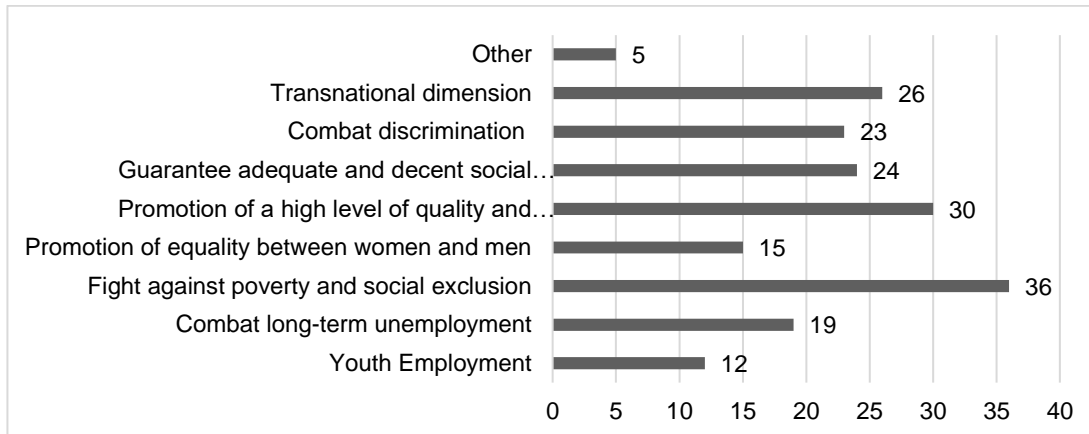
Source: Consortium (2021).

Innovative content of the projects

Social innovation is a relatively broad concept and can apply to a great variety of social policy areas, which is also witnessed by the thematic diversity of social innovation calls published by the EaSI programmes. Indeed, the intervention in question has provided financial support to testing a great variety of social and labour market policy innovations, as well as to build up the main actors' capacity to design and implement social policy initiatives in the future. To account for the diversity of projects, this section will (i) elaborate on the innovative content of all the projects; (ii) describe the main categories of innovations developed; (iii) compare the perception of innovativeness by the project implementers with the EaSI conceptual definitions.

As Figure 5 below shows, **the projects developed in the course of the intervention have relatively equally addressed all of the types of social needs outlined as priorities by the EC.** While the needs of 'Combating long-term unemployment' and 'Youth employment' are addressed less frequently, another related social need, 'Promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment', is well-aligned with them. Two-thirds of the projects (23 out of 35) also have a 'Transnational dimension', which has been an important factor in generating the intervention's cross-border and transnational effects (see the section on 'EU added value' for more details).

Figure 5 – Types of social needs addressed by the projects (in absolute numbers, excluding the 2020 call)



The offered classification is used in accordance with the categories established by the EC for the EaSI Programme. N = 35 projects.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the project mapping (Annex I).

Overall, the **innovative content of the projects developed so far has largely been dominated by the solutions that aim to improve the existing systems rather than completely overhaul them** with more than two-thirds of the projects (71%) being incremental innovations rather than radical⁵⁰. In terms of innovation types, the most widespread ones are process and service innovations as can be seen in Figure 6. This implies that most of the projects have either aimed to improve the existing social services by modifying the existing social policy approaches methodologically (process innovation) or to offer a new type of service that would better suit the needs of the end beneficiaries (service innovation). While **incremental innovations could be perceived as less fundamental in terms of impacts, their bigger share is only natural considering the small size and scope of the conducted projects**. Furthermore, testing improvements to the existing system rather than designing an entirely new system is usually seen as less costly both in terms of time and finances.

⁵⁰ See Annex I for more details.

Figure 6 – Classification of social innovations by type (excluding the 2020 call)

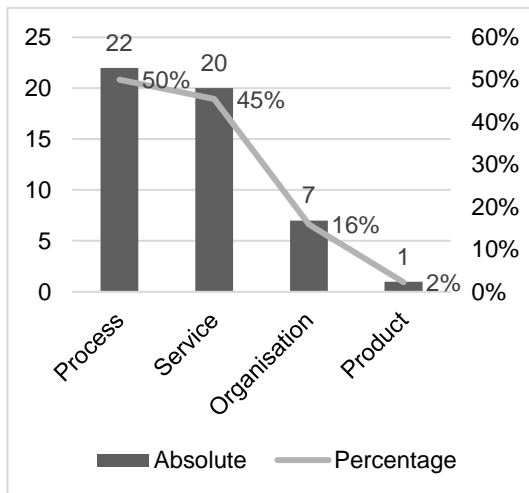
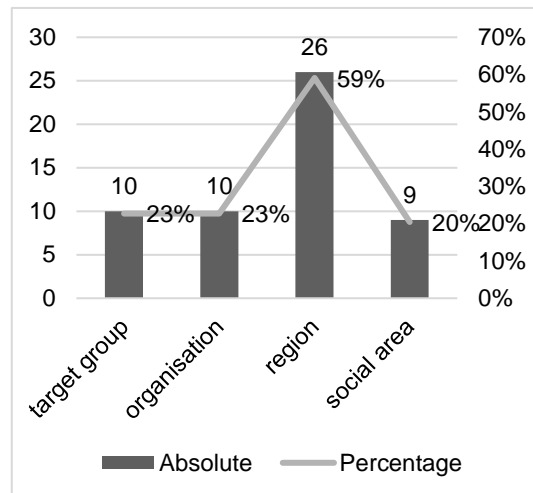


Figure 7 – Classification of social innovations by scope (excluding the 2020 call): 'New to the...'



N = 44 projects; more than one choice was possible.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the project mapping (Annex I).

A relatively low level of product innovation is only natural considering the service-oriented nature of the social policies domain, under which the programme operates. In most of the other cases, the projects have attempted to improve the existing operational aspects and/or efficiency of the existing social policies, specifically from the side of resource management (organisational innovation) rather than start from scratch and develop a completely new product such as software (product innovation).

As it can be seen from Figure 7, **20% of the launched projects have developed solutions that are innovative to the social area globally**. There was some divergence in terms of results produced from call to call. Some calls, such as the 2016 call have not aimed to produce any such solutions at all. More than half of the projects across the calls have adopted a narrower scope, with the approaches already used elsewhere being implemented in the project teams' homes or target regions (i.e. scope new to the region). Other projects have used even narrower scopes – introducing an established approach to a new target group (23%) or to a new organisation (23%). Box 5 below seeks to illustrate the difference between the projects that have developed solutions that are innovative to the social area globally vs. solutions that are new to the region/target group.

Box 5 – Examples of innovative solutions new to the region/target group vs. new to the social area globally

New to the region/New to the target group:

- Under the 2014 call, the project Family STAR has sought for softer, preventive welfare interventions to deal with the problem of early school dropouts. As of 2018, Italy was a Member State with one of the highest shares of young early leavers from education and training in the EU.
- In order to address the issue, the project team has adopted a Family Group Conference (FGC) methodology for certain Italian schoolchildren. FGC was defined as a meeting between children, their parents and teachers, guided by trained facilitators. The FGC method had previously been used largely in the legal context and was tested for the first time in Italy as of 2014. The project team has specifically targeted young teenagers with mild performance problems. Both of these factors have been defined as foundations of the project's innovativeness.

New to the social area globally:

- Under the 2018 call, the European Tracking System (ETS) project targets all EU mobile workers, who live in one country but work in another, as well as those, who change their country of residence for work purposes. The need, which the ETS addresses, relates to the lack of information on the old-age provision and other kinds of pension benefits for mobile workers.
- Frequently, when mobile workers leave one country for another, they struggle to understand the available information, assuming there is any, on how to exercise their rights and claim their entitlements. Presently, there are no pan-European systems in place to address their needs.
- The ETS team is trailing an online portal that provides comprehensive general information on all aspects of pensions and allows mobile workers to track their individual pension entitlements accrued during their work time.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the Family STAR and ETS case studies.

Another clear trend was the **lack of detailed programme-level definitions, criteria and conceptual framework in the EaSI intervention**, which somewhat undermined the coherence of approaches to innovativeness across different projects. This has also resulted in differing perceptions of innovativeness by the programme management and project teams. The only guiding principle was the broad programme definition of 'social innovation' established by Regulation EU No. 1296/2013⁵¹. However, **the interpretation of the official definition of social innovation has varied in different calls**. For example, some calls like the 2015 and 2020 calls have adapted the aforementioned programme definition with or without additional specifications⁵². Others, like the 2014 and 2019 calls have adopted much

⁵¹'Social innovations' are innovations that are social both as to their ends and their means and in particular those which relate to the development and implementation of new ideas (concerning products, services and models), that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations, thereby benefitting society and boosting its capacity to act. See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1296&from=EN> (no longer in force).

⁵² See the respective Terms of Reference documents for the 2015 and 2020 calls. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en&callId=462&furtherCalls=yes> and <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en&callId=603&furtherCalls=yes>

more thematically specific definitions⁵³. Moreover, most project calls have outlined their funding priorities, but only some have provided non-exhaustive lists of the types of projects and actions, which could be potentially financed (i.e. 2016 call, both 2018 calls and 2019 call). In some cases, these lists replaced formal definitions (e.g. 2016 call). Box 6 below illustrates the differences in utilising definitions of social innovations and social experimentation across three example calls.

Box 6 – Illustration of different approaches to the conceptualisation of innovativeness across the calls

2014 call: *Ad hoc* call definition (differs from the programme-level definition):

- *Accordingly, innovation in social services means new practices, policies or processes to meet newly emerging social needs and needs that are not sufficiently met by current practices. This may involve improving the delivery, availability, quality, affordability, effectiveness and efficiency of an existing service or creating a new service which better meets citizens' needs.*

2016 call: Absence of a formal definition. A list titled 'Type of actions/activities to be funded' is presented instead:

- Context: Social innovation as promoted by the EaSI programme can help address social challenges – such as the current refugee integration challenge - by providing better and innovative responses to identified social needs, in order to deliver better social outcomes.

2020 call: Programme-level definition:

- 'Social innovations' are innovations that are social both as to their ends and their means and in particular those which relate to the development and implementation of new ideas (concerning products, services and models), that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations, thereby benefitting society and boosting its capacity to act.
- 'Social policy experimentation' means policy interventions that offer an innovative response to social needs, implemented on a small scale and in conditions that enable their impact to be measured, prior to being repeated on a larger scale, if the results prove convincing.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the Terms of Reference of respective calls.

This absence of a single approach to innovativeness, which could connect the conceptual frameworks under different calls, has resulted in some confusion both amongst the project implementers and EC project/call coordinators. This has been particularly problematic at the stage of pre-selecting project applications since it was not clear what innovativeness criteria can and should be applied to the applicants and whether certain applications can be considered innovative at all. The problem has some spill over effects affecting the project implementers as well. For example, under the 2018 call on social protection, we have discovered that two projects argue that they cannot be considered socially

⁵³ See the respective Terms of Reference documents for the 2014 and 2019 calls.
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en&callId=408&furtherCalls=yes> and
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en&callId=570&furtherCalls=yes>

innovative since their priority was to develop pre-identified tools for the social policy reforms in specific Member States. The lack of social innovativeness in those projects is, however, partly explainable. That is because the relevant 2018 call featured not only social innovation as an acceptable key objective, but also supporting national reform.

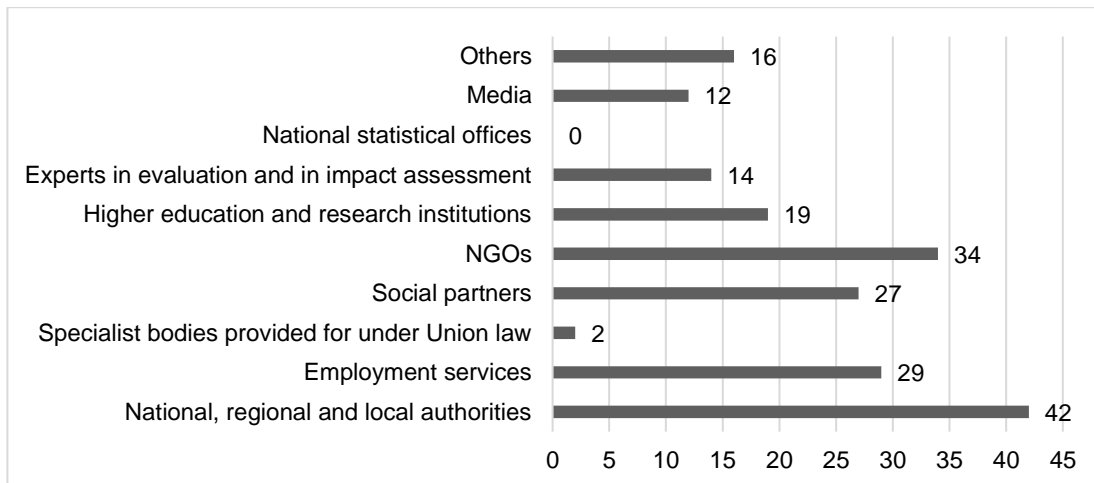
The methodological guide on social innovation to be developed under Task 3 is expected to provide clear, easy-to-read and practical information for project promoters. Specifically, the guide will help them to clearly identify and characterise the social innovation component of their proposal and demonstrate it, to better design and implement their projects and make them sustainable, with the aim to be upscaled for a wide impact. Primarily targeted at project promoters, it will additionally contribute to building the knowledge of policymakers and funding partners at the EU level, including the EC, and at the national, regional and local levels, in particular, ESF Managing Authorities.

The effects of the intervention on the target population

Determining the effects of the intervention on the target population is a crucial part of the evaluation of the effectiveness at the individual project level. Specifically, in this subsection, we examine whether the projects have been (or are likely to be) successful in providing effective solutions to their social needs. Due to the ongoing nature of the intervention, we have largely focused on the assessment of those projects, which have produced either final or some form of interim evaluative results (i.e. this excludes the 2019 and 2020 calls, which have been launched very recently and have seriously been impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic).

First and foremost, **the conceptualisation approaches defining the target population, which are used by the programme and project teams, are somewhat different.** On the one hand, most of the projects aim to benefit broader ranges of the population in their respective regions, which they designate as the end beneficiaries in practical terms (e.g. aiming to reduce unemployment or to foster the uptake of social benefits). On the other hand, the EaSI programme-level categorisation, which is outlined in Figure 8 below, focuses more on the 'intermediary' beneficiaries of the programme such as, for example, educational institutions, PES, NGOs or social service providers, among others. Therefore, a broader definition of the end beneficiaries (including the general populace or specific target groups such as, for example, migrants; unemployed; etc.) should be considered to distinguish between the two groups of beneficiaries: 'intermediary' beneficiaries and end beneficiaries. This distinction could also show whether determining effects on both 'intermediary' and end beneficiaries is necessary for the programme.

Figure 8 – Target groups of the projects (in absolute numbers; excluding the 2020 call)



The offered classification is used in accordance with the categories established by the EC for the EaSI Programme. N = 44 projects.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the project mapping (Annex I).

As demonstrated by the evaluative evidence of the finished projects, **the target groups have benefitted from the intervention both looking from the short- and mid-term perspectives**. The benefits have naturally varied from project to project and call to call – both in terms of outputs (e.g. number of courses taken, hours of therapy conducted, etc.) and results of the interventions (e.g. higher employability, higher motivation/life satisfaction, etc.). Box 7 and Box 8 below illustrate a variety of outputs and results produced by different projects with specific examples. Furthermore, another important factor is that the positive end-effects for the ‘intermediary’ beneficiaries (e.g. for national authorities) do not always immediately translate into positive end-effects for the end beneficiaries. Neither is this factor reflected in the project evaluations (e.g. how exactly can more effective/efficient policy tools contribute to the social needs of the general population or a population group with specific social needs).

Box 7 – Examples of the difference in outputs produced by different projects

Outputs: Number of workers with non-standard work schedules, who received flexible childminders services

- The project titled 'Vouchers for the provision of flexible childminders service to workers with non-standard work schedules' under the 2014 call aimed, among other things, to find an optimal childcare arrangement for workers with non-standard work schedules.
- The project was piloted between 2015 and 2018 in three municipalities of Latvia. The model attempted to balance between the social needs of employers (productivity, the optimal range of employment, low employee rotation rate and decrease in voluntary dismissals) and employees (work-life balance and possibility to use childcare services during their working time).
- As the result of the project implementation, 38 Latvian businesses and institutions in total joined the project activities. The experimental group which received a subsidised childminder service was formed by 30 of them, while the rest formed the control group. In total, 152 workers were provided with childminder services during late hours, nights and weekends over the course of 8 months.

Outputs: Number of hours of integration and professional trainings received by migrants and refugees

- The ALMIT (Acceleration of labour market integration of immigrants through mapping of skills and trainings) project under the 2016 call aimed to pilot quick access to the labour market programme for migrants and refugees who have legal status by guaranteeing a) the language acquisition to become more autonomous; b) the recognition of skills and qualifications to enter the labour market; c) the connection with social partners and local institutions (including employers).
- The project was structured in the first phase of language learning, ICT, civil and intercultural sessions followed by a second phase of labour market information, skills assessment and matching and events with employers and stakeholders. During the first stage, 621 migrants and refugees participated in the language courses and 753 in the civic and intercultural sessions, facilitated by 59 trainers/facilitators. The partners organised these trainings into at least five groups in each of the four countries. The duration of these courses was at least 40 learning hours for the language and 30 for the civic sessions within five days. At the end of each course, the partners made adjustments and updated the training content, based on the suggestions of the trainers on how the trainees assimilated the materials. In parallel, partners introduced the elaborated ICT tools to the attendees, ensuring them the possibility for further use outside the lesson time.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the 'Vouchers for the provision of flexible childminders service to workers with non-standard work schedules' and ALMIT case studies.

Box 8 – Examples of the difference in results produced by different projects

Results: Improvements in the labour market situation of individuals.

- The operational objective of the ‘Bridging Young Roma and Business’ project under the 2015 call was to test a model of integrated service delivery for the access of young Roma into the private sector labour market. The strategic objective was to decrease youth unemployment among the socially disadvantaged Roma group by making beneficiaries more competitive in the labour market.
- The project counterfactually evaluated its primary objective: reducing unemployment among young well-educated Roma. There were 280 Roma (150 in Hungary, 130 in Bulgaria), aged between 18 and 35, enrolled in the treatment group.
- The pilot was an overall success because nearly 30% of participants from both countries have found employment at a private company, most of whom remain regular employees.

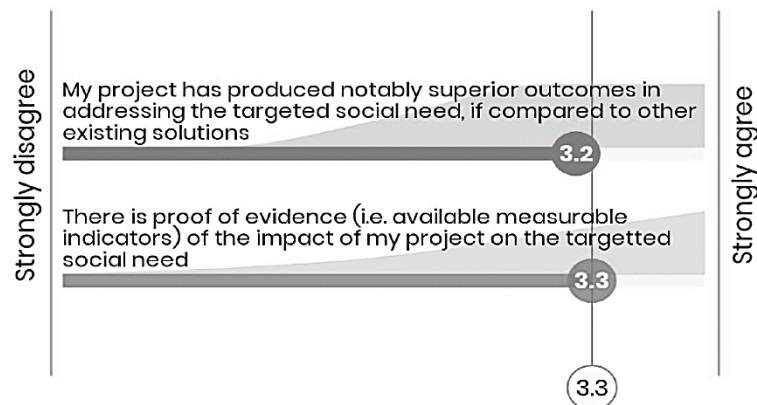
Results: Improvements in the quality of social services provided by public institutions.

- Up until 2014, the information management systems used in the Spanish region of Andalusia for the purposes of social service provision were fragmented and incomparable. As a result, the project team decided to develop the so-called Regional Single Social Record (RSSR) system, which is a special digital tool aimed at improving the quality of social services provided to the citizens among other objectives.
- According to the results of the tool evaluation, its implementation by the public servants has resulted in slight improvements in their working environment (by 3%) as well as improvements in general communication and communication with the citizenry (by 3%). Overall, the services quality index has increased from 24.14% to 25.73 by 6.5%.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the ‘Bridging Young Roma and Business’ and RESISOR case studies.

Planned outputs were created in most of the cases, since it was the main operational objective of almost all projects. To determine the intervention’s progress at the individual project level, especially with regard to the production of outputs, we have examined the evidence coming from both the survey of project implementers (see Figure 9 below), as well as the individual case studies based on the assessment of project documents and in-depth interviews. This evidence demonstrates that a large share of the finished projects has successfully accomplished their planned objectives (see Figure 10). Out of 22 finished projects, only two were unsuccessful (i.e. failed to produce the outputs outlined in their objectives), which constitutes an acceptable margin considering the social experimentation nature of the intervention.

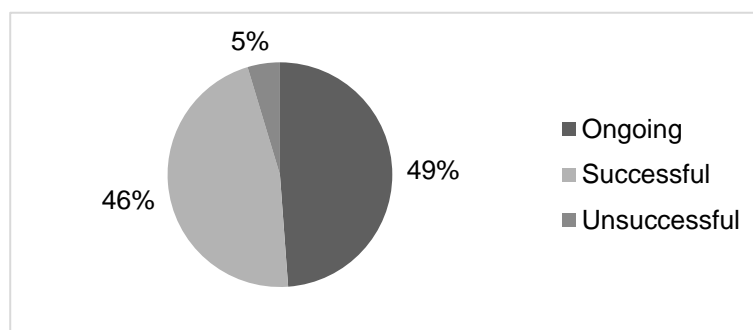
Figure 9 – Self-assessment of the effectiveness of the solutions developed by the project teams



N = 28 project representatives, 0 – strongly disagree, 4 – strongly agree.

Source: Survey done by the Consortium.

Figure 10 – Success rate of the social experimentation projects under the EaSI calls (including the 2020 call)



Note: Successful projects are defined as the projects which have achieved their outlined objectives and correspond to at least one of the criteria at the piloting stage.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the project mapping in Annex I and individual case studies. N = 43 projects (including freshly launched projects from the 2020 call as ongoing).

As for the medium-term results, not all project teams measure them. Almost a fifth of the finished projects have failed to produce robust quantitative evaluative evidence on the effectiveness of their proposed solutions (see Figure 11). The situation with the evaluation of the solutions' efficiency is even more complicated, with more than half of the projects failing to produce the necessary evidence (see Figure 12). There are two main reasons for that. First, the project teams lack the necessary skills and knowledge to conduct evaluations that would be fitting for their solutions. Furthermore, there is no strict control with regard to the quality of evaluations produced by the teams.

Similarly, in many cases, **the long-term impacts of individual projects remain unclear for the same two reasons mentioned in the previous paragraph.** However, there is an **additional factor** at play in measuring the long-term impacts of the projects. Specifically, **most of the pilots have not been fully embedded** at the policy level yet, even though many of them are in the process of doing so (see also the next section). In such cases, the solution is usually in the process of being transposed into the regional/national legislation or the necessary infrastructure to embed the solution is being developed and its broader impacts are only about to materialise.

Figure 11 – Evaluations of effectiveness with robust methodologies produced by the finished projects within the EaSI social innovation calls framework

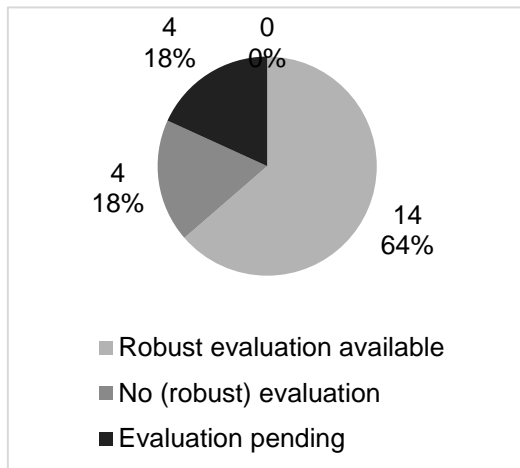
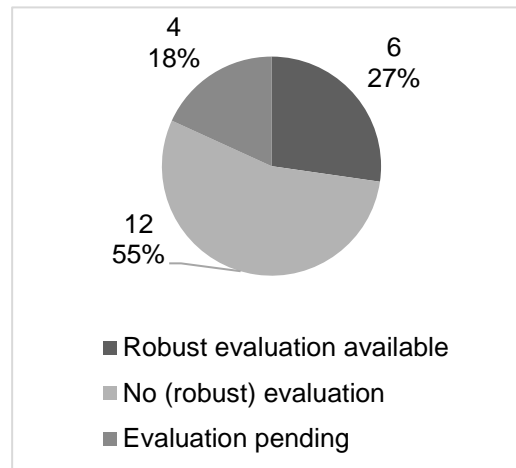


Figure 12 – Evaluations of efficiency with robust methodologies produced by the finished projects within the EaSI social innovation calls framework



Note: Robust refers to an evaluation methodology, which comprehensively describes (preferably in a quantitative fashion) the measurement of the produced effectiveness/efficiency improvements.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the project case studies and project mapping in Annex 1. N = 22 finished projects (only finished projects from 2014-2018 are included).

With regard to the **ongoing projects, the results and outcomes are less clear**, since some projects have just started their implementation, while others have just finalised the interim phase. Overall, the available evaluative evidence demonstrates generally positive results for the ongoing projects in terms of progressing towards their goals, both quantitatively and qualitatively, based on their interim reports, as well as on the interview feedback from the project teams. Unsurprisingly, more recent projects, specifically under the 2019 call, were significantly derailed by the outburst of the COVID-19 pandemic with some being frozen until the summer of 2021. Based on the interviews, at least 7 out of 13 ongoing projects across 2016, 2018 and 2019 calls have reported some implementation troubles caused by the pandemic⁵⁴. Nevertheless, these **projects are expected to produce the intended outputs and results, however, with some delays**.

The patterns that we have observed across the different project case studies have also allowed us to identify **the key barriers and drivers of effective social experimentation** (i.e. factors that impact on whether the intended outputs and outcomes are achieved). Specifically, understanding the main drivers of social experimentation is essential for the drafting of the recommendations in the Final Study and the effective implementation of future projects. Identifying barriers, on the other hand, could help to potentially avoid similar issues in the future. Table 7 below summarises both the key barriers and drivers, and also provides an illustration of the major observed effects based on the results of the horizontal analysis of the case studies.

⁵⁴ The number does not account for the projects from the 2020 call. See Annex I for more details.

Table 7 – Summary of key barriers and drivers of effective social experimentation (including observed effects)

Drivers (Stimulating factors)	Observed effects on the projects
Proactive cooperation with relevant policymakers (e.g. integration of policymakers within the project team or choosing policymakers as one of the target groups)	Higher likelihood of embedding the project outputs/results at the policy level (or, in some cases, organisational level).
Multi-stakeholder collaboration within the project teams and cross-sectoral cooperation in general (e.g. public-private partnerships, involvement of the academic community, representatives of the social partners such as trade unions, etc.)	Learning synergies, knowledge spillovers and exchange of best practices on both thematic and cross-sectoral issues (e.g. evaluation).
Learning from the existing best practices rather than creating 'from scratch' (e.g. looking at the experiences of the EU's MS, which were successful in this specific area or analysing strengths and weaknesses of the previously implemented projects)	Additional learning opportunities, additional tangential evidence of the proposed solution's effectiveness/efficiency and an ability to better compare results.
Targeted and pro-active dissemination and communication strategy , which market the proposed solution/approach from the earliest stages of project implementation (including targeting potential investors and relevant policymakers)	Higher awareness about the proposed solution in the region, higher likelihood of receiving additional funding and/or finding upscaling and transfer opportunities.
Favourable political context: interest and relevance of the topic to the policymakers (e.g. ongoing reforms in this specific policy area in a particular Member State)	A stronger degree of support on the side of the policymakers (e.g. with co-funding or stronger political commitments).
Stable financial commitment provided by the EU through EaSI despite political changes at the national level	Continuous operation of the pilots, unhindered by different political priorities of the new national/regional administration.
Learning and cooperation with other projects in their respective EaSI call (or between the calls, if thematically relevant)	Better effectiveness and efficiency at the project level and establishment of long-term (informal) partnerships.
Proactive cooperation with relevant policymakers (e.g. integration of policymakers within the project team or choosing policymakers as one of the target groups)	Higher likelihood of embedding the project outputs/results at the policy level (or, in some cases, organisational level).
Barriers (hindering factors)	Observed effects on the projects
Lack of knowledge about evaluations/reporting on EU public procurement	The inability of the project teams to produce convincing results on the projects' effectiveness and efficiency.
The short length of the intervention at the project level	The inability of some project teams to measure long-term impacts and, sometimes, results.

Lack of knowledge and clear understanding of the social innovation concept and relevant criteria	The inability of some project teams to clearly communicate the innovative content of their solutions to potential investors and the general populace.
Lack of cooperation from or even resistance of the local stakeholders/policy in implementing the pilots	Delays in / slower implementation of the pilot and slower upscaling / transfer.
Low participation rate from the side of the target groups – both ‘intermediary’ and end beneficiaries (e.g. due to distrust in innovative solutions, lack of interest, lack of time and resources for participation and pandemic-related inability to contact people)	Delays in / slower implementation of the pilot, inaccurate results and slower upscaling / transfer.
Poor communication/conflict of interests arising within the internal project team.	Slower pilot implementation and efficiency losses.
Structural problems caused by recurring changes in project management at the programme level (e.g. high degree of rotation of the responsible project officers)	Efficiency losses (time and human resources) caused by the need to adapt to managerial changes.
Objective complications related to the quantification of results (e.g. caused by the nature of the project’s goals, too diverse and incomparable target groups, etc.)	The inability of the project teams to produce convincing results on the projects’ effectiveness and efficiency for policymakers and investors.
COVID-19 pandemic	Efficiency losses caused by event cancellations or temporary project ‘freezes’, effectiveness drops in some projects caused by the inability to perform face-to-face interactions

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the horizontal analysis of case studies.

Finally, there is **no clear answer to the question about the long-term impacts of the projects**, since **most projects measure their outputs and results in the medium run only**. However, this problem happens mostly for objective reasons such as time constraints and, sometimes, bureaucratic ‘red tape’ that the projects face in order to get the necessary data. Furthermore, once the grant agreement expires, the project teams usually do not have the time or resources to measure the impacts in the long run. The problem of time constraints for the projects has to do with the fact that the project teams usually face a relatively large time gap between the project’s intervention and measurement of long-term impacts (e.g. at least one year⁵⁵). Considering the current length of the projects of about two to three years and the finalisation of their interventions at the later stages of project implementation, some projects struggle to measure long-term impacts in the EaSI framework. It has to be noted that in individual cases, the projects managed to successfully measure their long-term impacts as well. Box 9 below seeks to illustrate this with a case example.

⁵⁵ E.g. see EC and USAID approaches https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/better-regulation-toolbox_2.pdf and https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00T9HJ.pdf

Box 9 – Good practice: early evaluation of medium and long-term impacts on target groups

- TSUNAMI project under the 2015 call has sought to test a support-to-employment intervention targeted at unemployed individuals with mental illnesses in the Piedmont region. The pilot's methodology was based on the Individual Placement Support (IPS), which aimed to bring more people with severe mental illnesses into employment.
- The project has conducted a counterfactual evaluation of its model 12 months after its implementation. The evaluation has also been complemented by a qualitative study based on interviews, aiming to examine improvements in beneficiaries' motivation, willingness to work and general mental health. While the evaluation has not shown statistically significant improvements in employment, combined with the qualitative study, it has demonstrated significant non-tangible improvements in the target groups' mental health and general motivation. These results served as an important argument that the project team has used to secure additional funding for further upscaling.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the TSUNAMI case study.

Another indirect positive indicator of the projects' sustainability is the share of projects that proceed to mainstreaming and/or upscaling. Specifically, the intervention in question demonstrates a relatively high level of projects progressing from the social experimentation stage to the mainstreaming (21 out of 43, 49%) and embedding stages (19 out of 43, 44%)⁵⁶. Upscaling and transferring the project results significantly increases the probability of the project's effects addressing pertinent social problems at a wider scale and, hence, becoming more effective⁵⁷.

Effects of the intervention on the project implementers

When assessing the effectiveness of the intervention at the organisational level, we have also looked at the effects that it had on the project implementers themselves. Specifically, we have examined improvements in their organisational capacities. That broadly includes the establishment of sustainable partnership networks for the development of social innovations, various learning effects, as well as examining whether the programme participants (intend to) develop more innovations in the future.

First, the **development of sustainable partnerships** as the result of the project teams' participation in the EaSI programme has largely become **one of the key effects of the intervention** in question. The projects have developed three types of partnership networks: internal project team partnerships, inter-project partnerships and partnerships with external stakeholders. These partnerships – both institutionalised and informal – have emerged across 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2018 calls on access to social protection and national reform support with most of them remaining sustainable as of August 2021.

Partnerships between different project teams and project implementers have mostly focused on exchanging technical expertise or developing new ideas in the area of social policy. Long-term internal project team partnerships and partnerships with external stakeholders, by

⁵⁶ Project mapping, Annex I.

⁵⁷ For more details on upscaling and embedding see the next sections on 'Policy level effects of the intervention' and 'Upscaling and transfer'.

contract, have emerged as the result of the projects' attempts to upscale/transfer their solutions after the completion of their pilots. Most of the institutionalised partnerships are maintained at the expense of the organisations which have been involved in the course of the pilot implementation. Box 10 below provides an illustration of a sustainable partnership that emerged as the result of the intervention in question.

Box 10 – Example of a sustainable partnership network established as the result of a pilot's implementation

- One of the key outputs of the InnovCare project under the 2015 call was the so-called European Network of Resource Centres for Rare Diseases – *RareResourceNet*. The Network brought together national one-stop-shop services to advance holistic high-quality care for rare diseases and complex conditions across Europe. *RareResourceNet* facilitates the networking and mutual learning of services aiming at providing holistic care for people with a rare disease and their carers in Europe. It also serves as a resource hub for holistic rare diseases care providers. The Network is still functioning as of 2021 due to the support provided by its individual members.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the InnovCare case study.

Secondly, the project teams have also greatly benefitted from their **participation in the intervention as a learning experience** as evidenced by Figure 13. In-depth interviews with project implementers have shown that participation in the EaSI programmes has largely had two major learning effects on the project implementers (i) **thematic learning**; (ii) **development of transferable skills**.

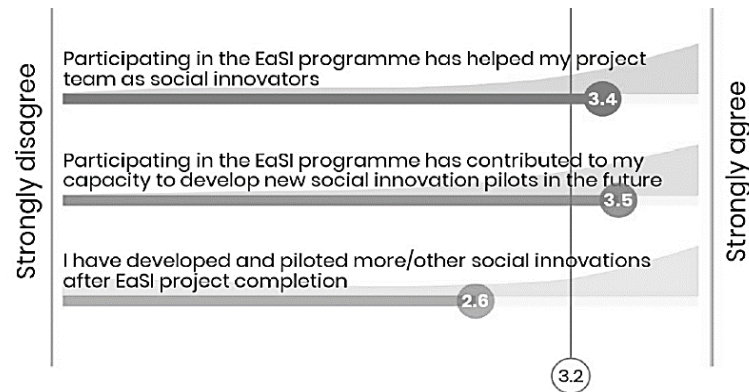
Thematic learning has largely been informal and has been centred around the exchange of expertise related to the specific fields of social innovation that the projects had focused on. For example, under the 2019 call, some of the RuralCare project team members are cooperating with the representatives of the InCARE project on the application of long-term care models in various contexts. However, there is no institutional framework for this cooperation, while the contacts between the projects are not always systemic (see the section on 'Coherence' for more details).

The development of transferable skills, on the contrary, has been more formal and clear-cut across the different calls. Specifically, the interviewed project teams have admitted that they are learning most in the fields of evaluative methodologies and project management skills required for EU public procurement. For example, under the 2014 call, leaders of the Family STAR project specifically invited representatives of the local university to cooperate with them on the topics of assessment and evaluation. As a result of this cooperation, not only has the project produced a robust counterfactual impact evaluation report, but all the other project team members have learned more about evaluative methodologies in general. The development of such skills by the project teams is crucial and may be applied by them in future social experimentation/social innovation projects.

Finally, despite the learning impact, the intervention's effects on the **project teams' capacities to develop new social innovations beyond the EaSI pilots have been somewhat limited** (see Figure 13 below, in particular, line 3). As both the survey and the interviews demonstrate, most of the project teams have not started any new social experimentation initiatives immediately after the finalisation of their pilots. Nevertheless, these teams now better understand how the European funding systems work and how applications can be drafted for such funds in the future. Furthermore, some of them have also developed the necessary assessment and evaluative capacities (e.g. about the counterfactual impact

evaluation methodologies). Both factors could potentially contribute to the development of new social innovations in the future.

Figure 13 – Assessment of the intervention’s effects at the organisational level by project implementers



N = 28 project representatives, 0 – strongly disagree, 4 – strongly agree.

Source: Survey done by the Consortium.

There are also some individual good practice examples with project teams partnering up to develop new social innovations as the result of their participation in the EaSI Programme. The key factors that had brought about this kind of cooperation were the programme-level events (e.g. EaSI conferences) and call-level events (e.g. kick-off and inter-project meetings), where internal discussions generated new ideas for potential future projects. Such events should be seen as a good practice and used as a foundation to be built upon in the light of the next programming period. Box 11 below seeks to illustrate how such partnerships can form based on the case studies from 2015, 2016 and 2019 calls respectively.

Box 11 – Good practice: establishing inter-project partnerships for the development of new social innovations

- TSUNAMI has largely been a nationally focused project with only one co-beneficiary being non-Italian. Nonetheless, the project team has been driven to rally EU-wide exposure of their model for integrating individuals with mental impairments into the labour market. The main occasion to do so was the 2nd EaSI conference in March 2021, where the TSUNAMI team presented and subsequently encountered like-minded bodies from all over the EU facing similar challenges. Most importantly, TSUNAMI co-implementer EXAR Solutions established cooperation with ProArbeit Kreis Offenbach, the coordinator of the RIAC project under the 2016 call. Both are now developing a new social innovation possibly to be submitted for a future EaSI call for applications that are integrating RIAC's methodology of rapid integration and TSUNAMI's methodology of individual placement support for individuals suffering from mental illnesses. In addition, both are jointly working on two additional proposals for ERASMUS+ which are going to focus on a target group different from TSUNAMI but which will maintain the results-oriented work and the involvement of multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- Under the 2019 call, the recently re-launched projects – I-CCC and InCARE – are in contact with one another and plan to deepen their cooperation in the area of long-term care. The main reason to establish this partnership is that both projects are being implemented in the same Austrian region (albeit in different communities). The two project teams are currently cooperating on their networking and dissemination plans. They also foresee intensifying exchanges, once they go deeper into the piloting phase, as well as potential cooperation on the future development of social innovations stemming from their current projects.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the TSUNAMI, RIAC, I-CCC and InCARE case studies.

Nevertheless, **most of the finished projects have decided to continue mainstreaming and embedding their pilots rather than develop additional social innovations after the EaSI project completion.** Some projects have managed to allocate additional internal funds for further activities in the area of social policy – but these are, again, mostly aimed at the upscaling of their project results. Yet due to the ongoing nature of the intervention, it could still be too early to assess the intervention's impact in this area (since many projects are still ongoing, while some have finalised their activities only recently).

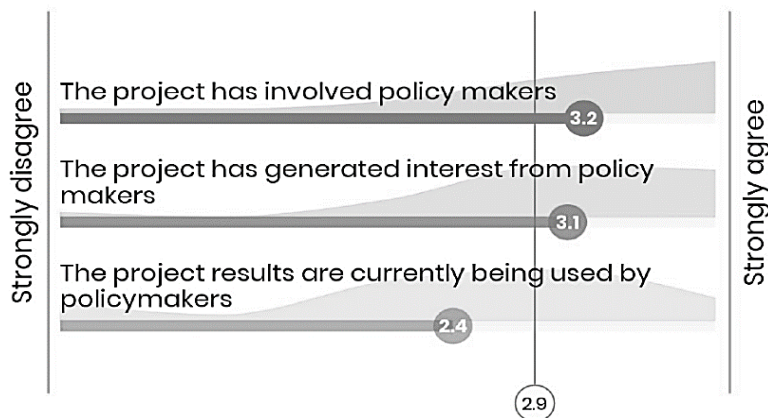
Policy level effects of the intervention

Finally, when assessing the effectiveness of the intervention at the policy level, we have also explored whether the approaches suggested by the projects have been or are likely to be adopted at the policy level to address pertinent social problems. **Due to the intervention's ongoing nature, it remains to be seen what the exact policy effects of the projects are going to be** since only a third of the projects have proceeded to embed and less than 10% have finalised their efforts⁵⁸. The projects, which are still going through the embedding stage, continue with their search for additional funding to standardise or streamline their service. Others, having embedded their approach locally, would seek new opportunities to upscale it even further – for example, from local/regional to national level.

⁵⁸ Project mapping, Annex I.

Overall, considering the positive experience of 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2018 calls on access to social protection and national reform support and a relatively high level of project success rate, both finished and ongoing **projects demonstrate significant potential to be adopted at the policy level in the future**. Nevertheless, the **embedding process is still ongoing and it is still only partially implemented**. One of the key problems here is that, when projects' results allegedly generate interest from policymakers, this does not always lead to better upscaling/transfer since the policymakers might lack the necessary funds for implementation or political commitment to support the initiative. This is also evidenced by the contrast of responses in the survey of project implementers (Figure 14 below). According to the survey, more projects claim that their projects have generated interest from policymakers, but fewer projects claim that the project results are actually being used by policymakers. The gap between these two indicators can be explained by the lack of trust on the side of policymakers in the developed solutions (sometimes due to the lack of the necessary evaluative evidence), lack of available funding at the local and regional level, as well as political changes in the governing administrations that happen at local, regional, and national levels.

Figure 14 – Self-assessment of the project's effectiveness at the policy level



N = 29 project representatives, 0 – strongly disagree, 4 – strongly agree.

Source: Survey done by the Consortium.

Embedding processes do also somewhat vary in their intensity from call to call. For example, the 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support despite its ongoing nature is doing particularly well. In the case of this call, the target groups of end beneficiaries, project implementers and policymakers often overlapped (i.e. 'solutions developed by policymakers for policymakers'). Secondly, almost all of these projects involve national ministries, which are inherently interested in embedding the project results and using them in their future work. Both of these factors have positively impacted the projects' upscaling efforts already at the stage of social experimentation.

On the positive side, **even the projects that still have not fully finished their embedding process can already demonstrate some limited effects at the policy level**. For example, some successful projects have led to changes at the legislative or administrative level in the regions of their implementation (e.g. introduction of new services at the municipal level and the introduction of the legislative framework necessary for the implementation of the pilots). In other cases, the updated or newly developed policy tools are being integrated into the daily bureaucratic functioning of the public institutions involved in the project.

An interesting trend is that **the developed solutions do not always have to be embedded by policymakers only**. This largely depends on whom the project teams targeted as their beneficiaries and what objectives they pursued. For example, if a project targets businesses and individual companies, upscaling would require cooperation from the local business communities. In some of the projects, the developed solutions have been picked up by the local NGOs and social partners instead of policymakers, becoming a local ‘good practice’ for addressing certain social challenges. Box 12 below seeks to illustrate the process of embedding both by policymakers and NGOs with a concrete example.

Box 12 – Example of policy effects of a project at the embedding stage

- The InnovCare project under the 2014 call aimed to identify the main social needs and barriers that Europeans suffering from rare diseases face, as well as to test and promote a case management-based model of integrated care (see the case study for more details on the model’s design). The experiment was conducted in the Romanian county of Salaj.
- After the pilot finalisation, the project team has continued with both mainstreaming and embedding efforts, while trying to attract more funding both from national and European institutions. Nevertheless, the project results have already contributed to the Romanian national reforms on case management for people with disabilities as well as to the formal introduction of the case management profession into the Romanian national code of occupations in November 2018. Another effect at the regional level is the introduction of a law for social assistance that now requires the local authorities in Salaj to hire at least one case manager for every 50 disabled people in the municipality.
- Finally, at the same regional level, a local service provider called NoRo now offers the services of case management developed by InnovCare both offline and online. NoRo continues to build on the InnovCare experience and also trains case managers for the regional authorities by including them in the community support network. Nevertheless, further upscaling efforts to the national level are constrained by the lack of funding even despite the political endorsement by the Romanian Ministry of Health.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the InnovCare case study.

Adoption of the developed solutions at scale (upscaling/transfer)

Upscaling and/or transferring the solutions developed as the result of the EaSI social experimentation projects is a key step towards ensuring policy level effects through their eventual embedding. This subsection examines whether the developed projects have become sustainable/established approaches to solving pertinent social policy issues in their target regions, whether they have managed to accumulate the necessary funding for upscaling and transfer and whether the piloted projects are easily adoptable to the local ecosystems. Before proceeding to analysis, we also provide the key definitions in accordance with our conceptual framework.

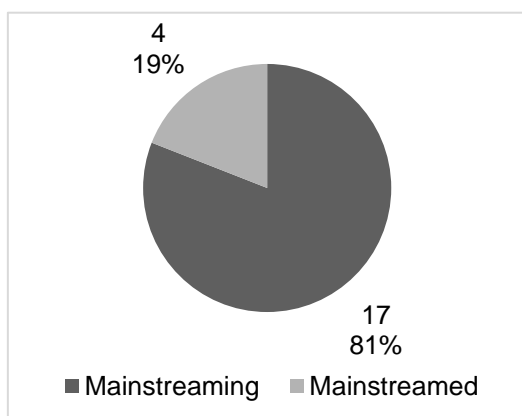
Upscaling a project means expanding or replicating an innovative pilot/a small-scale social experimentation project to reach a higher number of end beneficiaries and/or broaden the

effectiveness of an intervention⁵⁹. Transferring a project, on the other hand, means that the key features of a social experimentation project are implemented in a different context (normally, in a different country). However, in the academic literature, transferability is also often referred to as one of the types or dimensions of upscaling as innovations can be transferred not only from country to country but also between communities and organisations⁶⁰. Thus, while we conceptually differentiate the two terms, we also recognise a major theoretical overlap, which is the reason why we refer to them together throughout the study (unless specifically indicated otherwise).

Generally, **the progress with upscaling solutions has been largely positive (less so with regard to transfer, specifically to other national contexts)**. As of now, according to the project mapping, 60% of the projects (21 out of 35) have progressed to the mainstreaming stage, while 46% (19 out of 35) have progressed to the embedding stages (see Figure 15 and Figure 16). As for the progress with transfer to different national contexts, it has largely been hindered by rather nation/region-centred approaches developed in the projects and the willingness of the project implementers to establish their approaches at the national level first, before proceeding to the European one (see the section on 'EU added value' for more details).

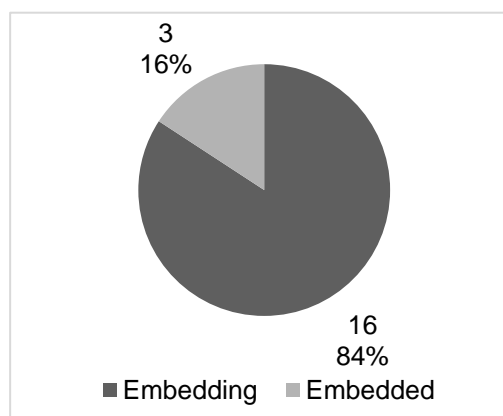
Another interesting trend is that some projects in both 2018 calls and the 2016 call have already progressed to the stages of mainstreaming and even embedding despite their ongoing nature. Particularly, the 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support has been very successful in this area due to the heavy involvement of policymakers in project implementation. Some individual projects have even managed to partially embed their results despite the fact that they fail to produce any convincing results on the effectiveness and efficiency of their approaches.

Figure 15 – Projects at the mainstreaming stage (mainstreaming vs. mainstreamed)



Source: Consortium (2021), based on the project mapping (Annex I). N = 21 projects.

Figure 16 – Projects at the embedding stage (embedding vs. embedded)



Source: Consortium (2021), based on the project mapping (Annex I). N = 19 projects.

⁵⁹ See e.g. Agapitova, N., & Linn, J. F. (2016). Scaling Up Social Enterprise Innovations: Approaches and Lessons. WHO (2016). Scaling up projects and initiatives for better health: from concepts to practice.

⁶⁰ Tamarack Institute (2018). Evaluating Efforts to Scale Social Innovation, p. 1.

Nevertheless, as it can be seen from Figure 15 and Figure 16, **the processes of mainstreaming and embedding have not been finalised in most of the projects** even after the social experimentation phase was over. So far only three projects have successfully finalised their embedding process at the policy level. Furthermore, there are at least five projects, which have successfully finished the social experimentation stage, but later on, abandoned their efforts to upscale/transfer the projects for various reasons.

Table 8 below summarises the key barriers and drivers for upscaling/transfer of the project results based on the horizontal analysis of the case studies.

Table 8 – Summary of key barriers and drivers of upscaling/transfer

Drivers (Stimulating factors)	Barriers (Hindrances factors)
Clear and, preferably, quantified evaluation results based on a robust methodology, which proves the effectiveness and efficiency of the approach and which can be presented to the potential investors and interested policymakers.	Political changes in regional/national political administrations often result in the discontinuation of funding for the upscaling/transfer of the projects or withdrawal of political support for them due to the change of national/regional policy priorities or even due to the change of staff.
Involvement of policymakers in pilots or implementation of the pilot being led by them. If the policymakers are responsible for co-designing the projects or are made responsible for implementation, upscaling (but not transfer) was much more likely.	A narrow region/nation-centric approach to developing solutions hinders both the development of replicable characteristics and the project's EU added value.
Pro-active communication/dissemination strategy from the earliest stages of project implementation aimed at the promotion of the pilot outputs. This also involves building sustainable networks with investors, other social innovators, and policymakers aimed at upscaling/transfer (e.g. through EaSI conferences, internal meetings).	Lack of a communication and outreach campaign / passive or late steps in terms of communication and outreach significantly decreases a project's visibility and its chances of receiving additional funding. The strategy should not be focused on the final conference as the sole and key dissemination event.
Developing plans for upscaling/transfer at the earliest stage of the pilot implementation such as, for example, through special upscaling/transfer plans (which could also be used by other social experimenters).	Different progress concerning the area of intervention across regions or countries (e.g. work-life balance and gender equality are currently high on the political agenda of Southern or Northern Europe but not as high in other regions)
At the inception stage and finalisation of the project design, paying greater attention to flexibility and replicability of the planned outputs (e.g. to document the service/product model in greater detail, provide a basic analysis of costs for implementation, etc.). This helps to ensure that the developed outputs could be easily adapted to different contexts.	External stakeholders, who are likely to contribute to the transfer/upscaling (e.g. external experts, social partners, investor networks) are not involved in the project implementation as actively as they could.
Ensuring long-term accessibility of created results. In some projects, the results are not easily accessible online due to the fact that the projects' websites are no longer functional, while their outputs have not been published elsewhere	Lack of follow-up contacts with the EC after pilot finalisation has sometimes caused confusion amongst the project implementers about how they should further proceed with the development of their pilot.

(e.g. with the online research repositories, EC web pages, etc.).	
The international nature of the implementing project team and the social experiment's initial design (e.g. conducting the experiment in multiple countries) have contributed to better transfer between different national contexts as well as to cross-border and transnational learning synergies.	

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the horizontal analysis of case studies.

One of the key and most often mentioned reasons why the project implementers struggle to mainstream and then embed their solutions is the **lack of immediate financial resources**, which can be challenging even for successful projects. Currently, five out of 22 finished projects have given up their efforts to mainstream and embed their results for that reason. The project teams, which are trying to upscale/transfer their solutions, largely rely on the support of local policymakers, who had already been involved in the course of the pilot implementation. However, in certain regions (e.g. such as Bulgaria, Italy or Romania) the local/regional/national governments have rather limited funding, which causes delays and complications.

At the broader programme level, the intervention has not initially foreseen any specialised objectives for upscaling/transfer since initially it was supposed to be the task of the European Social Fund's (ESF) national Managing Authorities (MAs). The national ESF MAs, which were supposed to play the key role in upscaling/transferring the projects (as initially envisaged during the stage of the intervention's design), have not been aware of many activities of the EaSI projects on social experimentation. Thus, they could not show any interest in the developed solutions. On their end, the project teams have not been particularly active in trying to reach out to the ESF MAs, while the information they have received from the programme management about the topic seemed very limited. Since the ESF's support for social innovations usually is geographically limited to specific Member States under specific operational programmes and thematic areas, some project teams could not understand whether and how they should approach their ESF MAs. Thus, the barriers in communication between the project implementers, national policymakers, ESF MS and, in some cases, EC representatives have resulted in sometimes significant pauses between the finalisation of social experimentation and mainstreaming. Communication between project implementers and relevant geographical DG EMPL desks which has been facilitated by DG EMPL in Brussels could only partially mitigate this issue.

In other cases, project implementers have instead relied on exploring external funding sources both at the EU level and in the private sector. This, however, has largely depended on the project teams' internal willingness to spend extra time researching such funding schemes and their potential synergies with the EaSI programme. Box 13 illustrates how some of the individual project teams have approached the question of securing funding for the continuation of their project efforts.

Box 13 – Examples of attracting additional funding for project upscaling

- The project RESISOR (REgional Single SOcial Record) under the 2014 call was successful not only in transitioning from mainstreaming to embedding with its pilot but also in expanding its social innovation by integrating new services into it. Initially, the pilot aimed at preventing fragmentation of the social services information management systems in the Spanish region of Andalusia. In 2013-2014, the RESISOR team decided to address this need by contributing to the structural reforms in Andalusia and creating a single social record that would replace the fragmented metasytem by using various types of software developed with the EaSI support. The pilot covered several social service types and was successfully concluded in 2018/2019.
- During the pilot, the project team applied a proactive communication strategy in its attempt to attract additional funding and political support for its further social experimentation efforts. Apart from widely disseminating the project results (including through Amazon); the project team's representatives participated in both national and EaSI networking events with policymakers (e.g. the working group of the Spanish regional ministries of social affairs and EaSI conferences). The project's plans for upscaling and integrating new services into RESISOR were eventually endorsed by the national government in 2019-2020, which led to further embedding efforts. The project is currently at the stage of accumulating additional funding for further expansion of the system (with the total amount of funding the team received as of June 2021 from several private and public donors standing at EUR 20 million).
- The FIER project under the 2016 call, aimed to develop 'instruments and strategies for a fast-track labour market integration of disadvantaged groups among refugees and asylum-seekers to reach a fast and successful integration process in different European areas by developing quality competence assessment strategies, training curricula, self-empowerment initiatives and a workplace language learning concept'.
- In the course of project implementation, the project team has established a sustainable partnership with the German region of Baden-Württemberg. Prior to FIER, the region had limited or no cooperation and networking on the topic. Together, they have managed in cooperation with the local social partners to further develop fast-track training concepts, curricula and company networks in three sectors (hotel & gastronomy, warehouse & logistics and construction) with 90% labour market integration for participants, many with full-time employment.
- The regional government of Baden-Württemberg, having witnessed the effects of the developed pilot, has financially supported the continuation of the activities of the project after the pilot project has run out of EU funding. Nationally certified training concepts and courses are now offered in Stuttgart and other municipalities, while Jobcentre Stuttgart continues to use the FIER modules as part of their regular training programmes.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the RESISOR and FIER case studies.

Finally, another important trend is that **while there are significant efforts** on the side of the project teams **to upscale their results, this is less the case for transfer**. Despite the programme's European nature and its high EU added value, some projects seek to address specific regional challenges and, most of the time, do not plan any transfer. Consequently, the proposed models/approaches are not very flexible and have to be significantly adapted to the local circumstances at a later stage, if transferred. Another problem is that the transfer of

project results into different national contexts is not perceived by the project implementers as their responsibility. If coupled with a poorly designed communication strategy, this significantly undermines their transferring process. Thus, while there are some examples of transfer of the developed solutions within the same national context (e.g. between different provinces), there are few examples of transfer between the national contexts.

Nevertheless, **the piloted projects can still be adapted to the new ecosystems (i.e. different regions or countries)**, if the involved project team is interested in transfer and shows proactive efforts needed for that. The international nature of the implementing project team, proactive communication strategies and the social experiment's initial design (e.g. conducting the experiment in multiple countries) have been inherent drivers of the project transfer. In all of these cases, the process of transfer was preceded by proactive communication with the local stakeholders – since without raising awareness about the projects in other national and/or regional contexts, any transfer would be practically impossible. Furthermore, the transfer process naturally required some conceptual adjustments of the proposed model to the local environment, as well as international multi-stakeholder validation events/conferences. Specifically, the projects had to not only assess the needs of their new target groups again but also to make sure that the methodological approach they intend to use further is feasible. By using the cases of two different projects, Box 14 below seeks to illustrate how project teams transfer their ideas in or between different national contexts.

Box 14 – Examples of successful transfer of the developed solutions between or within different national contexts

- The SIPA project under the 2015 call experimented in the French Metropolitan Community of Montbéliard, was looking for new forms of labour (re)mobilisation of individuals disengaged from employment. Specifically, the target groups included people distant from employment or struggling with social and professional integration. It paid particular attention to young people, refugees and women, and aimed to develop an interactive motivational model of professional counselling.
- In the course of implementation, the project established contacts with NGOs, social partners and other stakeholders in Spain, Belgium and Italy. At the end of the project, the SIPA team contacted its EU partners to share its results and tools, which raised their interest and gave birth to another ERASMUS+ project, 'RESOLUTION' with Spanish, Belgian, Hungarian, French and Italian partners. The project was inspired by SIPA and capitalised on the tools and approaches developed in those countries to remobilise people far away from the labour market. Currently, the 'RESOLUTION' partners are creating a new common methodology and a toolkit for involved professionals, while turning all the tools and lessons from SIPA into teaching material via tutorials and massive online open courses on 'the new forms of remobilisation'.
- The FAB project under the 2016 call was a project responding to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers for better and faster integration into the labour market through the so-called 'Transfer & Adaptation Plan' (TAP) methodology. The TAP method was largely based on knowledge-sharing strategies and peer-mentoring in the local communities.
- The FAB project was simultaneously implemented by city administrations across six different countries, which was a key step to establishing cross-border and transnational cooperation and ensuring the project outputs' uptake at least in some of the participating countries.
- After the project's successful implementation and publication of the evaluation results, the City of Stockholm decided to implement the projects' recommendation by recruiting a specialised coordinator on peer-mentoring in the local communities. In Serbia, the web app created for migrants and refugees is sustained and further developed by the Commissariat for refugees and migration and a local social partner. Serbia has also created a national website, deploying the FAB contents at the national level in coordination with the NGOs and social partners. The project outputs are also currently under discussion in the Berlin Senate, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2021 Bundestag elections, the implementation process has been temporarily halted. Finally, in Austria, the Viennese Board of Education is also considering implementing the project methodology in the capital city, which would lead to an additional transfer between partners, but outside of the FAB project.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the SIPA and FAB case studies.

Examination of the attribution of the effects to the intervention

When examining whether the changes/effects achieved can be credited to the intervention, we also need to proceed with analysis at three levels (as outlined in our conceptual model – individual, organisational and policy levels). Specifically, we have to determine whether the intervention has led to changes at all three levels.

At the individual level, the assessment of available evaluation reports produced by the project teams and cross-referenced with policymaker interviews demonstrate **a direct link between the support provided by the intervention** for social experimentation projects and **most of the projects' social, economic and other effects**. Having clearly defined social needs, target groups, and objectives, almost all projects have shown positive outcomes among end beneficiaries concerning the pilots' objectives (with only two projects not managing to do so). As mandated by the calls' conditions, more than half of finished projects have used robust counterfactual impact evaluation methodologies and demonstrated positive effects on the target populations. Currently, the share of finished evaluated pilots with net positive results stands at 60% (14 out of 22 projects, while 4 more evaluation reports are pending)⁶¹.

That said, while the project evaluations clearly demonstrate a link between the activities supported by EaSI and positive outputs/results, **the link is not as clear with the long-term impacts**. Many finished pilots have not been able to conduct an evaluation of their long-term impacts within the EaSI framework, usually citing the short duration of project implementation. Furthermore, since mainstreaming and embedding pilots are now funded by other national and European schemes, their long-term impacts on the target population cannot be fully attributed to the EaSI Programme.

At the organisational level, we have discovered that the following intervention's effects can be mostly attributed to the intervention itself, based on the evidence from the interviewed project implementers:

- The pilots experience **greater exposure** to the target groups, other social experimenters, policymakers and potential investors thanks to the European nature of the intervention.
- The European nature of the intervention as well as the coordinating role of the EC have empowered the project teams to **build (cross-border and transnational) partnerships and exchange experiences** relevant both for developing, upscaling or transferring their innovations as well as for developing new innovative projects.
- **Acceleration of the ongoing social experimentation process** as the result of the project implementers' guaranteed and stable access to funding.
- Project implementers also gather important **experiences in applying for EU-level projects; as well as managing and reporting on them**; thus increasing their ability and credentials to apply for EU funding schemes in the future.

Nevertheless, some of these effects cannot be attributed to the intervention alone – specifically, the development of partnerships and acceleration of social experimentation. With regard to partnerships, some of them already existed before the intervention took place, as evidenced by in-depth interviews with the project implementers. For example, many project teams' members under the 2016 call have already (in)formally cooperated with each other even before the call was launched. As for the acceleration of social experimentation, the

⁶¹ Project mapping, Annex I.

intervention provides co-funding of up to 80% of the costs rather than complete funding. Thus, project implementers under all calls also had to find additional donors or co-fund the intervention internally, which is why a share of this effect could also be attributed to the co-funders.

Finally, the **effects taking place at the policy level can be attributed to the intervention only partially**. On the one hand, it is clear that most of the projects would not have been able to go forward with their social experimentation at all, had it not been for the intervention's support. Furthermore, by piloting their social experimentation projects through EaSI, many project teams have also developed the evaluative evidence necessary for convincing national policymakers and other potential investors to support the projects' upscaling/transfer. In a few cases, just piloting the projects in politically relevant areas (e.g. long-term care or social support for people with rare diseases) has already stimulated local policymakers to work on some legislative changes (see Box 14 above for an example).

Nevertheless, **the size of the social experimentation projects in the EaSI framework is quite small and their scope is quite limited**. Therefore, **most policy effects manifest themselves only after the projects go through the mainstreaming and embedding phases**, for which they usually require additional support. The intervention in question, however, while actively encouraging the project teams to pursue further upscaling/transfer efforts, does not provide any direct support for upscaling/transfer after the pilot phase is over. Almost none of the interviewed project implementers have positively referenced some sort of guidelines or training provided by the programme on the topics of future upscaling/transfer. The only tangential factor that has been positively referenced is the contacts established with policymakers in the course of project implementation, which have sometimes helped the project teams to kick-start the upscaling/transfer process. Thus, it is impossible to make a direct link between the intervention and all policy level effects.

Finally, due to the ongoing nature of the intervention, not all policy effects have clearly manifested themselves just yet. Only about a third of the projects proceeded to the embedding stage as of August 2021⁶². An additional assessment of these effects, therefore, could be required in the future once all the projects are finalised.

2.3. Efficiency

Efficiency is understood as the extent to which the desired effects are achieved at a reasonable cost. In the framework of this assessment, efficiency is examined considering the special nature of social experimentation projects. From a strictly financial point of view, social experimentation is always inefficient due to three factors. To start with, piloting requires additional resources for the design, roll-out and evaluation; while established interventions typically do not have such additional expenditure items. Then, pilot projects are small and cannot exploit economies of scale. Hence, the costs per beneficiary are likely to be higher in comparison to the large-scale established interventions. Lastly, some pilots inevitably fail and do not produce the expected results; having, therefore, negative effects on the cost-effectiveness of such projects. Considering these aspects, assessment of the social experimentation intervention's efficiency will take a slightly different approach to standard ex-post evaluations.

1. To what extent are the costs proportionate and justified given the benefits of the intervention?

⁶² Project mapping, Annex I.

2. How cost-effective was implementation: was it possible to achieve the same results with fewer resources (or better results with the same resources)?
3. What internal/external factors influenced the efficiency of the intervention and how could the efficiency be further improved?

The last question is horizontal and will be addressed under the first two questions and reflected in the final report recommendations. Table 9 below summarises the key operational questions that we cover in this section, while Box 15 summarises the key messages.

Table 9 – Operationalisation table: Efficiency

Evaluation questions	Operational questions
Efficiency	
1. To what extent are the costs of the intervention justified and proportionate, given the changes/effects it has achieved? To what extent are the costs associated with the intervention proportionate to the benefits it has generated? What factors are influencing any particular discrepancies? How do these factors link to the intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do the benefits of successful pilots, once adopted at scale, justify the total costs of investments? • To what extent do the indirect positive effects (attracting additional funding or developing SI beyond the funded project) justify the costs? • What internal/external factors related to the design of the intervention affect the costs and benefits?
2. To what extent has the social innovation intervention been cost-effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How efficient was the intervention when compared to other similar programmes that support SI? • How efficient was the management and implementation of the intervention? • What would have been potential efficiency and effectiveness improvements of alternative results-based funding instruments?

Source: Consortium (2021).

Box 15 – Efficiency: key messages

- The benefits of successful pilots, once adopted at scale, could largely justify the total costs of the initial investments made, as demonstrated by EaSI success stories. Current evidence points us in the direction that this is quite likely considering the share of projects, which have proceeded to the mainstreaming/embedding stages. However, stricter evaluation requirements and monitoring of their implementation at the project level are necessary.
- Internal management and implementation of the intervention are generally efficient but could be improved in terms of monitoring and communication.
- Despite some positive evidence of introducing the ‘payments by results’-condition in certain national contexts (e.g. Social Impact Bonds in Portugal), currently the evidence suggests that the condition could potentially undermine the social experimentation-oriented nature of the programme. Therefore, the concept of evaluation-based ‘staged funding’ should be considered instead. The programme should not demand specific results from project implementers, but rather encourage high-quality evaluations of the effectiveness and efficiency of the developed approaches. Even if the evaluation results are negative, the project implementers should not be punished financially (otherwise the concept of experimentation becomes inapplicable). If the project results are positive, the projects could be recommended for further upscaling/transfer funding within the same programme.

Source: Consortium (2021).

Proportionality/justification of the costs in relation to the benefits

This section examines whether the costs in relation to the produced benefits are proportionate and justified. The rationale to invest in piloting social innovations is as follows: although a number of pilots may not achieve the desired effects, the successful ones, once adopted at scale, should generate sufficiently high benefits to justify the total costs of investments. Accordingly, the analysis compares the costs of the intervention with the (likely) benefits of successful pilots that have been or are likely to be implemented at scale, i.e. scaled-up and/or transferred. Given the diversity of the thematic priorities of the calls, the benefits could cover a range of outcomes, including social, economic, environmental, health and other types of benefits that emerged during fieldwork. Furthermore, even if some pilots are not likely to be implemented at scale, they may have, nevertheless, strengthened organisational capacities to develop and scale/transfer social innovations. Under efficiency, however, we assess whether organisations that strengthened their innovative capacities managed to (i) attract additional funding to their innovations developed outside of their EaSI pilot; (ii) developed social innovations outside of the EaSI pilot, which was successfully upscaled/transferred.

As of now, however, **it is impossible to precisely estimate whether the efficiency benefits that have already been generated quantitatively outweigh the investments made for objective reasons.** This has largely to do with the fact that the programme has to produce effective/efficient social innovations, which are then eventually embedded at the policy level, in order to compensate for the initial investment made. As illustrated in Figure 17 below, there is a relatively high share of successful projects, but only a small part of them have been fully embedded. The exact estimates are complicated by the fact that **most of the projects failed to estimate their solutions’ efficiency at the stage of social experimentation** (i.e. not even mentioning the mainstreaming/embedding stages).

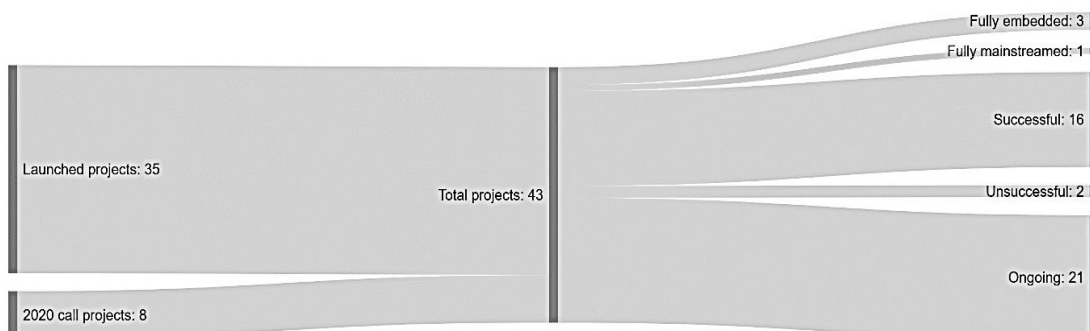
Based on this data, in Table 10 we have also provided approximate estimates of costs per various categories of projects (successful, mainstreamed or embedded) in the finished 2014 and 2015 calls.

Table 10 – Estimated share of investment per category of successful, mainstreamed, or embedded projects (based on the data from the 2014 and 2015 calls)

Project categories	Number of such projects (under 2014 and 2015 calls)	Average expenditures per project
Per successful project	14	€1,376,796.959
Per successful project with robust evaluative evidence on the effectiveness	13	€1,482,704.417
Per fully mainstreamed project	4	€4,818,789.355
Per fully embedded project	3	€6,425,052.473
Total expenditure for the finished 2014-2015 calls	N/A	€19,275,157.42

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the final financial statements of the 2014-2015 projects only.

Figure 17 – Sankey diagram showing the distribution of projects by stages



Source: Consortium (2021), based on the project mapping (Annex I).

As it can be seen from Table 10, there is **a significant gap between expenditures on successful projects and mainstreamed projects (as well as embedded projects)**. This is clearly one of the weakest points of the intervention's efficiency since successful projects struggle to mainstream and embed the results; thus inflating the ratio between the intervention's costs and benefits generated by embedding the projects. As mentioned above, the embedding of the projects is essential to ensuring the greater scale of benefits generated by them (in relation to their costs).

On the other hand, there are four key arguments that could justify the intervention's costs. First, the EaSI programme has succeeded in **producing a moderately high number of social experimentation pilots that are currently undergoing the stages of**

mainstreaming and/or embedding, if compared to the available alternatives such as the ESF. Overall, 21 projects out of 43 (48%) are already at the Mainstreaming stage and 19 out of 43 (44%) are at the embedding stage⁶³. Although so far, a small share of these projects has finalised their mainstreaming/embedding efforts (as seen in Figure 17 above), many are still actively trying to do so. As can be seen from Box 16, **there are some positive examples of finished successful projects, which have succeeded in producing significant cost savings already at the stage of social experimentation.**

Box 16 – Examples of cost-savings generated by the pilot projects as the result of successful experimentation

- The INSPIRE project under the 2014 call aimed to create a more efficient integrated system of services that could meet the needs of fragile people relying on the beneficiaries' resources and on proximity networks, thus having a positive impact on the promotion of social entrepreneurship.
- Its evaluation shows that a new proposed composition of services causes a reduction in waiting lists (for social services) with the same financial resources. The estimations suggest that by shifting 10% of the hours given by traditional services to the INSPIRE project's services, the pilot achieved a cost savings of 5.7% for the Saish service (disabled people assistance) and 9.3% for the Saisa service (older people care). The project team estimates that savings of 12% and 20.5% could be achieved by increasing the share of shifted hours to 20%. There was also a reduction in the costs of collective services (such as socio-occupational workshops for people with intellectual disabilities) from €19/hour to €10.25/hour for individualised home care. Finally, while the study could not quantify some of the non-tangible impacts, the effects of feeling helpful and participating in productive activities experienced by the end beneficiaries should also be taken into account.
- The operational objective of the 'Bridging Young Roma and Business' project under the 2015 call was to test a new model of integrated service delivery for access of young Roma into the private sector labour market. The project evaluation made by the team has shown that implementing their model results in cost savings per participant of approximately EUR 2 000 compared to similar projects. This estimate includes the entire array of services provided from training, internships and personal career coaching to various national and local events. If applied to the population sample, who have participated in the project (280 people), only its small-scale implementation resulted in savings of approx. EUR 560 000 and could have been expanded even further with upscaling.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the INSPIRE and 'Bridging Young Roma and Business' case studies.

In addition, **the programme has been moderately successful in generating additional investment in the areas of social experimentation and social innovation.** If we examine the results of the finished 2014-2015 calls, 11 projects out of 15 have managed to attract some form of additional funding to upscale the pilots, which had been developed within the EaSI Programme. **If the initial co-funding investments are taken into consideration, every €1 of the allocated EaSI grants has resulted in attracting more than €2 of investments** (more precisely, 2.14; see Table 11 and Table 12 below and Annex I for exact details). The sources of funding vary from project to project. Most often, they included national and regional

⁶³ Based on the Database of the EaSI Social Innovation Calls' projects, see Annexes.

budgets, ESF funds, Horizon 2020⁶⁴ funds and more rarely private/third-sector investment. That said, the attempts to generate investments have not been very systemic. An interesting observation is that some project teams still do not perceive the task of generating additional investments for upscaling/transferring the pilot as their own responsibility either.

Table 11 – Investments generated as the result of the programme implementation

Total co-investment for the social experimentation project provided by the third parties before the launch	Total additional investment gained (post-implementation, including for upscaling and transfer) ⁶⁵	Grand total of the investments generated for the projects under the 2014-2015 calls
€6,346,176	€31,158,110	€37,504,286
The total sum of grants allocated for social experimentation under the EaSI Programme		
€19,275,157		

Notes: Numbers applicable only for the finished projects under the closed 2014-2015 calls. Total co-investment for the social experimentation project provided by the third parties before the launch was calculated on the basis of the data in the Final Financial Statements. Total additional investments gained are based on the amounts reported by the project implementers and subsequent approximations⁶⁶.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the project mapping and case studies (Annexes I and III).

Table 12 – Ratios of investments generated vs. costs (allocated grants)

Ratio (Euros of Total Investments Generated / EaSI Grant Euros Spent)	Ratio (Euros of Additional Investments Generated / EaSI Grant Euros Spent)
2.14 (€41,304,286 / €19,275,157)	1.81 (€34,958,110 / €19,275,157)

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the data in Table 11.

What is more, **the sustainable nature of the projects' outputs** also helps to justify the initial investments since they can be used for many years without significant additional expenditures (e.g. handbooks, online courses) if their outputs are sustainable. Since most of these outputs such as theoretical models, policy recommendations, as well as implementation handbooks are generally replicable, they can be used by third parties for generating more social innovations in the future. Some individual projects have even developed special transfer maps to ensure that their results remain sustainable in the long run. As there are 16 projects as of August 2021 going through embedding efforts, there is a moderate likelihood that they will be adopted at the policy level in the future.

⁶⁴ Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) and repealing Decision No 1982/2006/EC Text with EEA relevance, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013R1291> (no longer in force)

⁶⁵ Including a conversion of the investments generated by the HELP project (from £ to €) as well as approximations for the InnovCare and RESISOR projects (see Annex I for more details).

⁶⁶ The RESISOR project being a significant outlier with an average of approx. €16-20 m.

Finally, some **unquantifiable/intangible positive effects could also provide some additional limited justification** for the costs of the intervention. On the one hand, some **knowledge spill overs** usually took place at the organisational levels and benefitted the individual project teams as social experimenters. Apart from the thematic learning synergies, many of the project teams have also developed or further advanced transferable skills (see the section on 'Effectiveness' for more details). On the other hand, the intervention has also produced a number **of positive cross-border and transnational effects**. Specifically, it has guaranteed wider exposure of the projects both to the end beneficiaries, other social experimenters, policymakers and investors at the EU level. It has also stimulated the thematic exchange of expertise and led to the development of cross-border partnerships between the project teams, both institutionalised and informal (see the section on 'EU added value' for more details).

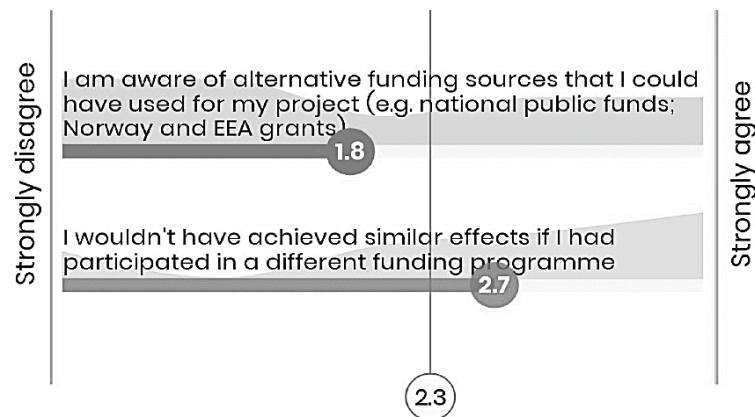
Assessment of the intervention's cost-effectiveness

When assessing the cost-effectiveness of the intervention's implementation, one of the essential steps is to understand how efficient the intervention was, if compared to other similar programmes that support social innovation at the regional, national or European levels. Direct benchmarking of costs and benefits might produce misleading results because each programme had unique objectives, thematic policy priorities and implementation modalities. Thus, the assessment significantly relied on interviews with the project implementers, who participated in other similar social experimentation initiatives for the necessary insights.

The evaluation results demonstrate that **the potential of alternative funding options is rather limited** for several reasons, with EaSI remaining a primary source of funding for many social experimenters for various reasons. First, there is a lack of either national or regional social innovation / social experimentation programmes in most of the countries where the pilots took place. This lack of programmes was reported by the project implementers and then later confirmed by the desk research results/interviews with policymakers. The lack is particularly acute in the regions of Southern (e.g. Italy, Spain) and Eastern Europe (e.g. Romania, Bulgaria), but also evident in other regions (e.g. Belgium). Furthermore, while in some cases, the pilots could have been eligible for national social innovation funding, it was usually reserved for tested solutions and was also very limited in scale, if compared to EaSI. In addition, the EaSI programme's thematic scope is rather wide, which is seen as an advantage both by project beneficiaries and policymakers. Finally, most national/regional programmes do not have a transnational dimension, which prevents projects from implementing their ideas at the European scale.

As for the cross-border programmes for comparison, we have identified the EEA & Norway Grants (Programmes on Social Inclusion, Youth Employment and Poverty Reduction), Horizon 2020 and ESF Support to Social Innovation as the main alternative sources of funding. However, there is a relatively low level of awareness among the project implementers about other available sources of funding at the European level as both the survey (see Figure 18) and in-depth interview demonstrate; with project implementers complaining that it was hard to find thematically fitting funding schemes for social experimentation. Some project teams do not understand whether their projects are actually eligible for funding under some of the aforementioned programmes since those do not focus on social innovation.

Figure 18 – Perceived feasibility of the other funding sources (by the project implementers)



N = 29 project representatives, 0 – strongly disagree, 4 – strongly agree.

Source: Survey done by the Consortium.

Currently, the evidence points to the fact that the **attainment of results at a similar scale would not have been possible in the context of other programmes**, since the EaSI programme remains the only EU funding scheme specifically targeting social experimentation so far.

The only more or less direct comparison can be made between the EaSI intervention and the ESF Support to Social Innovation programmes. Overall, **the available data and some individual project-level comparisons demonstrate that EaSI efficiency is relatively comparable to that of the ESF or might actually be slightly higher** as illustrated in Table 13. Furthermore, during the in-depth interviews, some of the interviewees argued that it was much harder for them to fit the concept of social experimentation into the ESF framework and its requirements. The interviewees have also noted that they perceive the ESF application as somewhat more complicated, confusing and/or bureaucratic if compared to EaSI. Another pertinent point is that the absence of geographic limitations in EaSI allows for wider and better cross-border cooperation. Furthermore, since the EaSI programme is administered by the EC, the project implementers experience less 'red tape' and are less impacted by the changes in the political priorities of the national administrations; making implementation more efficient.

Table 13 – Comparison between EaSI Social Innovation calls and ESF Thematic Support to Social Innovation

Criteria for comparison	EaSI	ESF
Share of projects at the mainstreaming stage	Currently 49% ⁶⁷	As of 2018, 34% ⁶⁸
Share of projects at the embedding stage	Currently 44%	As of 2018, 12% ⁶⁹
Thematic scope	Social innovation and social experimentation-specific	Broad social policy issues (including social innovation)
Geographic scope	No restrictions (determined by the EC in individual cases)	Operates based on operational programmes (OPs), which are oriented toward specific Member States
Example of project-level efficiency 1 (Scope: Mental illnesses & disabilities)	TSUNAMI (Italy): Ca. €3500 spent per trained person (with PPP adjustments for Portugal)	Project SEARCH (Portugal): Ca. €5000 spent per trained person
Example of project-level efficiency 2 (Scope: Migrant and refugee labour market integration)	FORWORK (Italy): Ca. €4100 spent per trained person (with PPP adjustments for Austria)	MIGRA-TRAIN (Austria): Ca. €7200 spent per trained person

Source:: Consortium (2021), based on the project mapping, analysis of programme documents and a sample ESF [Portuguese](#) and [Austrian](#) projects with relatively similar scopes to those administered in the EaSI framework.

As for the EEA & Norway grants and the funding received under the Horizon 2020 programme, we have identified that the interventions are incomparable with EaSI for three main reasons. First, neither programme prioritises funding for social innovations at the stage of piloting, i.e. for social experimentation. Furthermore, although some ad hoc calls partially support social experimentation (e.g. EEA & Norway Youth Employment Fund)⁷⁰, any clear effects have been produced just yet. Therefore, there are no quantitative indicators of effectiveness/efficiency available for effective comparison of outputs, results or impacts. Finally, with regard to EEA, some EU Member States (e.g. Western European countries) are automatically excluded from funding based on geographic criteria, unlike in EaSI.

There are also some additional indicators, which provide tangential supporting evidence to the hypothesis that the attainment of results at a similar scale could largely not have been possible in the context of other programmes. Nevertheless, this evidence is not conclusive and, therefore, should be treated with caution. One such indicator is the survey results, which demonstrate that around half of the project implementers think that they would have not been able to achieve similar effects if they had participated in a different funding programme (see

⁶⁷ Project categories: Mainstreaming ('Sharpening the idea and ensuring long-term sustainability' 22% + Scaling and spreading the innovation 12%) and Embedding (Achieving systemic change 14%).

⁶⁸ EC (2018). ESF Performance and Thematic Reports the ESF Support to Social Innovation Final Report, p. 46.

⁶⁹ Based on the Database of the EaSI Social Innovation Calls' projects, see Annexes. No data on the success rate of the ESF social experimentation projects was available.

⁷⁰ See e.g. <https://eeagrants.org/topics-programmes/fund-youth-employment>

Figure 18 above). The qualitative perception of the programme by the participants is, therefore, naturally prone to some degree of bias.

Thus, as shown by the interviews, the EaSI programme demonstrates superiority in several ways when compared to the national programmes and private sector grants. First, both mandatory criteria for internal cost-efficiency and audits for large-scale projects; as well as submission of a future upscaling/transfer plan of the project's pilot as a part of the application process helped to ensure effective internal project management and positively impacted cost-effectiveness. Also, requirements of the EaSI programme to include international partners, as well as partners representing different types of organisations (in particular, policymakers) led to effectiveness improvements due to the exchange of best practices. Something else to consider is that national funds are often scarce and ill-suited for long-term projects, according to project implementers, especially because they are subject to political decision-making. Finally, the larger length and scope of the EaSI support when compared to national programmes was essential to successfully conduct social experimentation as well as ensuring project sustainability.

Regarding **internal management**, the intervention has been to a large extent efficient, but could somewhat improve in terms of monitoring and evaluation. On the positive side, we have not discovered any evidence of systemic issues consistently reoccurring across the different project calls. To begin with, the finished projects, which have produced final financial statements, have spent even less money than initially envisaged by the grant agreement, resulting in some moderate savings (see Table 14 below). Any internal inefficiencies were quickly addressed through cooperation between the EC project officers and project implementers. For example, if there were changes in the original main objectives of the project, the programme management would adjust the budget in cooperation with the project (e.g. E4EMPOWL under the 2014 call). With regard to the COVID-19 pandemic's negative impacts, most have addressed its fallout by either swiftly digitalising their project actions or rearranging internal budgets and temporarily 'freezing' some of their actions.

Table 14 – Comparison of the initial envisaged Union grants vs. actual amount spent (2014-2015 calls' projects only)

Total sum of the EaSI grants envisaged before the launch of the projects	Actual amount spent	Difference (€)	Difference (%)
21,017,686.63 €	19,275,157.42 €	-1,742,529.21 €	-8.29

Source: Consortium (2021), Based on initial Grant agreements and Final Financial Statements. EMPL and HELP projects were outliers in terms of spending due to changes in the project objectives and internal cost allocation methods at the inception stages.

Nevertheless, **some improvements in the area of internal management could still be possible**, especially with regard to **monitoring and evaluation** and **internal communication**. Regarding communication, there is a clear need for a more institutionalised approach. In some projects, collaboration within the project teams and between the project teams and EC has become more difficult, especially in the context of the pandemic, which caused additional expenses. As evidenced by the interviews with the EC representatives, certain projects have not always reported the implementation problems on time, which caused implementation delays and additional expenditures. On their side, some project teams have reported a high level of rotation of the EC policy officers, who were responsible for managing

their respective projects. The consequent need to constantly establish new communication networks, often resulted in delays and/or loss of resources in the course project implementation.

The second potential area for improvement would be to monitor the quality of conducted evaluations since these are an important, but costly part of the intervention's implementation, according to the project representatives. When some projects do not produce specific or quantifiable results on the effects and efficiency of their solutions, this creates an efficiency problem (since projects are still spending financial and human resources). Based on the interviews, most project implementers agree that there is a need for such evaluations in the first place since they demonstrate the actual impacts of their innovative approaches in comparison to the existing ones. However, not all projects have performed high-quality evaluations. Furthermore, some project implementers were sometimes confused by varying evaluation requirements in and across the different calls, which caused additional delays in performing the necessary actions (see the section on 'Coherence' for more details).

Key positive, negative and mixed efficiency factors

In the course of the assessment, we have also identified a number of factors related to the intervention's design that both positively and negatively affect its costs and benefits. This subsection discusses these factors in greater detail.

Positive factors

In the first place, on the positive side, **encouraging the sustainable nature of the produced effects (both outputs and impacts)** through the requirements of the call, significantly contributes to the intervention's long-term efficiency. Sustainability of the outputs takes different forms (e.g. maintenance of websites with good practices; publishing policy handbooks; policy recommendations and concepts of services embedded at the policy level), as discussed above. Around half of the finished projects have produced some form of sustainable outputs and are pushing on with their upscaling efforts; this has been attributed to the requirements of the calls on sustainability⁷¹. Only by means of effective upscaling/transfer of the projects can the sustainable impacts on the intervention be ensured, as indicated in the section on 'Effectiveness'.

Moreover, a relatively **flexible approach** of the EaSI programme management **to (re)allocation of internal costs** was cited by the project implementers as another positive factor of internal efficiency. If the context of the project dramatically changes (e.g. as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic or due to misinterpretation of the needs of the end beneficiaries), continuous spending of the project budget without adjustments could be detrimental to the project's internal efficiency. The programme's approach, however, allowed the project teams to be also flexible with regard to their specific objectives and activities and shift the focus of these activities, when necessary; thus allowing to save costs and ensure a greater social return to investment (see Box 17 below for an example).

⁷¹ Based on the Database of the EaSI Social Innovation Calls' projects, see Annexes.

Box 17 – Illustration of a positive efficiency factor: flexible reallocation of the project budget

- The MASP project of the 2018 call on work-life balance illustrates well how the EaSI programme flexibility with regard to internal cost allocation helps to ensure better project-level efficiency. The project's activities largely targeted employers and social partners. The team developed a methodology under which it envisaged a lecture-style training course for the target groups. However, eventually, the team concluded that it may not be the best way to engage with employers since they have a limited amount of time, and it is difficult to expect their participation in long 4-hour classes. Thus, the project team proposed replacing the trainings with dissemination events and consultancy services offered to employers. Consequently, a budget transfer within the subheadings of Costs of services (hiring of rooms) and from Administration costs was facilitated. The change in the activities' format facilitated the participation of more employers than originally foreseen and, thus, improved the project's overall efficiency. The travel costs that were cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions were also reallocated to the technical project implementation.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the MASP case study.

Finally, **the requirement to conduct evaluations** under individual calls could also be seen as a good practice that encouraged the projects to monitor their internal effectiveness and efficiency. As evidenced by the interviews with successful projects, conducting high-quality evaluations was instrumental in providing the necessary proof for investors and convincing the policymakers to embed the developed solutions/approaches at the policy level. Nevertheless, this factor's positive influence has been largely limited by the negative factors, which are discussed in the section below.

Negative factors

First, on the negative side, the **absence of harmonised criteria not only for innovativeness but also for upscaling/transfer** sometimes resulted in a project's inability to exactly identify its innovative contents or incorrect upscaling/transfer strategies (or a lack thereof). While most calls allocate significant attention to the project's long-term sustainability and the necessity to upscale the pilot's results, the requirements for developing detailed upscaling/transfer plans were not concrete and, thus, were interpreted very differently by different project teams. This confusion leads to a lack of a proactive approach to the dissemination of the project results and the development of investor/professional networks. We have also identified several instances of project implementers not seeing upscaling/transferring the pilot's results beyond the programme as their own responsibility. In such instances, a passive approach was adopted with mere codification and publication of results being seen as enough (e.g. with the project implementers stating that if someone was interested in the results, they could be downloaded and used).

Furthermore, the **lack of convincing experimentation results, which could be presented to policymakers** and other potential investors has somewhat hindered the process of investment accumulation, especially from the private sector. As the research on social impact investment suggests, private businesses tend to support social innovations financially only when they are sure that the innovation will generate at least some financial return and when the innovation's impact is measurable⁷². The lack of convincing experimentation results in some of the EaSI projects was largely caused by the lack of basic knowledge on the side of

⁷² Mackevičiūtė R., Martinaitis Z., et al (2021). Social Impact Investment - Best Practices and Recommendations for the Next Generation, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL_STU\(2020\)658185](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL_STU(2020)658185)

the project teams about how to evaluate project efficiency and effectiveness and, in some cases, by an unwillingness to spend additional effort on that. Sometimes, they also lacked the necessary human resources capacity to conduct an evaluation. In other cases, the team would argue that the process of conducting (counterfactual) impact evaluations was too complex and time-consuming since they would also need a 'comparable intervention'. For more details on the projects' approaches to evaluation, see the section on 'Effectiveness'.

Another point is that the **lack of interest and trust in the proposed pilot concepts** among the target groups, investors and policymakers hindered both the process of pilot implementation and social returns to investment. It often led to resistance to and slower implementation of the solution on the ground (i.e. by policymakers and civil society organisations). Project teams would have to do a lot of convincing to install their solutions in the local bureaucratic or political ecosystems and, in some cases, even train people on how to use the new solutions. Box 18 below provides an illustration from a case study.

Box 18 – Example of the 'lack of interest'/'lack of trust' problem encountered by project implementers

- The PACT project under the 2014 call targeted social workers and professionals of the region of Castilla y Leon and aimed to create common tools, which could support personalisation and adaptation of social responses provided by case coordinators. Specifically, the (software) tools incorporated the anticipation capacity into their system by using the big volume of available social service data and used advanced ontologies that can explain the processes of social exclusion, identify risks and help with preventive actions.
- Once the project was finished and the project team proceeded with its upscaling efforts, other organisations outside of the PACT project team started to implement the software developed in the pilot, with the Social Policy Department of the regional government of Castilla y Leon becoming the first to implement it. Since the software is relatively transferrable, it was easy to transfer it to the third sector too. For example, the local Red Cross and Caritas branches as well as smaller social service providers are now implementing the software.
- Nevertheless, the post-EaSI implementation is not always easy since these local organisations do not always agree with the PACT approach or do not want to integrate it into their working arrangements due to its innovative nature. Lack of trust and understanding of the approach is one of the key reasons why the project team has to do a lot of additional communication work (i.e. provide additional explanations on how the tools work) to ensure smoother integration of the developed solutions into the local ecosystem.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the PACT case study.

What is more, the **perceived shortness of some of the projects' duration** is another factor. Several interviewed project implementers argued that extending the length of implementation could be beneficial. Specifically, they believe that a longer time span could have helped the projects to improve and properly conduct the evaluation of their long-term impacts. The cited reason was that many impacts like employability or reduction in the rates of school dropouts are very long-term and are hard to detect only one year after the pilot implementation.

Finally, several projects where the lead applicant was a national public body (e.g. a ministry) reported **problems with staff payments** due to the provision of the national regulations on

payments to civil servants. Essentially, provisions of the national legislation on the compensation of civil servants clashed with the EaSI grant agreements, resulting in significant delays in or cancellation of payments. This has consequently resulted in less effective implementation of the projects and a subsequent decrease in staff motivation.

Mixed (external) factors

The **COVID-19 pandemic** has had both negative and positive effects on the intervention's costs at the project level. On the one hand, many project implementers working under the 2018-2020 calls had to adapt to the new COVID-impacted context, which resulted in additional expenditures and losses. Redesigning the project plans required additional time and resources. The pandemic has also disrupted and significantly slowed down the upscaling and transfer processes as the policymakers' funds were redirected to different policy priorities, while many networking events were cancelled. On the positive side, online solutions (e.g. online trainings or videoconferences) adopted as the result of the pandemic helped to significantly cut certain types of expenditures and reallocate them to other, more urgent needs (see Box 19 below for an illustration).

Box 19 – Illustration of the COVID-19 pandemic's positive impact on project efficiency

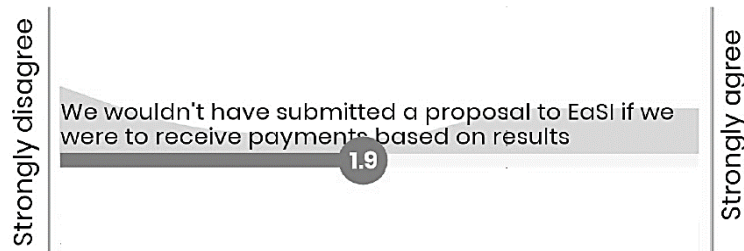
- The MOSPI project (Modernising Social Protections in Italy) under the 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, like many other projects under 2018-2020 calls. Apart from conducting a study and developing specialised software for microsimulations, the project team also envisaged several international workshops with the goal to foster mutual learning and validating the main findings and outputs of the project. While the first international workshop was organised in a face-to-face regime, the project team experienced significant savings throughout 2021 since the second one was organised online, which allowed to significantly cut down on both travel and administrative costs. Consequently, the project team applied for the reallocation of the saved costs to additional research activities.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the MOSPI case study.

Establishing a 'payments by results'-condition

Academic and policy debate over the past decade has focused on the extent to which alternative policy instruments, which establish payments by results, could be more efficient than the provision of grants. This debate is also well-reflected within the social experimentation projects that participated in the EaSI Programme. While a large part of the project implementers argued against the concept of introducing such a condition, a smaller but rather vocal minority supported it (see Figure 19 below). This subsection discusses the arguments of both sides in greater detail; explores potential arrangements of establishing a 'payments by results'-condition; and elaborates on their likely effectiveness and efficiency implications.

Figure 19 – Summary of opinions of the project implementers regarding a potential introduction of the ‘payments by results’-condition



N = 26 project representatives, 0 – strongly disagree, 4 – strongly agree.

Source: Survey done by the Consortium.

There is no consensus among project implementers about establishing a ‘payments by results’-condition for future calls. The opponents of introducing such a condition argue that it goes against the whole concept of (social) experimentation. They postulate that (social) experimentation can never guarantee any specific type of results because of its inherently risky nature. Thus, they conclude that demanding a specific set of results from a social experimental project would be unjust and would significantly undermine the programme’s attractiveness for social experimenters. The proponents of introducing such a condition base their arguments on the examples of the validity of their own pilots. Specifically, they claim that because they are absolutely certain about the potential results of their projects, they would definitely support the condition. The proponents also maintain that introducing such a condition could guarantee better results as well as ensure better project management efficiency. Their argument is that not all social experimentation projects resort to the same level of implementation oversight and evaluation. At the same time, around a half of the proponents also admitted that such a condition might be financially unfeasible and even unfair for specific types of projects, which have to test riskier social innovations.

As for the implications of such a condition, we currently foresee **four likely consequences**. First, based on the interview results, social innovations with a potentially high impact but also with a high risk of failure would likely not be pursued since the condition will discourage risk-inherent projects from applying. Second, less risk-inherent projects would probably adjust the promises of specific results before sending in their application (e.g. by not targeting the most disadvantaged or vulnerable groups), which might decrease the scope of their benefits. Third, stricter and more accurate evaluation methods would have to be introduced in order to accurately measure the projects’ results and impacts (see the section on ‘Effectiveness’ for more details), thus increasing the intervention’s costs. Fourth, the length of individual projects would possibly have to be extended or adjusted to be able to account for the requirement of assessing the long-term impacts of the developed solutions.

Considering the nature of the intervention (aiming to support risk-inherent implementation) and the implementers’ strong opposition to the introduction of results-based funding, different alternatives should be explored. Specifically, the literature review supplemented by the insights from the interviews points us in the direction of the so-called ‘stage-gate grants’⁷³ and ‘staged funding’⁷⁴. Staged funding means that the programme would not demand specific results from the project implementers and tie payments to them; it would rather encourage high-quality evaluations of their products’ effectiveness and efficiency. Even if the evaluation results are negative, the project implementers are not punished. However, if the results are positive, the projects could be recommended for further

⁷³ <https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/Funding-Innovation-Nov-18.pdf> p. 17.

⁷⁴ <https://www.globalinnovation.fund/what-we-do/stages-of-funding/>

upscaling/transfer funding within the same programme. In such cases, the projects would have stimuli to perform better and produce more robust evaluations.

There are **four key reasons why introducing a ‘payments by results’-condition would likely cause more benefits rather than disadvantages**. First, there is a share of the EaSI projects that still struggle to conduct proper evaluations of effectiveness/efficiency despite the requirements outlined in the calls (as evidenced by Figure 11 and Figure 12 in the previous section, only 64% of the finished projects have a robust evaluation of effectiveness and 27% of efficiency). Moreover, there has been no cohesive approach to the evaluation of results across the projects and/or calls. Introducing ‘payments by results’, however, could provide an important precondition to streamlining the programme’s approach to evaluations in individual projects. Furthermore, the condition could be used as a connecting element between the stages of social experimentation and upscaling/transfer. For example, successful projects would be able to receive additional funding for upscaling/transfer. Finally, there is also some support for introducing the condition amongst a smaller share of the project implementers.

2.4. Coherence

Coherence is understood as the measurement of quality showing how well the intervention works internally as well as with other EU interventions. We have approached the examination of the intervention’s coherence by searching for both internal and external synergies (i.e. between the EaSI projects themselves as well as between the intervention and other EU social innovation actions). To examine complementarities and duplications, we have cross-referenced the evidence provided in the project documentation with the data gathered from the targeted stakeholder interviews. Assessment of both internal and external coherence relied on two criteria (i) existence of **complementarities** and (ii) **absence of duplications**:

- Complementarities exist if there are preconditions for the coherence of efforts between different actions. This means that in the first place, actions have similar (but not exactly the same) objectives and use a coordination mechanism. Furthermore, there have to be some synergies, which include (i) **non-financial complementarity/additionality** (e.g. reaching wider or new target groups, improving the quality/quantity of outputs); and (ii) **financial complementarity/additionality** (e.g. reducing the costs of the actions, such as costs and acquisition of information for beneficiaries, costs of programme management, etc.). In addition, there is pro-active dissemination of good practice and policy learning/policy spillovers. This means that similar interventions were set up or existing ones were improved after the learning acquired from the success of the intervention/strands of action within the same or external programmes.
- Duplications exist if the same type of intervention (i.e. two or more different projects) has the same objective, same target group, and provides similar/competing support in the same region.

Table 15 below outlines the key operationalisation questions, which have guided the assessment of the intervention’s coherence, while Box 20 presents the key messages derived from the evaluation.

Table 15 – Operationalisation table: Coherence

Evaluation questions	Operational questions
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Coherence	
1. To what extent is the intervention coherent internally?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any other EaSI social experimentation projects with similar objectives? • Is there any evidence suggesting the projects' non-financial complementarity with each other? • Is there any evidence suggesting the projects' financial complementarity with each other? • Is there any evidence of duplications within the programme?
2. To what extent is this social innovation intervention coherent with other interventions which have similar objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are other EU interventions with similar objectives? • Is there any evidence suggesting the intervention's non-financial complementarity with other EU interventions? • Is there any evidence suggesting the intervention's financial complementarity with other EU interventions? • Is there any evidence of duplications between actions of different programmes?

Source: Consortium (2021).

Box 20 – Coherence: key messages

- The intervention's internal coherence has so far demonstrated moderate levels of both financial and non-financial complementarities internally. Internal synergies between the projects are constrained by the lack of active and consistent exchange of the information between the projects at the programme level; the lack of project teams' willingness to cooperate with other projects; as well as thematic and contextual differences between the projects.
- At the programme level, the intervention is externally coherent and conceptually complements the existing EU policy initiatives. However, at the individual projects level, the potential for the external coherence has been somewhat constrained by the lack of time and resources on the side of project teams to conduct an in-depth analysis of relevant external EU actions/programmes, lack of motivation, as well as by the lack of understanding of how these actions/programmes work.

Source: Consortium (2021).

Internal coherence

Overall, the evaluation has discovered **some internal synergies between the EaSI projects**. However, **the potential for internal synergies between them has not been maximised and the opportunities for collaboration are sometimes missed**. In the course of this evaluation, we have identified multiple projects pursuing relatively similar objectives within and across different calls, which should have served as the main foundation for both financial and non-financial complementarities (i.e. the preconditions were in place). For example, in the 2014 call projects with similar objectives (focused on one-stop-shop approaches in the provision of social services) experienced some learning synergies. A similar trend of cooperation between projects with similar objectives can be observed under the 2015 call. By

contrast, the projects under the 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support did not cooperate closely, citing very different national contexts as the key barrier. Below, while bearing in mind the differences between the calls, the main (non-)financial complementarities are described, and the main barriers constraining them are identified.

Most of the non-financial complementarities include various **cross-border learning synergies** (see an example in Box 21 below). In particular, experiences on some of the thematic topics were exchanged by the projects in and across different calls (e.g. development and application of the one-stop approaches, microsimulation tools, etc.).

In some cases, this has led to the establishment of **informal partnerships** between different project teams, resulting in a post-EaSI collaboration in the framework of other European programmes.

Box 21 – Illustration of the internal learning synergies between different projects

- In the framework of the 2014-2015 calls, one of the 2014 projects named PACT experienced learning synergies with a variety of different projects under these calls. The exchange of experiences in applying the one-stop-shop model took place with a different project called RESISOR (within the same call). Specifically, the RESISOR team arrived at Castilla y Leon to study how the PACT team had organised and managed the unit-based social history of clients and their social policy reports. The project also experienced similar learning synergies with another 2014 call project, INSPIRE. Representatives of a 2015 call project called ERSISI also co-organised joint sessions with PACT and RESISOR representatives, where information and knowledge on their respective one-stop-shop models were shared. Both PACT and RESISOR representatives admitted that they were brought together not only by similar project objectives but also by thematic closeness and geographical proximity.
- The PACT project team admitted that even though two of these projects were happening in PACT's country of origin (Spain) and in a similar field; their representatives probably would not have found out about each other's existence, had it not been for EaSI. The lack of an annual national social service platform in Spain was a key obstacle.
- In the course of the programme two projects – TSUNAMI and RIAC, respectively under the 2015 and the 2016 calls – experienced synergies as the results of participating in the 2nd EaSI conference in March 2021. Specifically, they exchanged expertise in the areas of cross-cutting issues (i.e. evaluations, project management and communication) as well as their areas of thematic expertise. As a result, project representatives of both TSUNAMI and RIAC are currently working on a joint proposal for another EaSI project that combines the key elements of both pilots. In addition, the project teams are in the process of commencing two Erasmus+ projects in cooperation with each other. In contrast to the EaSI proposal, only governance-related aspects (i.e. project evaluation and multi-stakeholder partnerships) are being transferred from TSUNAMI's and RIAC's EaSI experience.

Source: Consortium (2021), based on the PACT, RESISOR, INSPIRE, ERSISI, TSUNAMI, and RIAC case studies.

The horizontal analysis of the case studies demonstrates that there have been **three key instruments stimulating internal coherence** between the EaSI projects. These include **(i) coordinating role of the project officers: kick-off and operational meetings** (e.g. in the case of the kick-off meetings organised by the COM all projects within the call are invited to

present their project and get to know each other, as well as COM representatives from the relevant policy and financial units, and the concerned geographical desks); **(ii) independent informal cooperation between the projects;** **(iii) EaSI conferences.** The EaSI conferences, which have been coordinated by the EC, are seen as particularly important and as good practice by all interviewed stakeholders. Both conferences have provided the project implementers with unique opportunities to interact with each other, as well as with relevant policymakers, programme management, and ESF representatives among other stakeholders. Internal kick-off and operation meetings serve a similar role but within individual calls. Furthermore, the EC noted that the projects had an opportunity to also contact the coordinating project officers with implementation-related queries and organise internal meetings if they wished to do so (however, most chose not to).

On the other hand, if we look at the details of the survey results, around 50% of the polled project implementers have reported an almost complete lack of interactions with other projects. By contrast, only ca. 20% have reported benefitting from internal synergies. Another trend is that there have been some discrepancies between different calls with the projects under smaller and more targeted calls (specifically both 2018 calls) reporting lower synergies, if compared to the projects under bigger calls with more projects (e.g. 2014, 2015 and 2019 calls). In that light, horizontal analysis demonstrates that **internal coherence has been constrained by five factors:**

- First, the absence of proactive exchange of expertise on cross-cutting issues (i.e. communication/dissemination, evaluation and upscaling/transfer). In fact, cooperation and mutual learning have been largely ad hoc. Some projects demanded more systemic exchanges on these cross-cutting matters, which could have guaranteed better efficiency and coherence of the whole programme.
- Furthermore, most partnerships have been more grounded in geographical proximity and previous experience rather than in EaSI opportunities. For example, projects led by institutions from Spain would mostly cooperate with other Spanish projects.
- Moreover, thematic learning synergies were not very systemic, also because there was no institutionalised programme-level coordination mechanism in place. Some project implementers admit that gaining in-depth knowledge from the project meetings in the current format is quite hard. Normally it would require substantive exchanges for at least several days, while current exchanges are usually limited to kick-off sessions only. That said, the first two EaSI Conferences were seen as major drivers of in-depth knowledge exchange since their scope was much bigger and involved other stakeholders (not only EC and project representatives) compared to internal meetings.
- Also, there was a lack of willingness among some project implementers to cooperate. Some projects even opposed the idea, arguing that they saw the search for such synergies as unnecessary, time-consuming, and/or useless, when they could focus on actual project implementation instead.
- Finally, some project implementers had almost no contextual understanding of what their counterparts under the respective calls were doing, which sometimes hindered the exchange and learning process.

The assessment **has not discovered any significant financial complementarities between the projects.** Most projects worked/work independently and did not foresee any initiatives to create financial synergies in the first place, which could be explained by their thematic variety in and across the calls. Nevertheless, such complementarities could have been theoretically possible in some areas, especially on the cross-cutting issues (i.e. communication, evaluation and upscaling/transfer), which were particularly stressed by the

project implementers of the closed calls (i.e. 2014 and 2015 calls). They postulate that the lack of (self-)coordination between the projects on these cross-cutting issues prevents the ideas about the complementarities from ever materialising.

To finish with, **very limited evidence of internal duplications** has been discovered. While there are certainly several projects under the respective calls pursuing similar objectives, their impacts do not negate each other's positive effects since they are conducted in different contexts. An illustrative example is the 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support, where several projects have been working on the microsimulation models for social policy design, but in different national frameworks. Thus, actions on the aforementioned cross-cutting issues (evaluation, communication and upscaling/transfer), which may be relevant for all the projects under the same call, could have been better coordinated by the EC and/or project implementers themselves.

External coherence

Based on the evidence gathered from the projects funded by the intervention between 2014 and 2019 (except the 2016 call), the intervention so far demonstrates a **moderate degree of external coherence with other EU programmes and actions in practice**. As requested by the EC, the evaluation has also identified a general list of 15 other EU programmes and actions on social experimentation and social innovation (see Annex II for more details). In this chapter, we will focus on what complementarities have taken place so far, at which levels (project vs. programme level), and what hindered them.

With regard to **non-financial complementarities**, the intervention and its calls are **conceptually well aligned with other EU initiatives and (legislative) actions in respective areas of social policy** as can be seen from Table 16 below. Specifically, the EaSI calls (especially starting from the 2016 call) follow-up policy initiatives in the areas seen as the most pertinent at the time of their implementation. The process of their upscaling/transfer was also connected to the ESF programme through cooperation with the national Managing Authorities, even though the connection has not been working very effectively so far (for reasons and details see the section on 'Effectiveness'). The intervention is also well aligned with the broader goals of the EaSI PROGRESS axis aimed at boosting employment, ensuring better social protection and social inclusion; as well as fighting poverty and improving working conditions⁷⁵. The calls strive to achieve these goals through social innovation fostered by social experimentation projects.

Table 16 – Conceptual connections between the EaSI intervention and other EU initiatives and actions

Call reference number	Topic	Programme-level connection with ESF	Other relevant EU programmes and actions in this field
VP/2014/008	Integrated delivery of social services	Connection with the ESF's operational programmes	Connected with the Social Investment Package (SIP) adopted by the EU in 2013.
VP/2015/011	Integrated social services for the		Connected with the Social Investment Package (SIP) adopted by the EU in 2013. Aligns with the

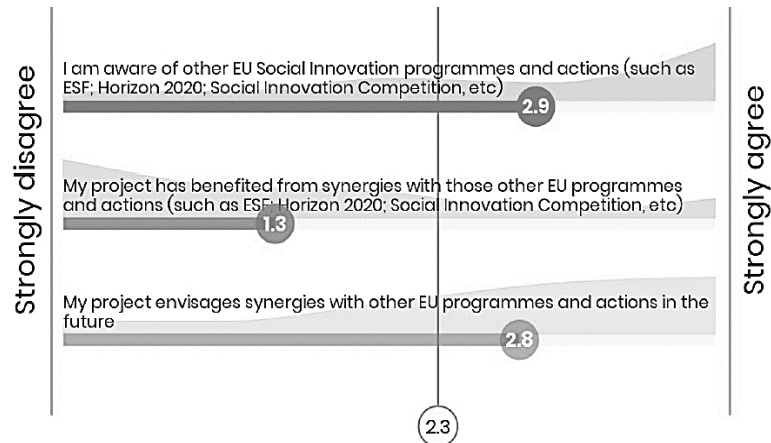
⁷⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1082>

	integration in the labour market	through national MAs	establishment of Integrated (social) services as one of the activity fields of 2013-2015 of the European Social Network.
VP/2016/015	Fast track integration into the labour market for third-country nationals, targeting exclusively asylum seekers, refugees and their family members	(foreseen as a part of the upscaling / transfer efforts at the individual project level)	Complements other EU actions in the area of migrant integration in the labour market including Employers Together for integration, European Partnership for integration, as well as funding initiatives. The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund finances several transnational projects to promote labour market integration. Funding for labour market integration is available also under the European Social Fund
VP/2018/005	Innovative work-life balance strategies		No direct connections with other programmes, but goes hand in hand with the EU initiatives aiming at modernising the existing legal framework in the area of family-related leaves and flexible working arrangements (especially in the light of developing the Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers). Aligned with the European Pillar of Social Rights.
VP/2018/003	Access to social protection and national reform support		No direct connections with other programmes, but goes hand in hand with the Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed as well as the EU support for mutual learning actions in this area. Aligned with the European Pillar of Social Rights.
VP/2019/003	Social innovation and national reforms - long-term care		No direct connections with other programmes, but feeds into the EU efforts to address common LTC challenges across different Member States (including through the voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services). Aligned with the European Pillar of Social Rights.
VP/2020/003	Establishing and testing integrated interventions aimed at supporting people in (the most) vulnerable situations		Part of the continuous EU efforts for long-term integration and inclusion of vulnerable population groups (Recommendation on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market, Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market). Connected with the Social Investment Package (SIP) adopted by the EU in 2013. Aligned with the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Source Consortium (2021), based on the terms of reference of individual calls and analysis of the DG EMPL webpages.

Nevertheless, the **level of synergies with other EU programmes** and actions on social innovation **is low at the project level** (1.3 out of 4) **despite a relatively high level of awareness about other programmes and actions** (2.9 out of 4) as can be seen from Figure 20 below. Even though some projects did apply for ESF or Horizon 2020 funding, most of these attempts have not been very successful and usually came only after the intervention to upscale/transfer their results. The key reasons cited by different projects in the interviews were the lack of time/commitment on the side of project implementers; lack of in-depth understanding of the other schemes' potential complementarities with EaSI; lack of interaction with the ESF MAs at the Member States level; as well as lack of actions/programmes, which could be thematically relevant for the individual projects.

Figure 20 – Quantitative assessment of the projects' external synergies by project implementers



N = 26 project representatives, 0 – strongly disagree, 4 – strongly agree.

Source Consortium Survey done by the Consortium.

At the same time, the evaluation has also discovered some **good practices for developing external synergies with national programmes at the project level** as well (despite their rather limited nature), also with regard to financial complementarities. These include utilising the teams' previous experience of working in the fields of social experimentation/social innovation as well as proactive outreach to similar projects through the existing EaSI channels (such as operational meetings, EaSI conferences, etc.). For two illustrative examples, see Box 22 below.

Box 22 – Illustration of external complementarities of the projects in the EaSI social innovation calls

- The 2016 call which focused on socially innovative solutions for integrating migrants and refugees into the labour market can be seen as a ‘best practice’ since all projects experienced synergies with other EU interventions, although none of the interventions meant social innovation actions. Three of the five experienced synergies were with projects funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) of the EC. AMIF has similar thematic objectives since one of the fund’s priorities is to foster integration even though the fund does not strictly support social innovation. Project FAB experienced the strongest synergies here with an AMIF-funded project called MILE; as both projects shared the City of Milan as a project partner. While FAB provided end beneficiaries with job training, MILE provided internships in associated companies. Synergies resulted as some FAB beneficiaries received both the FAB training and the MILE internship. In addition, ALMIT experienced learning synergies with ERASMUS+ projects that focused on migration research, while RIAC did with COSME and EMEN-UP.
- The HomeLab project under the 2015 call sought to test and establish the innovative Social Rental Enterprise (SRE) model, which would make housing more affordable for vulnerable and marginalised people at risk of losing their homes. The project took place in four different countries (Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia). Externally, HomeLab got in contact with the Athens-based ‘Curing the Limbo’ project which implemented an SRE-like project but aimed at refugees. The programme was co-financed by the EU’s Urban Innovative Actions initiative which provides funding for experimental solutions for sustainable urban design. The project team is currently building up a network of cities in Southern and Eastern Europe outside of the EaSI programme to promote the SRE model.

Source Consortium (2021), based on the FAB and RIAC case studies under the 2016 call and the HomeLab case study under the 2015 call.

Financially, the EaSI calls demonstrate **a lower degree of complementarity with other EU actions/programmes**. At the project level, one of the key factors is that despite high levels of awareness about the existing EU programmes (see Figure 20), many project teams have little understanding of their specificities, conditions, and potential complementarities with EaSI. Several interviewed project implementers have stressed that they would like to access information about these programmes in a clearer, simpler and more centralised fashion to create more financial synergies. From that perspective, the coordinating role of the EC is extremely important to help project implementers navigate through these programmes and, thus, create more synergies. Despite that, a few pilots have been able to attract additional funding from other EU interventions (e.g. INSPIRE under the 2014 call; ESTI@ under the 2015 call from ESF; SIPA under the 2015 call from ERASMUS+, and HomeLab under the 2015 call from the European Social Catalyst Fund⁷⁶ (ESCF) co-funded by Horizon 2020).

We have not discovered **any evidence of major duplications** when analysing the intervention’s coherence with the external EU actions on social innovation. The issue of duplications has not been systemic across the projects and calls and could be addressed by improving the information exchange mechanisms involving various European and national

⁷⁶ The fund does not have its own dedicated EC/EP-level regulation and was co-established by representatives of Horizon 2020 and a consortium composed of a representative set of actors involved in the financing of social services and their provision such as venture philanthropists, foundations, social impact investors, government agencies and/or social service providers. For more details, see the following: “A European Social Catalyst Fund to scale up high performing social innovations in the provision of social services”, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/governance-19-2019>

institutions. For example, under the 2016 call on migration, the EaSI projects performed activities in the same Member States with relatively similar objectives and target groups, if compared to the ESF projects in that thematic field⁷⁷. Nevertheless, due to the small scale of the projects, any potential duplication cannot be seen as very serious. Duplications, however, might occur if the developed social innovations are upscaled without any synergies with other EU actions, which is why careful monitoring in this area is necessary.

Nevertheless, there is some evidence from the 2014 and 2015 calls, showing that **there could be even more financial complementarities with other EU interventions during upscaling and transfer** since some pilots have been able to attract additional European funding, but not all of them have been as proactive. The reason behind the fact that these projects won the aforementioned funding is that they have been able to supply empirical data, proving that their models work thanks to the EaSI support. Funding schemes like the ESF, ESCF and Erasmus+ are somewhat less flexible when it comes to funding unproven social innovations. For example, the ESCF requires all applicants to provide empirical evidence of effectiveness, while ESF conceptually focuses on social innovation only (rather than social experimentation). Since the projects under the 2016 call and of the later calls are still ongoing (or have concluded only very recently), potential financial synergies will become evident in some of those projects in the future, too.

2.5. EU added value

European added value is defined as the value that is additional to what would be achieved if the intervention was carried out by the Member States. Analysis of the European added value refers to the questions of causality, i.e. whether the observed additional resources, process and results can be causally attributed to intervention at the EU level. Additionality and causality, however, cannot be established by simply asking all project implementers about what would have happened; had the intervention not been in place. Thus, the assessment of the EU added value relies on the following groups of criteria: **resource additionality, process additionality and result additionality**:

- Under **resource additionality**, we examine whether the project could have been implemented without the intervention in question (project additionality). The additionality is high if the activities were (or would have been) cancelled unless they were supported by the EU intervention's funds. Secondly, we look into how the EaSI programme stimulates additional investments made by project implementers and other target groups such as MS Managing Authorities (input additionality).
- Under **process additionality**, first, we assess the extent to which the implementation of activities was accelerated by the EU level intervention. In the second place, we will look at how the intensity and scale (in terms of target groups reached, activities carried out) of the action were impacted by the intervention. Finally, we examine whether the intervention enhanced cross-border cooperation and helped to create new networks that would help to upscale/transfer the project effects (network additionality).
- Under **result additionality**, we look into what results and impacts (in terms of social needs addressed, best practices exchanged and achieved upscaling/transferability) would be unattainable without the EU intervention (outcome additionality). We also analyse whether the intervention has empowered implementers to develop and

⁷⁷ E.g. comparing the EaSI project FORWORK and ESF's MIGRA-TRAIN, see <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=46&langId=en&projectId=2057> or EPIC in Ireland <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=46&langId=en&projectId=1997>

implement new ideas, attract additional funding for scaling, or start new SI projects (follow-up additionality).

To ensure a balanced assessment of the EU added value, we have also cross-referenced the evidence provided by the project implementers with that of policymakers, both at the national and EU levels, as well as complementary evidence such as external evaluations and assessments. Table 17 below outlines the key operationalisation questions, which have guided the assessment of the EU-added value, while Box 23 presents a summary of the key findings.

Table 17 – Operationalisation table: EU added value

Evaluation questions	Operational questions
Coherence	
1. What is the additional value resulting from the EU intervention, compared to what could reasonably have been expected from the Member States acting at national and/or regional levels? What would be the most likely consequences of stopping/withdrawing the intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could the projects have been implemented without the intervention? Has the intervention helped to stimulate additional investments into social experimentation project(s)? • To what extent has the intervention helped to accelerate social experimentation? Has the intervention helped the project implementers to reach wider target groups and implement activities at a broader scale?
2. To what extent can factors influencing the observed achievements be linked to the EU intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key factors influencing the intervention's effects? • To what extent has the intervention improved the projects' effects at the individual/organisational/ policy level (especially cross-border ones)? Could these impacts have been made possible without the intervention?

Source Consortium (2021).

Box 23 – EU-added value: key messages

- The EU added value of the intervention is relatively high and remains to be one of the strongest sides of the intervention. The EaSI programme demonstrates a particularly high degree of resource additionality since most of the social experimentation projects could not have been implemented without it.
- Furthermore, not all project teams have actively been using the European nature of the programme with some of them preferring to work in the context of one country only. This somewhat limits the programme's cross-border effects (e.g. visibility and cross-border learning) and follow-up additionality (e.g. pro-active dissemination of good practice and policy learning/policy spillovers at the national level).
- The EC's coordinating role is essential for further strengthening the EU added value (in particular with regard to organising networking events between the projects, representatives of external programmes, and investors and policymakers).
- Withdrawing the intervention would likely have negative financial implications for social experimenters and social enterprises across the EU by significantly limiting their access to funding. It would also negatively impact cross-border learning and networking opportunities that have just begun to emerge in the areas of social experimentation and social innovation across the EU.

Source Consortium (2021).

Resource additionality

Overall, the intervention demonstrates a relatively **high level of resource additionality**. **Withdrawing** the intervention **would have significant negative financial impacts** on social experimenters across the EU, depriving them of a major funding source. As the case studies of individual projects show, there is a lack of large-scale social innovation and, especially, social experimentation-oriented programmes like EaSI at the national level in most Member States. The most often cited reason for that mentioned both by project implementers, as well as national and EU policymakers is that social innovation is not an immediate policy priority for some Member States. In certain cases, even for policymaking institutions such as national ministries, it can be very hard to apply for national funding as the case of BELMOD demonstrates (see Box 24 below).

Box 24 – An illustration of challenges with acquiring funding for social experimentation at the national level

- In the case of the BELMOD project, which was implemented under the 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support, the project team did not have any alternatives to EaSI at the national level since national funding in Belgium is aimed at fundamental research rather than policy-oriented research. Both the data warehouse and the model, which are currently in use, were developed with the support of the Belgian federal authorities more than 20 years ago. However, the priorities of the national funding programmes changed at the federal level in the course of this period, which is why updating them was made possible only with EaSI's support.

Source Consortium (2021), based on the BELMOD case study.

In other cases, when **national funding** is available, it is **limited and usually preserved for the tested social experimentation projects** that have already demonstrated their effectiveness and efficiency. According to a project implementer who has participated in a national funding scheme, applying for such funding can also have other disadvantages too. These include rigid political conditions imposed on the social experimenters; too much 'red tape'; shorter length of the programmes and application-related over complications as evidenced by the interviews. Thus, unsurprisingly, most project implementers admit that without the EaSI support, conducting their pilots would have been impossible or much harder as evidenced by Figure 21 below. It is claimed by approximately half of the project implementers that they would not have been able to achieve similar effects if they had participated in a different funding programme. Specifically, most of them would not have been able to conduct comprehensive impact evaluations with quantifiable results, while the scale of experimentation and size of the target population samples would have been much smaller. This led to inconclusive results on effectiveness and efficiency, which have also been confirmed by interviews with the policymakers in the finished projects.

Figure 21 – Assessment of the intervention's potential by participants compared to other sources of funding



N = 28 project representatives, 0 – strongly disagree, 4 – strongly agree.

Source Survey done by the Consortium.

With regard to additional funding for post-pilot implementation, the EU added value has been more limited. On the positive side, the intervention **has helped the project implementers to establish contacts with the potential investors and policymakers**, who would be interested in the results of the pilots. Participation in a high-level programme like EaSI serves as an important credential for some project teams when interacting with national policymakers regarding the questions of acquiring additional funding, e.g. through the EaSI conferences.

However, the end result of such interactions often depends on the proactive attitude of the teams themselves, as evidenced by the interviews. Only some project implementers have succeeded in establishing sustainable connections with policymakers and potential investors, but mostly at the national rather than cross-border level.

Policymakers were included in most of the project teams that have managed to generate additional investments. Thus, the inclusion of the policymakers in the consortiums should be perceived as a positive factor for securing political backing and/or funding (and it can be definitely attributed to the intervention; see the section 'Effectiveness'). For example, in the 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support, the post-pilot funding support from the government institutions was guaranteed since many of its projects were developing policy solutions for the government in the first place (e.g. microsimulation tools, specialised software). These institutions, on their end, had a very strong interest in ensuring the long-term usage of such solutions, which is why they provided both political and financial support for the upscaling of the pilots.

Process additionality

Overall, the level of the intervention's **process additionality was relatively high**. There is strong evidence suggesting that the EU intervention **has accelerated the process of social experimentation at the individual project level**. This means that the innovative concepts, which had previously been developed or tested on a very small scale, had a chance to proceed and pilot their ideas at a larger scale without regular financial hindrances. The project teams, which had already possessed some experience of conducting similar projects before on a smaller/more limited scale, admitted that the main factor here is long-term secured funding if compared to national programmes. At the national level, funding is usually provided through smaller programmes and is rather intermittent, which often causes delays between the implementation stage and evaluation as well as mainstream. Box 25 below seeks to illustrate this with an example.

Box 25 – Example of project implementation acceleration as the result of participation in the EaSI Programme

- The FamilyStar project under the 2014 call aimed to introduce Family Group Conferences (FGCs) as a softer, preventive way to decrease the level of lower secondary school dropouts in Italy by preemptively targeting children at potential risk. The project itself was developed as a follow-up of the 'Riunioni di Famiglia' pilot, which was supported by local NGOs but failed to gather enough data on the method's effectiveness due to a very small size of the treatment and control groups. For a while, the pilot remained on halt, but eventually, the project team discovered the EaSI programme and applied for the 2014 call.
- Consequently, participation in EaSI allowed the project team to consolidate these effects and increase its external validity through a larger study sample and a more sophisticated counterfactual impact evaluation. Furthermore, participation in EaSI has attracted significant attention to their pilot and its results, especially at the regional and national levels in Italy. Currently, the project team is still monitoring the intervention's effects, while interacting with the Italian Ministry of Education to receive the data necessary for a long-term impact evaluation, which will be necessary for policy embedding.

Source Consortium (2021), based on the FamilyStar case study.

Another positive factor is that the EaSI **calls have significantly contributed to the teams' ability to perform social experimentation at a larger scale and in a more stable and intensive way** compared to national interventions. First, this implies reaching wider stakeholder circles – both in terms of target populations and policymakers (or potential investors) through EU-wide EaSI conferences and cross-border and transnational partnership networks. The opportunities for EU-wide exposure were particularly important for some project implementers because they could establish new networks with partners working on similar topics in other countries (also see Figure 23 below). Second, the intervention has empowered some project implementers to introduce more robust evaluation methodologies with larger population samples, if compared to their previous experience with funding programmes in the area of social policy. According to the interview results, most national programmes on social policies and social innovation do not impose such requirements. Finally, unlike with national programmes, the process of social experimentation in the EaSI framework is not endangered by the political swings at the regional/national levels (e.g. changes in government) since the EU funding commitment is long-term. This financial stability has ensured a more cohesive implementation of the social experimentation projects, allowing the project teams to see the mid-term results of their activities and, in some limited cases, even long-term impacts.

The coordinating and guiding role of the EC has been an additional positive factor in improving the intervention's process additionality. The fact that the EC project officers under the calls encourage more synergies/cooperation between the projects has stimulated communication between some project teams. Furthermore, the officers serve as important focal points for answering the project teams' questions in the course of experimentation. Nevertheless, several projects have also admitted that they would have liked the EC project officers and call managers to have organised more meetings between different projects for better coordination, creating more learning and other types of synergies.

There is **evidence indicating that the intervention has also induced some cross-border and transnational cooperation**, but it is unclear **whether its potential has been used to the fullest extent possible**. On the one hand, the EaSI intervention has clearly resulted in some positive cross-border and transnational effects, especially in the area of mutual learning. First, it has stimulated the integration of international partners into project teams, which has led to positive exchanges of experiences and the establishment of new partnership networks. Overall, only 50% of the projects (18 out of 35 launched projects) have chosen international partners for internal project implementation⁷⁸. Furthermore, due to the thematic similarities of certain calls, there have been both thematic and general knowledge spillovers. Specifically, some project teams established informal contacts with each other, which they have maintained even after their pilots' finalisation.

That said, both **cooperation and learning processes could have been more systemic and frequent** since they have been and still remain **limited in three different ways**. First, project teams tend to pursue cooperation only with the teams that pursue the **same narrow objectives**. For example, in the 2014 call, some of the projects did not want to cooperate because of the thematic differences despite the fact that functionally they used similar methods (i.e. a one-stop-shop approach). Another trend is that the **projects from the same country of origin would usually cooperate with each other more actively** (for instance, from Spain and Italy), even across different calls. However, the degree of cooperation between projects from different countries of origin is less active (even if their objectives or methodologies are similar). Finally, there is **no evidence of systemic cooperation on cross-cutting issues** either (such as evaluation, communication, or exchange of experience in upscaling/transfer) despite the fact that some of the project implementers are very interested in these questions.

⁷⁸ See Annex I, not accounting for the 2020 call.

Results additionality

In terms of outputs additionality, three key effects could be attributed to the EU intervention (i.e. they would have been unattainable without the EU intervention) based on the in-depth interviews with both project implementers and policymakers as well as the examination of the available evaluative evidence. First, participation in the EaSI programme **has enabled more robust social experimentation with more traceable results, if compared to national-level programmes** as can also be seen in Figure 22 below. The key drivers here are the fact that the intervention is funding social experimentation for a relatively long period of time (2-3 years) and that it also encourages project implementers to produce traceable results by imposing a mandatory evaluation condition. Overall, EaSI has empowered its participants to test the ideas more boldly and without major thematic or administrative limitations, which would not have been possible due to the lack of or limitations of similar schemes at the national level (Box 26 seeks to illustrate this).

Box 26 – Intervention’s EU added value in ensuring more robust social experimentation

- The DEMTOP project under the 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support aims to update the current Czech microsimulation model of the pension system called NEMO. The NEMO model has been widely used by the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for analysis of every reform or partial change of the pension system. Overall, the results of the NEMO provide important evidence and significant help in policy and decision-making processes, but its modelling results have not been used to inform people about their individual pension rights and entitlements.
- While the project team could have potentially applied for national funding, it chose not to do so since national funding is usually limited to 1 year-long or even shorter projects. Furthermore, its provision and renewal are subject to changing political priorities of the government (a factor, which could be relevant again in the light of the upcoming 2021 Czech elections). By contrast, the EaSI funding provides a secure and stable environment for project implementation, which became a deciding factor for the project team to send out an application.

Source Consortium (2021), based on the DEMTOP case study.

Figure 22 – Quantitative assessment of the intervention’s key EU-added value by project teams



N = 26 project representatives, 0 – strongly disagree, 4 – strongly agree.

Source Survey done by the Consortium.

Second, **learning synergies and cross-border and transnational exchanges of good practices** have also been referenced as a direct consequence of the intervention both by project implementers and policymakers. These effects could not have been possible without the intervention itself, which actively encourages cross-border and transnational cooperation (e.g. by introducing the conditions on securing international partners as a part of the application in some of the calls, or with the EC taking the lead to encourage cooperation/synergies between different projects). For example, cross-border and transnational partnerships established within internal project teams would have been much less likely, had the participants taken part in national funding schemes and programmes. Furthermore, at a broader level, since EaSI imposed some evaluation requirements across all projects, it facilitated the development of an EU-wide knowledge base of what innovations work under what circumstances. However, to fully make use of the evaluative knowledge generated by the projects, there is a need for a database, which could provide the evaluations in an easily searchable and accessible manner.

Finally, the intervention has helped the project implementers to **reach a wider circle of potential target groups and other stakeholders across the EU** due to the intervention’s European nature. This effect, however, varies from project to project and significantly depends on how proactive a project’s communication strategy is. This has been particularly relevant for the 2016 call, which was thematically migration-centred and had to leverage its networks at the European level to address the common European challenges related to the integration of the third-country nationals into the single market. Box 27 below seeks to illustrate this with examples.

Box 27 – Examples of a project's wider outreach as the result of participating in the EaSI Programme

- The FIER project's stated goal was to develop 'instruments and strategies for a fast-track labour market integration of the disadvantaged groups among refugees and asylum-seekers' by '[...]developing quality competence assessment strategies, training curricula, self-empowerment initiatives, and a workplace language learning concept'. The project team admitted that it was unlikely that most of their activities could have been implemented without EU funding because the priority on migrant integration is not shared by all EU Member States and regions.
- Thanks to the EaSI funding and networking opportunities, the project could establish cross-border and transnational cooperation between 12 different partners in 6 countries. As a result, over 2600 refugees were reached in guidance sessions, training and empowerment activities, far more than initially targeted (1000).
- The project RESISOR (REgional SIngle SOcial Record) under the 2014 call used the EaSI networking opportunities, such as the EaSI conferences, to establish contacts with both national and European policymakers (e.g. to become a part of the working group of the Spanish Regional Ministry of Social Affairs). The broader outreach to both policymakers and potential investors was seen by the project team as crucial to further mainstreaming and embedding efforts, which they had been working on ever since the project's completion. Apart from that, participation in the EaSI programme has also become an important tool, which gives additional credibility to the project's outputs, when presented to both policymakers and investors.

Source Consortium (2021), based on the FIER and RESISOR case studies.

Finally, with regard to **follow-up additionality, there is mixed evidence on the intervention's EU-added value**. On the one hand, the programme has empowered the project teams to implement and test their ideas more boldly and gain European exposure and it has generated some additional investments in the course of and after the pilots' finalisation. On the other hand, as the results of the survey demonstrate, only around a half of the projects claim that participation in the EaSI programme has helped/inspired them to launch more social experimentation projects. It is possible, however, that the share of positive responses is likely to grow as the project teams refocus from upscaling their pilots to developing new social innovations.

Thus, the intervention **has resulted in some dissemination of good practice and policy learning/policy spillovers** at the national level in the individual Member States, but **its dissemination potential has not been fully exploited yet**. So far, dissemination has occurred mainly through mainstreaming and/or embedding some of the developed social innovations. The exact effects of mainstreaming are likely to manifest once a majority of the projects is complete. There is some limited evidence of improvements among the existing funding programmes as the result of learning from the success of the individual projects under the EaSI umbrella. In such cases, some of the regional and local governments allocated additional funding for the support of social innovation from their budgets (e.g. in Spain and in the Netherlands). Nevertheless, **no similar interventions at the national level, which were set up as the result of the EaSI impact, have been discovered** (despite the programme raising awareness about the concepts of social innovation and social experimentation).

3. Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter summarizes the key findings of the assessment under its five angles. It discusses the key drivers and barriers in the implementation process, elaborates on the identified good practices and provides targeted recommendations for dealing with the identified barriers.

Relevance

The EaSI social innovation calls have aimed not only to foster the uptake of socially innovative solutions through social experimentation but also to strengthen connections between various stakeholder groups involved in the development and upscaling of social innovation solutions. From that holistic perspective, the intervention demonstrates a high degree of relevance, especially in the light of its unique status at the EU level as a funding scheme aimed at the support of social experimentation. The assessment shows that the intervention's original objectives have largely corresponded to the needs of the key stakeholders involved – including project implementers, end beneficiaries and policymakers. Specifically, the project implementers have received an opportunity to conduct social experimentation without interruptions and a chance to proceed with upscaling/transfer. Many policymakers have received effective and tested solutions to the relevant regional or local social needs, which has also been a positive outcome for end beneficiaries. All stakeholder groups have also greatly benefitted from the establishment of new partnership networks and exchange of experiences (also see EU added value).

Nevertheless, the in-depth interviews with the representatives of many **project teams** have shown that some of them **need additional conceptual guidance both on social innovation in general and evaluations in particular**. There are differing perceptions of innovativeness and evaluation requirements by the programme management and project teams. Therefore, with the goal of further improving the intervention's relevance, we recommend producing some form of centralised programme guidelines on:

- The concept of social experimentation and social innovation (incl. their upscaling/transfer) aligned with the existing ESF+ approach;
- Impact evaluation of social experimentation projects (e.g. based on the already existing EC Better Regulation Toolbox), including methodological guidance (e.g. guidance on experiment-based evaluations, process tracing, and other relevant effect measurement methods).

Administration of these guidelines and provision of consultative functions could be delegated to the ESF+ National Contact Points (see also the next subsection for more detailed recommendations on NCPs).

Effectiveness

The intervention has also been largely effective in achieving short and medium-term goals. The main successes included developing innovative solutions relevant to the social needs in the target regions, raising awareness about the social experimentation and social innovation concepts across the EU, as well as establishing networks between social innovators and policymakers at different levels. 90% of the finished experimentation projects has successfully achieved their goals and many of them have proceeded into mainstreaming/embedding phases. However, it is too early to judge whether long-term policy impacts (e.g. socio-economic) are going to materialise. The key challenge in achieving long-term impacts is that

even some successful social experimentation projects (40%) struggle to mainstream the innovations and ensure that they are embedded within the existing policy frameworks (with only 3 projects finishing their embedding process as of late 2021). There are various factors at play underlying the problem. This includes the lack of immediate financial and human resources, absence of quantified evidence of effectiveness or efficiency in some projects, poor understanding on the side of some implementers about how to proceed with upscaling after project finalisation, as well as the occasional lack of a supportive policy context at the national level.

At the same time, project teams in the calls that have relied on involving policymakers more extensively (e.g. 2018 call on access to social protection and national reform support) have found it easier to proceed with mainstreaming and embedding their solutions. Thus, the **requirement to involve policymakers as project leads and/or project partners** should be considered a **good practice** since it contributes to the projects' upscaling / transfer efforts and the establishment of multistakeholder partnerships. The requirement could be somewhat expanded and adjusted to foster multistakeholder collaboration by **further encouraging the involvement of both non-profit organisations and representatives of the academia**, who could assist the consortia with the evaluation-related tasks.

To address the remaining challenges, we suggest several targeted recommendations. First, the future project calls should establish **stricter and more measurable requirements for evaluation of the developed solutions' effectiveness and efficiency**. There is still a share of finished projects that has not produced convincing quantitative evaluative evidence on their effectiveness (18% of the finished projects) and, especially, efficiency (55% of the finished projects). Clear, quantified evaluation results based on a robust methodology, which prove the effectiveness and efficiency of the approach, are extremely important. These can be presented to potential donors and interested policymakers as a part of the upscaling/transfer efforts. In that sense, the 2020 call requirement to submit a comprehensive evaluation plan in advance as a part of the application package is a step in the right direction. Similar steps could be taken regarding efficiency evaluations.

Furthermore, the programme needs to **strengthen the efforts at helping the project teams in transitioning from the social experimentation stage to the stage of scaling/transfer**. The intervention has not initially foreseen any specific objectives for upscaling/transfer since initially it was supposed to be the task of the European Social Fund's (ESF) national Managing Authorities (MAs). Thus, despite the intervention's requirements for sustainability under individual calls, the calls lacked a specialised part dedicated to post-pilot scaling/transfer. Since many project implementers see that initial assistance with upscaling/transfer as one of their key needs, introducing some limited funding for successful projects to start their upscaling/transfer efforts should also be considered. This adjustment could also be reflected in the intervention's broad objectives to improve its relevance by better accounting for the needs of project implementers. This could be implemented through the new framework of the ESF+ National Contact Points (NCPs)⁷⁹. For example, the NCPs could consult project implementers on how to calculate maximum ceilings for expenditure for impact evaluation (based on geographical dispersion, project scale, target group, skills, and competences of assessment teams, etc.) or they could share information on thematic experts or companies capable of helping with impact evaluations/assessments at the national level.

On top of that, if the programme were to introduce stricter (self-)evaluation requirements for the projects and/or add an additional phase to assist with upscaling/transfer after pilot finalisation, **a slightly longer period of project implementation should be considered**. Currently, the brevity of the project implementation period is often cited by project implementers as a hindrance to long-term project-level impact evaluations. Extending the timeframe will help the projects to better assess their own long-term impacts on the end

⁷⁹ NCPs will aim to (a) inform about the EaSI strand, its opportunities, application requirements, projects and results in their country; (b) assist in sharing and promoting EaSI project results; (c) serve as focal points connecting the project implementers with other stakeholders in the post-experimentation phase.

beneficiaries and to better transition from the social experimentation stage to the stages of mainstreaming and embedding.

Efficiency

In terms of efficiency, the benefits of successful pilots, once adopted at scale, could largely justify the total costs of the initial investments made, as the individual EaSI success stories and the amount of generated investment demonstrate (ca. €2 of additional investments were attracted per €1 invested by the programme as of late 2021). Internal management and implementation of the intervention seem to be generally efficient but could be improved in terms of monitoring, as discussed above, and communication. As for the latter point, some project implementers have not been particularly active in reaching out to each other or the EC representatives, which sometimes resulted in time loss/opportunity costs. Finally, in more recent projects, efficiency has been very seriously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding the last point, the programme's management has demonstrated a relatively **liberal approach to (re)allocation of internal project costs**. This has allowed project implementers to improve the efficiency of the intervention, especially in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This approach should be explored further in the context of the future calls as a potential good practice.

As regards improving **programme-level communication**, we propose to build on the existing institutional framework. Some positive steps have already been made in this area in 2020-2021 with the establishment of the NCPs that would link project implementers, ESF+ MAs and EC. The opportunities provided by the NCPs should be built upon by, for example, potentially connecting the NCPs with an online database solution containing all the projects or through NCPs helping project implementers during the experimentation phase to expand their outreach to various stakeholders at the national level. On top of that, the project implementers should be more actively encouraged to participate in large-scale EaSI events such as conferences and seminars organised by the programme management as these present unique opportunities to get to know each other as well as potential funding donors, as well as national and European policymakers.

Regarding the proposed assessment of the 'funding by results' condition, the evaluation evidence is rather contradictory. While there are examples demonstrating that the concept of 'funding by results' works in some national contexts (e.g. Social Impact Bonds in Portugal), such schemes are usually planned with rather modest planned goals. Taking into consideration many concerns voiced by the project implementers, we have concluded that **the concept of 'staged funding' would be more appropriate**. Despite the lack of consensus among stakeholders, the evaluative evidence points us in the direction that introducing the "funding by results" condition will likely bring more disadvantages (esp. a potential drop in both application rates and a fall in the quality of the proposed projects). Considering its socially innovative nature aiming to foster social experimentation, the programme should not demand specific results from the project implementers. Instead, it should rather encourage high-quality evaluations of their products' effectiveness and efficiency. Even if the evaluation results are negative, the project implementers should not be punished – otherwise, the concept of social experimentation becomes irrelevant (since experimentation always foresees a possibility of failure). If the project results are positive, the projects could be recommended for further upscaling/transfer funding within the same programme framework (in line with the previous recommendation). Alternatively, the projects could receive funding based on a different understanding of results (e.g. submission of the evaluation reports even with negative evidence).

EU added value

The EU added value of the EaSI social innovation calls is one of the strongest sides of the intervention. The intervention has successfully connected policymakers and social experimenters across a variety of the EU regions, offering networking and learning opportunities, which otherwise would have not been available. Another positive aspect of the EaSI social innovation is its high degree of resource additionality (i.e. most of the social experimentation projects could not have been implemented without the EaSI support). The assessment has established that withdrawing the intervention would likely have negative financial implications for social experimenters and social enterprises across the EU.

In terms of potential good practices, the **condition to involve at least one international partner** under some of the calls is also seen by many project implementers as a key element of the programme's EU added value. Despite that, several projects decided to focus only on the national context, which somewhat limits the intervention's cross-border effects. Therefore, in the next calls, at the application stage, this existing requirement could be further supplemented by **giving priority to cross-border projects rather than projects focused on solely national contexts**.

To boost the EU added value even further (and also in connection to the topic of programme-level efforts of helping individual projects with their upscaling/transfer efforts), the intervention could provide better visibility for the projects by **launching a European online database of the developed solutions**, which could be hosted either by the EC website (e.g. DG EMPL) or by an independent platform. Alternatively, such information could also be integrated into the existing ESF+ Social Innovation database, which could then also provide additional validation of the developed solutions by the European Competence Centre for Social Innovation. In this case, additional coordination between the EC units responsible for EaSI and ESF+ implementation will be required to ensure a smooth transfer of all the necessary information into the ESF+ Social Innovation database.

As indicated by the thematic stakeholder workshop, a database is the most popular solution format across stakeholder groups. The database should be open to programme participants, applicants, national policymakers, programme management and the general public. It could serve as a powerful tool for information exchange, learning, and raising awareness about the funding initiatives supporting social experimentation and social innovation and could also ensure greater sustainability of the project outputs. The following categories of information were stressed during the workshop as particularly relevant:

- General descriptors (i.e. budget, geographical area, target groups, policy area);
- Contact data of the project implementers;
- Effectiveness and efficiency rate of the developed solution;
- In-depth description of both the key barriers and success factors;
- In-depth description of the upscaling/transfer strategy.

Coherence

The EaSI calls have so far demonstrated moderate levels of internal and external coherence. Regarding the latter, the EaSI social innovation calls conceptually complement the existing EU policy initiatives. Nevertheless, the intervention has also established some hindrance factors in both cases. Among other factors, internal synergies between the projects are constrained by the lack of active and consistent exchange of the information between the projects, while external coherence is constrained by the lack of understanding by project

implementers of how the external EU actions/programmes work. This last issue also feeds into the slow pace of upscaling/transfer of the developed solutions.

Exchanges of both thematic and cross-cutting expertise between different projects, especially within the thematic framework of the same calls, remain an important part of the learning synergies generated by the intervention. These could be expanded by partially **institutionalising the processes of learning and cooperation between the projects and/or between the calls**, if thematically relevant under the guidance of the EC (e.g. through additional operational meetings between the project's representatives or through the suggested online database). While there might be significant thematic differences between individual projects; learning and exchanges on cross-cutting issues, such as communication/dissemination, evaluation and upscaling/transfer, could be useful for any project under any call.

In that light, more **coordination is necessary to establish better synergies between the intervention in question and other EU social innovation actions and programmes** to improve the calls' long-term effectiveness and external coherence. One problem is that upscaling of cross-border/transnational projects can be particularly challenging for project implementers since this requires a lot of coordination between the project implementers, ESF+ MAs, and different NCPs. Another problem is that some project implementers are aware of external opportunities but struggle to conceptually connect them with EaSI (e.g. receive support soon after the finalisation of social experimentation). Therefore, instructing the project teams on what funding schemes they could potentially access and to whom they could reach out at the national level could both improve the intervention's external coherence and magnify the intervention's policy effects through better upscaling/transfer of the projects. These functions should be well integrated with the currently developed institution of the NCPs.

4. Annexes

4.1. Annex I – EaSI Social Experimentation Project Mapping

FINAL ASSESSMENT STUDY

Project title (incl. link to the website if available)	Total Budget	Beneficiary (Region) & Co-beneficiaries	Country	Summary of the methodology used	Social need addressed / Policy area (assign based on the final reports or other project documentation)														Target Group			Scale of innovation	Type of social innovation developed	Scope of innovation	Piloting (ongoing, successful or unsuccessful)	Mainstreaming (x - Mainstreaming Mainstreamed)	Embedding (x - Embedding - Embedded)	Robust evaluation of effectiveness (yes or no)	Robust evaluation of efficiency (yes or no)																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																		
					Youth Employment	Combat long-term unemployment	Fight against poverty and social exclusion	Promotion of equality between women and men	Promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment	Guarantee adequate and decent social protection	Combat discrimination	Transnational dimension	Other	National / regional and local authorities	Employment services	Specialist bodies provided for under Union law	Social partners	NGOs	Higher education and research institutions	Experts in evaluation and impact assessment	National statistical offices									Media	Others																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																
VP/2014/008/0088	Vouchers for the provision of child minding service to workers with nonstandard work schedules	€ 908 948	LATVIJAS REPUBLIKA - Ministry of Welfare	LV	Cross-sectoral (public, private and personal) cooperation in funding flexible childcare arrangements to target group – employed parents with children up to 7 years of age																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																										

FINAL ASSESSMENT STUDY

	Project title (not linked to the website if available)	Total Budget	Beneficiary (ies) & Co-beneficiaries	Country	Summary of the methodology used	Social need addressed / Policy area (assign based on the final reports or other project documentation)														Target Group										Scale of innovation	Type of social innovation developed	Scope of innovation	Partner (ongoing, successful, or unsuccessful)	Mainstreaming (X - Mainstreaming - Mainstreamed)	Embedding (X - Embedding - Embedded)	Robust evaluation of effectiveness (yes or no)	Robust evaluation of efficiency (yes or no)
						Youth Employment	Combating long-term unemployment	Right to work	Right to social exclusion	Promotion of equality between women and men	Promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment	Guarantee adequate and decent social protection	Combating discrimination	Transnational dimension	Other	National, regional and local authorities	Employment services	Specialised bodies provided for under Union law	Social partners	NGOs	Higher education and research institutions	Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment	National statistical offices	Media	Others												
VP/2015/011/0210	Employment enhancement and Social services integration in Athens municipality (ESTI@)	€ 2 370 311	DIMOS ATHINAION (Municipality of Athens)	GR	Athens Development and Destination Management Agency																						Radical	Process Innovation	New to the organisation	Successful	Mainstreamed	Embedding	No	No			
			City of Athens Homeless Centre	GR	ESTI@ sought to integrate medical and social services provided by public and private entities into one comprehensive package of services with Single Entry Points to assist beneficiaries' gradual (re-)integration (i.e. transition from being benefits-reliant to becoming self-reliant)	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X			X																	
			Fainareti	GR																																	
			First Elements Euroconsultants	GR																																	
			Network for children's rights	GR																																	
			Praksis	GR																																	
			Solidarity Now	GR																																	
			Metropolitan Research Institute	HU																																	
VP/2015/011/0375	HomeLab - Integrated Housing and Labour Services in the Social Rental Enterprise Model	€ 1 622 775	Budapest Institute for Policy Analysis	HU	HomeLab assumed vulnerable groups lack the ability to combine separated services to their best benefit. A Single Entry Point approach was trialled to help target population access adequate housing and to enable integration into the labour market.		X	X				X	X			X	X										Radical	Service Innovation	New to the target group	Successful	Mainstreaming	Embedding	Yes	No			
			Habitat for Humanity Poland	PL																																	
			Humanitarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta	MT																																	
			People in Need	SK																																	
			Romodrom	CZ																																	
			From Streets to Home Association	CZ																																	
VP/2015/011/0380	Housing and Employment Learning Project (HELP)	€ 1 251 414	WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL	UK	HELP integrates housing, employment, welfare benefits, social care and job centre services for homeless households into a 'one-stop-shop' holistic and wrap around services with a personal casehandler		X	X				X	X			X											Incremental	Organisational Innovation	New to the organisation	Successful	Mainstreaming	Embedding	Yes	Yes			
			FEANTSA	BE																																	
			Vital Regeneration	UK																																	
			REGIONE PIEMONTE	IT																																	
			Agenzia Piemonte Lavoro	IT	TSUNAMI is a support-to-employment intervention targeted at unemployed with mental illness. It arranges 3 - 6 month long traineeships focusing on skills acquisition with the support of external casehandlers who intensively support the job search for 3 months following traineeship completion. Paid employment is the long term goal.																																
VP/2015/011/0390	TSUNAMI - A Traineeship as a Springboard out of Unemployment for those Affected by Mental Illness	€ 1 745 956	ASVAPP	IT																																	
			FONDAZIONE ADECCO PER LE PARI OPPORTUNITA'	IT				X																													
			Dxar Social Value Solutions	IT								X	X			X	X	X																			
			INFORCOOP LEGA PIEMONTE S.C.R.L.	IT																																	
			KAIROIS MESTIERI	IT																																	
			Stichting Economie en Cultuur	NL																																	
VP/2015/011/0422	Bridging Young Roma and Business - Intervention for inclusion of Roma youth through employment in the private sector in Bulgaria and Hungary	€ 889 967	Open Society Institute Foundation - Sofia	BG	The project targeted Roma people with completed secondary education or higher educational attainment. Roma participants were prepared for recruitment processes and for integration into the work environment through training. The method experimented by SIPA consisted of actively approaching the most fragile, disengaged and unidentified	X		X	X			X	X			X				X	X						Incremental	Service Innovation	New to the target group	Successful	x	x	Yes	Yes			
			Autonoma Foundation	HU																																	
			Central European University	HU																																	
VP/2015/011/0429	SIPA - Sites d'information, de Projet et d'Accompagnement	€ 1 573 140	INSTITUT DE L'ENTREPRISE ET DE L'INNOVATION SOCIALE	FR	Asociation Intermédiaire DEFI	X	X	X	X				X	X			X	X									Radical	Process Innovation	New to the region	Successful	Mainstreaming	Embedding	Yes	No			
			Association Intermédiaire DEFI	FR																																	
			COMUNIDAD FORAL DE NAVARRA - CONSEJERIA DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE DERECHOS SOCIALES	ES	Participants were assigned pairs of casehandlers who liaised between social and employment services and the participants. A new regional minimum scheme and a new mechanism for active employment planning policy through local partnerships between public, private and civil society stakeholders were also tested.		X	X					X	X			X	X	X																		
VP/2015/011/0567	Enhancing the Right to Social Inclusion through Service Integration (ERSI-SI)	€ 1 841 445	Ayuntamiento de Tudela	ES																																	
			Mancomunidad of Social Services of Altusa, Olazagutia, and Zoritia	ES																																	
			Navarrese Employment Services	ES																																	
			Public University of Navarra	ES																																	
VP/2016/015/0096	FAIR - Fast Track Action Boost	€ 1 891 441	COMUNE DI MILANO - Direzione Economia Urbana, Lavoro, Relazioni Internazionali (Directorate Urban Economy, Employment, International Relations)	IT	AGENCIA PARA EL EMPLEO DE MADRID																																
			AGENCIA METROPOLITANA PARA LA FORMACION, L'ORIENTAMENTO E IL LAVORO	IT	A multi-level partnership model is used for the analysis and transfer of good practices. The model includes a cross-border cooperation and mentoring program (i.e. a mentoring system between 5 European territories, giving partners the opportunity to exchange, adapt and transfer the most successful experiences).		X	X				X	X			X	X	X	X																		
			REPUBLIKA SRBIJA - Department for International Cooperation, European Integration and Project Management	RS																																	
			SENATSVÄRMLING FÜR INTEGRATION, ARBEIT UND SOZIALES	DE																																	
			SOSTRA SOZIALÖKONOMISCHE STRUKTURANALYSEN GMBH	DE																																	
			STADTSCHULRAT FÜR WIEN	AT																																	
			STOCKHOLMS KOMMUN	SE																																	
VP/2016/015/0117	RIAC - Regional Integration Accelerators	€ 2 027 203	STADTVERWALTUNG OFFENBACH	DE	Regional Integration Accelerators (RIACs) are decentralised centres for the accelerated integration of refugees. They are based on the need of local labour markets and cooperating businesses and are organised with focus on specific industries or businesses. They are composed of the following elements: RIAC coordinator, Speed-Manager (concerned with factors inhibiting integration), Mentoring-Manager (manages mentors and aligns mentoring goals with those of the RIAC), Mentors (volunteers accompanying a refugee's integration,	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X								Incremental	Process Innovation	New to the region	Successful	Mainstreaming	Embedding	Pending	Pending			
			ALISEI SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE	IT																																	
			CENTRO INFORMAZIONE DOCUMENTAZIONE E INIZIATIVA PER LO SVILUPPO - C.I.D.I.S. - ONLUS	IT																																	
			ESBIERG KOMMUNE	DK																																	
			HABITAT DERNEGI	TR																																	
			ILITICA VE GOC ARASTIRMALARI	TR																																	
			MERKEZİDERNEGI	TR																																	
			KIZ SINIOVA GESELLSCHAFT FÜR SOZIALE INNOVATION GGMHB	DE																																	
			RUHR-UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM	DE																																	

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Project title (incl. link to the website if available)	Total Budget	Beneficiary (ies) & Co-beneficiaries	Country	Summary of the methodology used	Social need addressed / Policy area (assign based on the final reports or other project documentation)										Target Group										Scale of innovation	Type of social innovation developed	Scope of innovation	Piloting (ongoing, successful, or unsuccessful)	Mainstreaming (X - Mainstreamed, N/A - Not mainstreamed)	Embedding (X - Embedded, N/A - Not embedded)	Robust evaluation of effectiveness (yes or no)	Robust evaluation of efficiency (yes or no)		
					Youth Employment	Combating long-term unemployment	Right against poverty and social exclusion	Promotion of equality between women and men	Promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment	Guarantee of adequate and decent social protection	Combating discrimination	Transnational dimension	Other	National, regional and local authorities	Employment services	Specialist bodies providing services under Union law	Social partners	NGOs	Higher education and research institutions	Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment	National statistical offices	Media	Others											
VP/2016/015/0162 TIER - Fast track integration in European Regions	€ 2,319,163	VASTRA GOTALANDS LANS LINDSTING	SE	TIER aimed to integrate refugees, especially women and the low qualified, into the labour market faster and more sustainably by introducing validation and competence assesment procedure (esp. Soft skills), improving guidance to showcasing skills and accessing the labour market for refugees, and testing language training combined with basic work/vocational experiences and training.	X	X	X	X		X	X																							
		ARBETSFÖRMEDLINGEN	SE																															
		ASSOCIATION EUROPEENNE DES AUTORITÉS REGIONALES ET LOCALES POUR L'APPRENTISSAGE TOUT AU LONG DE LA VIE AISBL	BE																															
		BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG - Ministry of Education	DE																															
		HET GEMEENSCHAPSONDERWIJS	DE																															
		LANDESHAUPTSTADT STUTTGART	DE																															
		MOLNÁLS KOMMUN	SE																															
		OSLO VOKSENOPPLÆRING ROSENHOF	NO																															
		PÄDAGOGISCHE HOCHSCHULE WEINGARTEN	DE																															
		SALZBURG	AT																															
VP/2016/015/0171 FORWORK - Fostering Opportunities of Refugee Workers	€ 2,339,568	AGENZIA NAZIONALE PER LE POLITICHE ATTIVE DEL LAVORO	IT	FORWORK targets the limitations of Italy's refugee reception system. 600 beneficiaries will be registered in the database of Piedmont's regional PES, migrants' existing skills will be mapped, they will receive civic and short vocational courses, informal and non-formal skills will be recognised, and they will receive individual counseling and placement services.																														
		ADRIAPOL - SMART AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	AL																															
		AGENZIA PIEMONTE LAVORO	IT																															
		AGENCIJE KOMBETARE TE ARSIMIT; FORMIMIT PROFESIONAL DHE KUALIFIKIMEVE	AL																															
		CENTRO INTERNAZIONALE DI FORMAZIONE DELL' OIL	IT																															
		FONDAZIONE RODOLFO DEBENEDETTI	IT																															
		FORCOOP CONSORZIO SOCIALE SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE IMPRESA SOCIALE	IT																															
		KAJROS MESTIERI SRL	IT																															
		VP/2016/015/0179 Acceleration of labour market integration of immigrants through mapping of skills and trainings (ALMIT)	€ 979,178		SOFIA UNIVERSITY ST KLIMENT OHRIDSKI	BG	Individualised educational profiling and trainings (languages, intercultural competencies, job skills); publication of training materials; open access e-learning available in multiple languages.	X		X																								
					BEOGRADSKA OTVORENA SKOLA	RS																												
COUNCIL OF WOMEN REFUGEES IN BULGARIA	BG																																	
COVEKOLIUBIE, DOBROTVORNA FONDACIJA SRPSKE PRAVOSLAVNE CRKVE	RS																																	
DUZICE PROVINCE	TR																																	
OPSTINA SID	RS																																	
OSTERREICHISCHE JUNGARBEITERBEWEGUNG, OJAB	AT																																	
TURKIYE CUMHURİYETİ	TR																																	
ZGURA-M EOOD	BG																																	
VP/2018/003/0001 Development of microsimulation tools for social insurance projections (DEMTOPI)	€ 970,506			ČESKA REPUBLIKA - Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	CZ	DEMTOPI aims to improve the existing Czech dynamic microsimulation model of the pension system by introducing a fully funded complementary pension strand and...																												
		ERUDICIO NADACNI FOND	CZ																															
VP/2018/003/0007 Establishing the European Tracking Service on Pensions	€ 1,686,716	VERSÖRUNGSANSTALT DES BUNDES UND DER LÄNDER	DE	The project sets up a European pension tracking system which is particularly relevant for mobile workers in Europe who have or are planning to work in more than one country. Two project pillars are combined into one user view: A website on pensions for European citizens and the necessary infrastructure to retrieve and merge the individual data from the connected data sources. Data from individual countries' tracking systems and other data sources is merged to that end.																														
		PENSIÖNSMYNDIGHETEN	SE																															
		SOCIALE INDIVIDUELE GEGEVENS-DONNEES INDIVIDUELLES SOCIALES	BE																															
		MIN PENSION I SVERIGE AB	SE																															
		PGGM NV	NL					X	X				X	X							X		Radical	New to the social area globally	Ongoing	Mainstreaming	Embedding	N/A	N/A					
		APG RECHTENBEHEER NV	NL																				Organisational innovation											
VP/2018/003/0018 BELMOD	€ 929,765	ASSOCIATION EUROPEENNE DES INSTITUTIONS DE PROTECTION SOCIALE PARITAIRES	BE																															
		SERVICE FEDERAL DES PENSIONS	BE																															
		KONINKRIJK BELGIE - Federal Public Services Social Security	BE	BELMOD desires to set up a national reform plan for reducing the non-take-up of social benefits by those in need. The plan focusses on improving access to means-tested benefits through simplifying and MOSPI seeks to prepare the Italian social protection system for upcoming challenges including digitalisation, the changing world of work, and the ageing population by collecting relevant data, developing...																														
VP/2018/003/0052 Modernizing Social Protection Systems in Italy (MOSPI)	€ 1,164,953	UNIVERSITEIT ANTWERPEN	BE		X																													
		UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX	UK																															
		ISTITUTO NAZIONALE PER L'ANALISI DELLE POLITICHE PUBBLICHE (INAPP)	IT																															
VP/2018/003/0052		REPUBBLICA ITALIANA	IT		X			X	X			X	X																					
		FONDAZIONE GIACOMO BRODOLINI	IT																															

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[illegible]

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	Project title (incl. link to the website if available)	Total Budget	Beneficiary (legal) & Co-beneficiaries	Country	Summary of the methodology used	Social need addressed / Policy area (assign based on the final reports or other project documentation)														Scale of innovation	Type of social innovation developed	Scope of innovation	Piloting (ongoing, successful, or unsuccessful)	Mainstreaming (X - Mainstreaming - Mainstreamed)	Embedding (X - embedding - embedded)	Robust evaluation of effectiveness (yes or no)	Robust evaluation of efficiency (yes or no)	
						Youth Employment	Combat long-term unemployment	Fight against poverty and social exclusion	Promotion of equality between women and men	Promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment	Guarantee adequate and decent social protection	Combat discrimination	Transnational dimension	Other	National, regional and local authorities	Employment services	Specialist bodies provided for under Union law	Social partners	NGOs									Higher education and research institutions
VP/2019/003/0055	Towards User-centred funding models for long term care (UNIC)	€ 1 041 504	EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES	BE	UNIC aims to foster user-centred funding models for LTC. A toolbox to support public authorities and key stakeholders in the use of personal budgets will be piloted in Flanders during one year. Knowledge transfer workshops will be organised in several countries developing pilots on personal budgets to assess the toolbox and adapt it to be flexible enough for different countries and target groups. The toolbox, together with a set of policy recommendations and capacity building activities, will provide a framework to support public authorities in the deployment of a user-centred funding model (based on the concept of personal budgets) for long term care.																							
			RESEAU EUROPEEN DU VIEILLESSEMENT ASBL	LU																								
			THE CENTRE FOR WELFARE REFORM LTD	UK																								
			FUNDACIO PRIVADA TUTELAR DE LES COMARQUES GIRONINES	ES																								
			DISABILITY FEDERATION OF IRELAND	IE																								
			LEBENSHILFE SALZBURG GEMEINNÜTZIGE GMBH	AT																								
			KEHITYSVAMMAISTEN PALVELUSAITIO	FI																								
			ASOCIACE POSKYTOVATELU SOCIÁLNÍH SLUŽEB ČESKÉ REPUBLIKY	CZ																								
			VLAAMS AGENTSCHAP VOOR PERSONEN MET EEN HANDICAP	BE																								
VP/2019/003/0061	Improving autonomy and global well-being through Adapted Physical Activity - By Siel Bleu	€ 914 057	Siel Bleu	FR	Autonomy of people needing LTC is to be improved through 'Adapted Physical Activity' (APA) which allows adaptation of physical activity to people's individual abilities, needs, and desires. Apart from higher individual well-being, cost reductions for the health system are also expected.			X				X	X	X		X												
VP/2019/003/0068	„Dać to, czego naprawdę potrzeba” - “To give what is really needed”	€ 712 404	FUNDACJA HOSPICIUM PROROKA ELIASZA WOJEWÓDZTWO PODLASKIE	PL	A multi-level model of durable partnership will be created between state and non-governmental local institutions. A pilot care system network will be developed in five rural communities in two counties. The pilot will integrate a new professional profile of local care coordinator for dependent individuals, who will diagnose the users' needs and find solutions to meet them with the help of professionals. A PLLC strengthens community-based LTC services for people with cognitive impairments and dementia by addressing affordability, quality, and sustainability. The project trials a Community Care Centres which will provide counselling for people in need of care and their carers, while focussing on preventing functional loss and promoting of healthy ageing and volunteer based services to complement informal care.																							
			OSRODEK WSPIERANIA ORGANIZACJI POZARZĄDOWYCH	PL																								
			Republikański Zakład Opieki Zdrowotnej „Nowe Życie” I. Ogonek, 2. Ogonek Spółka Jawna	PL				X			X				X			X	X									
			INSTYTUT ROZWOJU WSI I ROLNICTWA POLSKIEJ AKADEMII NAUK	PL																								
VP/2019/003/0080	Addressing and preventing care needs through innovative Community Care Centres (i-CCC)	€ 1 817 260	Austrian Red Cross	AT																								
			REPUBLIKA CRNA GORA - Ministry of Health	ME																								
			CRVENI KRST CRNE GORE	ME																								
			CRVENI KRST SRBIJE	RS				X		X	X	X		X			X			X								
			GESUNDHEIT ÖSTERREICH GMBH	AT																								
			REPUBLICKÝ ZÁVOD ZA SOCIÁLNU ZÁSTITU WIRTSCHAFTSUNIVERSITÄT WIEN	RS																								
VP/2019/003/0103	“Rural Care” - Integrated Social and Health Care in the home at Rural Scale	€ 2 218 210	Gerencia de Servicios Sociales de Castilla y León	ES	A new model of person-centred LTC will be developed integrating healthcare services with health coordinators and social services coordinators working jointly. The model will be preventive and proactive in adapting to the needs of the care users at every stage of life according to their own life plan. A pool of volunteers and the use of ICT tools will help to provide these flexible services, making them more accessible, affordable, sustainable, and of better quality. The goal is to provide a personalised service that allows people to continue living in their homes safely ensuring adequate quality of life.																							
			EUROPEAN SOCIAL NETWORK	BE				X			X	X	X	X		X			X	X								
			FUNDACION PERSONAS	ES																								
			DIPUTACION PROVINCIAL DE VALLADOLID	ES																								
			UNIVERSIDAD DE VALLADOLID	ES																								

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	Project title (incl. link to the website if available)	Total Budget	Beneficiary (Single & Co-beneficiaries)	Country	Summary of the methodology used	Social need addressed / Policy area (assign based on the final reports or other project documentation)														Target Group										Scale of Innovation	Type of social innovation developed	Scope of innovation	Planning (ongoing, successful, or unsuccessful)	Mainstreaming (X - Mainstreaming - Mainstreamed)	Embedding (X - Embedding - Embedded)	Robust evaluation of effectiveness (yes or no)	Robust evaluation of efficiency (yes or no)
						Youth Employment	Combat long-term unemployment	Fight against poverty and social exclusion	Promotion of equality between women and men	Promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment	Guarantee adequate and decent social protection	Combat discrimination	Transnational dimension	Other	National, regional and local authorities	Employment services	Specialist bodies provided for under Union law	Social partners	NGOs	Higher education and research institutions	Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment	National statistical offices	Media	Others													
VP/2019/003/0152	Community-based social service centers as a tool of multilevel partnership for providing long-term care in Slovakia	€ 893 560	BANSKOBYSTRICKÝ SAMOSPRÁVNÝ KRAJ	SK	Building community-based social service centres for seniors is the aim. These are hoped to make service delivery more coordinated, more targeted, and more flexible because centres will concentrate social services provided by several municipalities (esp. those with <1000 residents) and they will interconnect local, regional and national social and health service providers.			X			X	X			X													Incremental	Service Innovation	New to the social area globally	Ongoing	x	x	N/A	N/A		
VP/2020/003/0059	Lone Parents (Digital Action)	€ 1 245 927	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection	IE	The project will provide targeted employability support to lone parents with low incomes at locations in Ireland, Finland, and Greece. The key feature of this action is that a large proportion of trainings and other measures will be delivered digitally. Parents lacking the means to purchase their own equipment will be provided with it free of charge.																																
			One Family	IE																																	
			Uudenmaan ELY-keskus - Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment in Uusimaa	FI		X	X	X		X																											
			Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	GR																																	
			Agalia	GR																																	
VP/2020/003/0109	Rights first	€ 1 032 220	Bruss'Help	BE	This intervention targets homeless people who are not registered with the authority and, thus, cannot access their social rights. Hence, the project seeks to reach out to the homeless to re-register them, provide targeted housing support, and employment support	X	X	X				X	X	X																							
			New Samusocial	BE																																	
			L'Ilot	BE																																	
			Asbl DIOGENES VZW	BE																																	
			Hobo - geïntegreerde thuislozenzorg Brussel	BE						X	X	X			X	X		X	X																		
			Crisis UK	UK																																	
			Saint Joan de Deu Serveis Socials	ES																																	
VP/2020/003/0111	New partnerships and opportunities for innovative and sustainable approaches to social and labour market (NOVA)	€ 1 004 014	Centre Public d'Action Sociale de Forest	BE	The intervention targets recipients of the Serbian minimum income. It experiments a model of social and employment service integration in selected local environments, despite being championed by a network of the most influential stakeholders at national level. The action places a strong emphasis on co-creation with end-beneficiaries.																																
			Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	RS																																	
			National Employment Service	RS																																	
			Center for Social Policy	RS		X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X																	
			ISM Strategic Marketing	RS																																	
VP/2020/003/0166	Un toit sur la tête: un job dans la poche (un toit, un job)	€ 1 253 995	Red Cross Serbia	RS	The project follows a two pronged methodology: Firstly, it will trial a Youth Solidarity or Minimum Income which will allow beneficiaries to access housing and employment support. Secondly, the action aims to integrate the housing and employment services that are now available to young people.																																
			The Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia	SI																																	
			Métropole de Lyon	FR																																	
			Alynea	FR		X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X		X																			
			CLLAI	FR																																	
VP/2020/003/0177	xETU	€ 1 278 822	ACOLEA	FR	Drawing on findings from previous Spanish Easi projects, xETU will provide early intervention support for people facing multiple vulnerabilities. It will deliver personalised and holistic support in the form of a common basic package and an individually designed custom package, not only to the beneficiaries themselves but their entire family. Implementation will be aided by the use of various ICT tools.																																
			Rock Trust	UK																																	
			FEANTSA	BE																																	
VP/2020/003/0177	Cooperate, ReachOut, Integrate Services (CRIS)	€ 1 080 331	Consejería de Derechos Sociales y Bienestar	ES	The project promotes a complex methodological approach of "systemic counselling", which consists of three parts: (i) conducting outreach activities to improve the existing referral mechanisms; (ii) capacity-building of responsible organisations; and (iii) developing a model of subcontracting NGO services. The implementation of these methodological activities is coordinated by the so-called "Innovation Labs".	X	X			X	X	X			X																						
			Stadt Offenbach	DE																																	
			Artemisszió	HU																																	
			Bischoff Johanna Integrated Human Services Centre	HU																																	
			People in Need	SK		X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X		X																			
VP/2020/003/0177			Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family	SK																																	
			Centre for social and psychological studies, Slovak Academy of Science	SK																																	
			Social Protection Institute of Republic of Slovenia	SI																																	

FINAL ASSESSMENT STUDY

	Project title (and link to the website if available)	Total Budget	Beneficiary (Benefi) & Co-beneficiaries	Country	Summary of the methodology used	Social need addressed / Policy area (assign based on the final reports or other project documentation)																Target Group									Scale of innovation	Type of social innovation developed	Scope of innovation	Planning (ongoing, successful or unsuccessful)	Mainstreaming (X - Mainstreaming - Mainstreamed)	Embedding (X - Embedding - Embedded)	Robust evaluation of effectiveness (yes or no)	Robust evaluation of efficiency (yes or no)
						Youth Employment	Combat long-term unemployment	Fight against poverty and social exclusion	Promotion of equality between women and men	Promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment	Guarantee adequate and decent social protection	Combat discrimination	Transnational dimension	Other	National, regional and local authorities	Employment services	Specialist bodies provided for under Union law	Social partners	NGOs	Higher education and research institutions	Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment	National statistical offices	Media	Others														
VP/2020/003/02_01	Capabilities, Opportunities and Engagement: Approach for Social Inclusion of Difficult to Reach Young People through a "Relational Proximity" Community Network (C.O.P.E.)	€ 798 692	Provincia Autonoma di Trento DON LORENZO MILANI SOCIETA' COOPERATIVA SOCIALE Universidade Nova de Lisboa European Foundation for Philanthropy and Society Development Federazione trentina della cooperazione SHINE 2Europe, Ida University of East London	IT IT PT HR IT PT UK	The project will address the need factors simultaneously through the proposed method of "relational proximity". The method, which is developed and sustained through a multi-stakeholder approach, is focused on the social and health needs – particularly mental health needs – and assets of young NEETs. The network created through relational proximity is accessed through the support of a link worker who builds a trust relationship with each young	X		X		X								X	X					X	Radical	Service innovation	New to the target group	Ongoing	x	x	N/A	N/A						
VP/2020/003/02_14	RETICULATE	€ 1 148 435	And Toscana Associazione Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale EUROPEAN SOCIAL NETWORK ASBL ARTI - Tuscan Regional Agency for employment FIOPSO - Italian Federation of Organizations for Homeless People Società della Salute Pistoiese COESO SOCIETA DELLA SALUTE DELLE ZONE AMIATA GROSSETANA, COLLINE METALLIFERE E AREA GROSSETANA CAPANNORI MUNICIPALITY LIVORNO MUNICIPALITY Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale	IT IT BE IT IT IT IT IT IT IT	Reticulate aims to improve the currently fragmented social service system by opening 4 one stop shops that offer integrated and individualised housing and employment but also health and psychological support. The implementation is being co-designed between the public authorities and NGOs involved as well as the vulnerable groups concerned.			X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X						Incremental	Process innovation	New to the target group	Ongoing	x	x	N/A	N/A							
VP/2020/003/02_18	Initiative for innovative integrated interventions in Miskolc - Miskolc shall be a place for everyone (4IM)	€ 762 280	Miskolc Megyei Jogú Varos Onkormany Zata University of Miskolc Abajraköds Public Association Hálózat a Regionális Fejlesztésért Alapítvány Association Européenne pour l'Information sur le Développement Local (AEIDL) City of Košice	HU HU HU HU BE SK	This pilot tests a new model of benefits and social services delivery. It will involve the cooperation and incorporation of several newly formed boards and committees whose job it will be to facilitate outreach and implementation with the ultimate goal of institutionalise cooperation between relevant stakeholders. The project also places an emphasis on co-production.			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					Radical	Organisational innovation	New to the region	Ongoing	x	x	N/A	N/A							
Total						12	19	37	15	30	24	23	26	5	42	29	2	27	34	19	14	0	12	16														
Percentage						27%	43%	84%	34%	68%	55%	52%	59%	11%	95%	66%	5%	61%	77%	43%	32%	0%	27%	36%														

4.2. Annex II – Mapping of other EU actions and programmes on social innovation

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Action title	Managed by	Budget	Target Group	Type of action	Objective	Brief Description	Coherence with EaSI
European Social Innovation Competition	EC	3x €50k prizes	Varies annually (2020: Ideas and ventures aiming to improve the environmental and social impact of fashion market)	Competition / funding	The European Social Innovation Competition (EUSIC) is a challenge prize run by the EC across all EU countries and Horizon 2020 associated countries. The competition calls upon its participants (all types of organisations) to come up with solutions to the problems affecting our society. The topics change annually (e.g. 2020 – sustainable fashion, 2019 – plastic waste).	Recognises novel and socially innovative early-stage projects and ideas (operational projects ineligible) and seeks to help selected ones to prototype and implementation stages. Challenge prizes awarded based on the degree of innovation, impact, sustainability and scalability . All (semi-)finalists benefit from technical assistance and mentoring.	Conceptually compatible (similar objectives and target groups) but this intervention's onset is earlier as only idea-stage projects are eligible and it places more emphasis on mentorship, technical assistance and networking.
Social Innovation Tournament (SIT)	EIB	2x €75k 1 st prize 2x €30k 2 nd prize 1x €10k audience prize	European social entrepreneurs creating social, ethical or environmental impact		The SIT recognises and supports the best European social entrepreneurs. It promotes innovative ideas and rewards initiatives that contribute to creating social, ethical or environmental impact. Typically, it covers projects in the areas of education, healthcare, the environment, circular economy, inclusion, job creation and ageing, amongst others.	Idea-stage and implementation-stage proposals eligible from any entity (private, public, for-profit and not-for-profit). Assessment based on the relevance of problem targeted, estimated impact and scalability, the likelihood of sustainable implementation (social vision, cost-effectiveness, team's strategy and commitment). Membership in SIT Alumni Network for the 15 finalists giving access to Scaling Programme, an executive training programme with a focus on scaling and pitching, SITolarships innovation grants programme and Europe-wide conferences.	Conceptually compatible (similar objectives and target groups) but broader thematic scope and more emphasis on non-financial support.
RegioStars Awards	EC	N/A	(Inter-)regional projects in 5 categories of regional development		The Regiostars are Europe's award to EU-funded projects which demonstrate excellence and new approaches in regional development (launched in 2008). With the goal of inspiring other regions and project managers	Categories are smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; urban development and the topic of the year (2020: Youth empowerment). Prize awarded based on applications' innovative character, good results and	Conceptually incompatible (SIs are assessed based on the results already achieved).

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Action title		Managed by	Budget	Target Group	Type of action	Objective	Brief Description	Coherence with EaSI
						across the EU, participating projects are in the spotlight of communication activities at European level. Five categories and a public choice prize are awarded annually.	impact, financial sustainability, transferability and replicability. Considers only project with provable results.	
Horizon 2020 Social Innovations initiatives and projects	EIC Accelerator (former SME Instrument)	Various consortia supported by EC through Horizon 2020	€50k - €2.5m grants per project (approx. 70% of total project cost) Max. €15m equity	SMEs	Funding	The EIC Accelerator supports high-risk, high-potential small and medium-sized innovative enterprises willing to develop and commercialise new products, services and business models that could drive economic growth and shape new markets or disrupt existing ones in Europe and worldwide. It provides full-cycle business innovation support and offers coaching and mentoring.	Support for chosen SMEs through business innovation grants in 2 stages (1) feasibility assessment and (2) development and demonstration purposes. Additional support for chosen projects through equity, free business coaching, access to other business acceleration and facilitated access to risk finance. Stage (1) applications should be project-based (i.e. project should align with SMEs business strategy); for stage (2) projects must be underpinned by a sound and strategic business plan.	Possibly complementary (different target group that is not so much covered by EaSI) with similar but thematically broader objectives.
	Digital Social Innovation for Europe (DSI4EU)⁸⁰		EU contribution: €585k	Social entrepreneurs, hackers, communities, and academics working on DSI	Networking	DSI4EU (funded through CAPS – see below) fostered digital innovations for the social good, helping communities share data, collaborate to solve societal problems and scale their initiatives focusing on open and distributed technologies and new sustainable business models. It developed and upgraded the digitalsocial.eu platform, to promote large-scale collaboration and support experiments among the DSI community and activate collective	Platform (still in use despite project end in May 2017) allows users to showcase their work/organisation; to search for other projects/organisations; to find funding and support opportunities or to advertise own funding offers; to learn about the latest research in the field. Further activities included researching European DSI landscape, producing policy proposals, carrying out an experimental training programme for digital social innovators, and networking events.	Possibly complementary (networking opportunity for digital social innovations as the objective). Could be particularly relevant for 2018/003 EaSI PROGRESS beneficiaries).

⁸⁰ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/688192>

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Action title		Managed by	Budget	Target Group	Type of action	Objective	Brief Description	Coherence with EaSI
						awareness with a large number of citizens across Europe.		
	Entrepreneurial skills for young social innovators in DOIT ⁸¹		EU contribution: €2.48m	Primary and secondary school children (6-16 years of age), educators	Education	DOIT was an EU funded project contributing to youth employment and to creating new jobs in the social economy by nurturing in young pupils seeds for active social innovation: entrepreneurial mind-sets, knowhow and skills. The project developed a toolbox to achieve this and is to be implemented into curricula Europe-wide.	Project developed a collection of materials and handbook for entrepreneurial education. Results show increased creativity, self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial intentions in children aged between 6 and 16. Large scale project with approach trialled in 10 EU members. All materials available under Creative Commons license.	N/A
	Novel Education Model Enabling Social Innovation Skills Development (NEMESIS) ⁸²		EU contribution: €2.13m	Learning communities		NEMESIS designs, develops and tests an educational model for equipping students of primary and secondary education with Social Innovation Skills, values and tools. This process will enable students to become creative social thinkers; develop entrepreneurial mindsets and become social change makers into a world where inequality, poverty and social exclusion are still quite evident.	Developed teaching materials based on collective learning, co-design and co-creation approaches. Developed an Open Learning Platform for SI connecting teachers and social innovators who want to share their vision with young people.	N/A
	Social Innovation Community	Consortium of various research institutes (EU-funded project)	EU contribution: €2.99m	Researchers, social innovators, citizens, policymakers, intermediaries, businesses, civil society organisations, public sector employees	Networking	The Social Innovation Community (SIC) was an EU-funded project aiming at the development of an enabling environment for social innovation by connecting social innovators from Europe and beyond. The project offered various summer schools, workshops and policy masterclasses.	SIC connected with various SI stakeholders and created a common framework of understanding through research work, tested new innovations and developed learning materials and policy recommendations. SIC website to help innovation community stay connected by presenting developments along with themes, countries and networks.	Possibly complementary (seeks to connect SI stakeholders such as EaSI beneficiaries and co-beneficiaries).

⁸¹ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/770063>

⁸² <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/770348>

FINAL ASSESSMENT STUDY

Action title		Managed by	Budget	Target Group	Type of action	Objective	Brief Description	Coherence with EaSI
	European Social Catalyst Fund (ESCF)	Consortium of three NGOs (coordinated by Genio)	Approx. 700,000€ for at least 6 projects	Proven social service innovations	Funding, capacity building support	The objective of the ESCF is to bring together public and private resources to improve social services to enable people who need support to live as valued and participating members of their communities. The ESCF will provide financial and capacity building support to develop plans to scale proven social service innovations.	Eligible projects (projects innovating the delivery of social services aimed at reducing and overcoming social challenges) are selected from a pan-European call with the most important evaluation criteria being robust evidence of previous success. Selected projects receive up to €100 000 and capacity building support for the development of an upscaling plan as well as at least €600 000 for the implementation of that plan.	Funded upscaling of one EaSI project. Complementary to EaSI because it only funds SIs with good evidence proving effectiveness.
	Social Challenges Platform	META group (project funded by EC)	EU contribution: €3.5m Grant budget: €2.43m (€30k each for 81 selected projects)	Social innovators, start-ups, SMEs, public authorities, private companies, third sector organisations	Networking, competition/funding	Social Challenges Innovation Platform is an online environment where public, private and third sector stakeholders can upload social and environmental challenges to receive innovative solutions from European innovators, start-ups and SMEs. The platform aims to provide visibility to social challenges afflicting different actors and regions in Europe.	Platform matches 'challenge owners' (organisations with problems to solve) with innovators. Platform assists organisations in formulating and developing challenge. Platform then calls for solution proposals (services, products or models) from SMEs, start-ups or foundations. Proposals evaluated based on how well they address challenge, innovativeness, impact, scalability, implementation and sustainability.	Conceptually compatible (similar objectives and target groups) but stronger emphasis on capacity building and non-financial support.
	Collective Awareness Platforms for Sustainability and Social Innovation (CAPS)	EC	N/A	Online platforms	Funding, platform initiative	The CAPS initiative aims at designing and piloting online platforms to create awareness of sustainability problems and putting in place collective solutions. It fosters collaborative solutions based on networks (of people, of ideas, of sensors), enabling new forms of digital social innovation. CAPS has also funded a number of social innovation projects – e.g. Catalyst (a project on collective applied intelligence and analytics for social innovation) and Comrades (a collective platform for	Funds online platform projects based on emerging areas including open democracy, open policy marketing, collaborative economy, collaborative consumption, environmental action, and new collaborative approaches. Supported platforms should enable users to share knowledge, make better-informed decisions as consumers, nudge collective environmentally savvy behavioural changes and set up more participatory democratic progresses.	Possibly complementary (very specific objective in terms of SI which EaSI PROGRESS mostly has not covered).

FINAL ASSESSMENT STUDY

Action title	Managed by	Budget	Target Group	Type of action	Objective	Brief Description	Coherence with EaSI
					community resilience and social innovation).		
European Social Fund	EC	€10b/year	Workers, young people, all those seeking a job	Funding	The ESF is Europe's main instrument to support jobs, help people get better jobs and ensuring fairer job opportunities for all EU citizens. It works by investing in Europe's human capital – its workers, its young people and all those seeking a job. Among other social policy initiatives, the ESF aims to support social innovation through its targeted operational programmes.	Funds local, regional and national employment-related projects : from small projects run by neighbourhood charities to help local disabled people find suitable work, to nationwide projects that promote vocational training among the whole population. Projects cover a variety of themes and aims: There are projects aimed at education systems, teachers and schoolchildren; at young and older job-seekers and at potential entrepreneurs from all backgrounds. People are the focus of the ESF.	Funded upscaling of some EaSI projects. Complementary to EaSI because ESF authorities in MS tend to favour proven SIs.
Urban Innovative Actions (UIA)	EC (as part of European Regional Development Fund - ERDF)	Total ERDF budget: €372m Max. funding per project: 80% co-financing up to €5m	Urban authorities	Funding	Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) is an Initiative of the European Union that provides urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test new and unproven solutions to address urban challenges in various areas including but not limited to social innovation.	UIA published calls for applications usually covering 3 to 4 thematic areas – some of which cover social innovation (e.g. demographic change, housing), while others call for innovation in unrelated areas (e.g. digital transition, housing, air quality). Applications are judged based on their innovativeness (notably, solutions must not have been tested and implemented on the ground previously), the involvement of key stakeholders, the measurability of results, and the potential for transferability and scalability .	The same City of Athens department that implemented ESTI@ has been piloting another social innovation ('Curing the limbo'), which model is similar to HomeLab using UIA funding. In broad terms, the actions are somewhat

FINAL ASSESSMENT STUDY

Action title	Managed by	Budget	Target Group	Type of action	Objective	Brief Description	Coherence with EaSI
							incompatible due to different objectives and target groups.
Social Business Initiative	EC	N/A	Social enterprises	Action plan	The social business initiative (SBI), launched in 2011, aims to introduce a short-term action plan to support the development of social enterprises, key stakeholders in the social economy and social innovation. It also aims to prompt a debate on the avenues to be explored in the medium/long-term.	Defined 3 themes with 11 corresponding actions: (1) Easier access to funding for social enterprises (2) Increasing visibility of social entrepreneurship (3) Making the legal environment friendlier for social enterprises	EaSI realised Theme 1 (Making it easier for social enterprises to obtain funding) Action 3 (Set up an EU financial instrument to provide easier access to funding) of this action plan.
Start-Up & Scale-Up Initiative	EC	Max. total €400m venture capital funding from EC	Innovative entrepreneurs		Launched in 2016, this initiative addresses three issues: barriers, the shortage of partners and opportunities, and difficulties as regards finance. It is based on a coordinated approach across EU policies, building on measures in place, including sectoral approaches (i.e. applicable to social innovation), as well as on developing partnerships and a limited and targeted set of practical measures.	Addresses these shortcomings through activity in three areas (1) improved access to finance through Pan-European Venture Capital Fund; (2) amended insolvency law allowing businesses in financial difficulty to restructure early on (entrepreneurs will be fully discharged of their debt after max 3 years); (3) simpler tax filing.	Potentially complementary (objectives focus not only on funding for SIs but also on improving the institutional setting around SI).

4.3. Annex III – Case Studies

CASE STUDIES: 2014 CALL

E4EmPoWL

Contextual part

Needs: The project aimed to address the employment needs of workers from families with multiple problems (i.e. facing multiple social challenges) by improving the national system of counselling and professional empowerment services in the Netherlands.

Project team (implementers): A partnership between Orionis Walcheren, Netherlands, and the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research.

Objectives: (a) develop the concept of an integrated one-stop-shop/office for the provision of social services with a personalised approach in each of the districts of the Dutch Walcheren region⁸³; (b) implement the concept and monitor its functioning.

Method: The project used the model of a one-stop-shop for social services, as a means of social experimentation. Its leading assumption was the model would reduce the time to find employment and improve the quality of provided care. Social services were organised more closely to the citizens' level (i.e. by local and municipal institutions, instead of by the national government).

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents, incl. final report.

- **Effects**
- Contextual description of effects (evidence on measured impacts and results)

Overall, the project failed to produce conclusive results in the area of effectiveness. First, the main objective of the project changed in the course of implementation. The project did not develop a physical one-stop-shop entry for each district as it was initially envisaged due to organisational difficulties. Instead, the project focused on constructing the so-called integral intake procedure, which meant that social work professionals focused on an interconnected network of problems (unemployment, social exclusion, poverty, etc.) rather than focusing on just one issue at a time. Seven pilots were set up to develop and test the integral intake procedure⁸⁴.

Even though a PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) monitoring system was set up to evaluate the effects of the project implementation⁸⁵, the pilot failed to conduct a comprehensive ex-post evaluation with control groups and produce conclusive results on the method's effectiveness and efficiency. First, the results of an integral intake procedure for the social services in Walcheren did not support nor oppose a significant cost reduction of social services⁸⁶. On the one hand, an integral intake procedure requires more time than a regular intake one. On the other hand, there were some examples of cases in which an integrated approach led to a reduction in social costs (i.e. one-off intervention in one domain, sustainably reduced social expenditure in another domain). Second, the analyses of register data provided by the local work and income service organisation (Orionis) did not show any

⁸³ This main objective changed during the implementation process from developing a one-stop-shop in each of the districts to the implementation of the so-called integral intake procedure in Orionis Walcheren.

⁸⁴ DEFIS (2019). Final project report, VP/2014/008/0638, p. 4.

⁸⁵ EC (2019). Projects and organisations funded by the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), p. 36.

⁸⁶ DEFIS (2019). Final project report, VP/2014/008/0638, pp.7-8.

decrease in the time to find employment over the course of the project. In fact, in the last implementation year, applicants were less likely to find employment or education.

On a more positive side, however, interviews with professionals and users showed that they approved of the idea of introducing a one-stop-shop for social services and a more integrated approach because it allowed for better collaboration and exchange between social service professionals (esp. between Orionis and Porthos, which are key social service providers in Walcheren).

Efficiency (focusing on why the project's solution is better than the existing ones)

Based on the project team's evaluation of the pilot there is no evidence to suggest that the proposed integral intake procedure was financially more efficient than the existing alternatives in terms of reducing social spending. According to the project team, the follow-up period in the E4EMPOWL project was too short to evaluate whether the additional costs in staff during intake could have been compensated by a reduction in social benefits and social services support during the social service delivery. However, there was also some positive evidence speaking in favour of the project's non-financial efficiency – specifically, the intervention helped the target group to significantly reduce the amount of time spent on administrative procedures when attending to social service providers.

In terms of internal spending, this was the most efficient project in the 2014 call, having spent just 69% of the initially allocated grant⁸⁷. Based on the desk research evidence, the rearrangement in the grant sum was also connected with the change in key project objectives. The project representatives stressed, however, that they would not have been able to accomplish the project goals with even fewer resources.

They also spoke out against introducing a results-based funding requirement for social experimentation projects. Their argument was that the changing social context often impacts the projects and their results and that the project teams have no influence on such factors. Hence, if a social experimentation project presents negative results, it might often be natural.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

The project's innovative content was reflected in two parts. First, the project offered a comprehensive package of social services in the area of employment available to citizens in a one-stop-shop, thus eliminating the need to deal with multiple institutions, which was new for Walcheren⁸⁸. Moreover, in terms of implementation, the project team tried to apply the 'interactive, incremental and iterative development process' (AGILE) concept. Practically, they conducted a series of smaller experiments within their own social experiment. These small-scale experiments using the integral intake procedure were conducted starting with just one team based on very short cycles. The cycles consisted of (1) a design and building phase; (2) a testing and experimenting phase; (3) an improvement phase. The model, which is a standard procedure for many other industries, such as ICT, was adapted to the national context of the Netherlands' social environment.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

On the one hand, the social experimentation project was positively influenced by two factors. The first driver being the fact that the project was not thematically constrained in the choices of research focus and methods thanks to EaSI's support. The application of the

⁸⁷ €1,150,326.49 instead of €1,688,618.42 in accordance with the final financial statement and initial grant agreement.

⁸⁸ EC (2019). Projects and organisations funded by the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), p. 36.

AGILE concept accounts for the second factor, which allowed the project implementers to make the necessary adjustments to the project's design as the implementation process went along. On the other hand, two barriers prevented the project from fully implementing its innovative potential. First, due to a change in the main project objective and its overall design, it was not possible for the project to construct a valid control group, which prevented a comprehensive randomised evaluation. Furthermore, according to the project team, the follow-up period was too short to produce conclusive evidence and evaluate whether the additional costs in staff were compensated by a reduction in social benefits and social services support during social service delivery.

Scalability/transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

Some of the project's key outputs are embedded at the policy level but, overall, the team of implementers faced significant barriers on their way to upscaling. Specifically, the multilevel approach that they developed was successful, as well as the suggested approach to working with and involving professionals/experts in social policy design. Both were allegedly implemented by the local city councils as services offered on a regular basis, but no confirmation from the local councils could be obtained. Moreover, local social services in Walcheren were inquiring about background information with the entities/organisations, which are usually in early contact with the users (e.g. churches, doctors, schools, etc.) to obtain more background information on them – in some cases, also as a preventive measure⁸⁹.

Barriers and drivers of transferability/scalability

The project results were taken up by the local city councils in the target region only after almost 3 years since the pilot had been implemented. Multiple reasons delaying that uptake were identified. The first reason was the project team's inability to provide conclusive results on the pilot's effects. In the second place, the project team failed to formulate a mainstreaming strategy and focused only on disseminating the results of the pilot only through offline means (i.e. presentations, brochures and prints)⁹⁰. The findings had not been made available digitally to the wider public (e.g. the project lacks its own website). Finally, the political factors also negatively impacted the upscaling process. Because the local elections take place every 4 years in the Netherlands, changes in priorities occur very regularly, this being one of the key reasons for the delay according to the project team representative. They also had to adopt their project outputs to the current needs of policymakers, so not all but some individual products and models were adopted.

Project's internal and external coherence

The project demonstrated a basic level of internal coherence as it showed some degree of cooperation and mutual learning between the E4EmPoWL project team and other projects under the same call. Specifically, they cooperated with RESISOR and INSPIRE by exchanging best practices in the application of a one-stop-shop approach. This cooperation took place largely because of thematic similarities between the projects. For example, the E4EmPoWL team members were invited to Rome to participate in a series of workshops. However, the project team could not provide any evidence of financial complementarities; no stable partnerships emerged as a result. The project representative argued that more synergies could have taken place, had there been a more proactive involvement of the EC project managers, who should have stimulated those synergies between different projects pursuing similar goals.

⁸⁹ DEFIS (2019). Final project report, VP/2014/008/0638, pp. 10-11.

⁹⁰ EC (2019). Projects and organisations funded by the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), p. 36.

With regard to external coherence, the project implementers attempted to create synergies with Horizon 2020 by applying under one of their calls so as to involve representatives of the academia in the process of project implementation. The application, however, was unsuccessful.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

Overall, the programme's relevance in the case of this particular project can be assessed as very high. First, the project interviewees stated that EaSI was the only programme at the EU level, which was funding social experimentation on such a large scale at the time of their application. Furthermore, the project's goals matched well with the call's overall objectives. Specifically, its horizontal objectives, including youth employment, combating long-term unemployment and fighting against poverty and social exclusion, were all addressed simultaneously⁹¹. Third, EaSI empowered their freedom in professional thinking (i.e. there was no pressure from a funding 'mother' organisation). With the EaSI funding, they were able to test more boldly and not think about the goals of the organisation they were working for – hence, they could put the users at the centre of their approach. They were actively supported by the EC in the course of project implementation, as the EC policy officers helped them to establish new networks and contacts with national policymakers.

On the other hand, the project team representatives expressed some criticisms with regard to the lack of post-implementation support provided by the EC. They believed that it would have been better if the EC policy officers could have followed up on the pilot after its implementation for a year to assist with its potential uptake.

EU added value

Overall, there was very little evidence to suggest that the project demonstrated significant EU added value. The aforementioned knowledge spillovers in the European dimension, which happened due to cooperation with other EaSI projects, could be theoretically viewed as positive results. The project's participation in the EaSI Lisbon Conference could also be viewed in a similar fashion. Yet, it was unclear what their end impacts were. No sustainable outputs or long-term results of the project at the European level were discovered. In terms of alternative funding sources in the Netherlands, the project team's representative admitted that the pilot could possibly have been funded at the national level, albeit on a much smaller scale.

List of literature and references

- Visionary Analytics (2021). Interview with the E4EmPoWL project team representative.
- DEFIS (2019). Final project report, VP/2014/008/0638.
- EC (2019). Projects and organisations funded by the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI).
- Orionis (2021). Official website, <https://www.orioniswalcheren.nl/>.
- EC (2018). Entry for Empowered Working & Living (E4EmPoWL), VS/2015/0208, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1035&langId=en#/publication/917>.

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 35.

Family STAR

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Italy is a Member State with one of the highest shares of early leavers from education and training in the EU. The 2018 share stood at 14.5%, while the EU 2020 target was 10%. The standard approaches to addressing the dropout issue (such as the involvement of social services) can be costly and lead to stigmatisation of the children involved. Thus, the team identified a need for softer, preventive welfare interventions.

Project team (implementers): A public-private partnership, including L'Associazione per lo Sviluppo della Valutazione e l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche; Azienda Speciale Consortile Comuni Insieme per lo Sviluppo Sociale; Azienda Speciale Consortile del Lodigiano per I Servizi alla Persona; La Rada Consorzio di Cooperative sociali and Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore.

Objectives: (a) introduce Family Group Conferences (FGCs) as a softer, preventive way to decrease the level of lower secondary school dropouts; (b) test FGCs in the context of lower secondary schools with a large sample of pupils in five Italian regions (Bollate, Lodi, Salerno, Milano and Sondrio).

Method: The FGCs are defined as formal meetings between family members, children and teachers mediated by trained facilitators. FGCs aim to increase the well-being of pupils at school, reduce social exclusion and help families cope with child education. FGCs were used in this project to assist young teenagers with mild well-being/performance problems and prevent them from dropping out of school at later stages.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents, incl. final report.

Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts)

The participation of individual schools in the project was voluntary. In total, more than 60 schools located in five different areas have been involved with a total of 540 pupils. The goal was to determine whether participation in FGCs has statistically significant impacts on children's academic skills and on their relations with parents/relations at school. Thus, the participating schools were asked to choose pupils as candidates, who were then randomly assigned to the FGCs group or to the control group.

To implement FGCs, a group of 120 facilitators were trained to coordinate meetings between families and teachers. The project used an evaluation methodology based on randomised control trials with pre- and post-measurements of outcomes to determine the effects (exact quantitative effects are detailed in three evaluation reports)⁹². The results demonstrated that local public and private service providers (78%), students (84%), parents (81%), and schoolteachers (64%) saw FGCs as useful.

Furthermore, the evaluation results showed a statistically significant impact of FGCs on pupils' well-being at school⁹³, on support received from parents and teachers, as well as on inter-family relations and relations between parents and schools⁹⁴. Moreover, FGCs reduced the perception of teacher discrimination, negative feelings and deviant behaviours

⁹² This method splits the target population into two groups: one is treated with the intervention, while the other is not. The comparison between them shows the effects. Interviews, focus groups; as well as baseline/follow-up questionnaires were used for data collection.

⁹³ EC (2019). Projects and organisations funded by the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), pp. 31-34.

⁹⁴ Argentin G., Barbetta G. P., Maci F. (2019). The Family St.A.R. project: analysis of short-term effects, p. 10-14.

if compared to control groups. However, the team found no evidence of child empowerment (i.e. improvement in academic skills/boosts in motivation), even though FGCs stimulated pupils to take longer and more challenging classes at school.

Efficiency

According to their estimates, the method cost on average €1,000 per pupil, which is comparatively cheaper than traditional interventions (e.g. using several hours of social service experts and psychologists worth several thousand euros) since FGCs rely on family involvement. At the reporting date, the project had not been able to comprehensively assess the cost-benefit ratio due to the lack of data on the pupils-participants that had to be provided by the Italian Ministry of Education. However, there is significant evidence from FGCs literature suggesting that the method constitutes an efficient preventive tool if compared to the involvement of social services⁹⁵. The project team also noted that it could have been useful for them to interact with other EaSI projects pursuing the same goal in order to see what methods could be more efficient.

The project team did not think they could have implemented the project with fewer resources. However, the project team expected the costs of implementation to decrease significantly once FGCs were adopted at scale (if compared to the pilot budget). First, the FGCs practitioners would not have to spend money on complex evaluations in usual circumstances unlike the project team since pilots like these would be enough to prove the method's effectiveness. Second, standardising FGCs at the national level would further decrease costs as the policymakers and practitioners would have the necessary knowledge about the FGCs and would not require extra training. The project itself contributed to the process by producing a specialised manual on conducting FGCs in schools.

With regard to the payment by results concept, the project team argued against the approach, citing the inherently risky nature of social experimentation. Such a condition would be financially challenging for the project. The team would not have applied for EaSI funding, had the condition been in place.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

The innovative content of the project consists of three key elements. First, FGCs had rarely been used as a preventive method applied in schools despite their success in the broader social and judiciary contexts⁹⁶. Second, the model had been mainly tested in Anglo-Saxon countries before, but Italy seemed to be a new promising context for it considering the high relevance of family ties and a high share of resources conveyed through family networks (*regional innovation*). Furthermore, Italy had one of the highest shares of early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) in the EU⁹⁷. Third, unlike other available social interventions, FGCs are not only expert- but also family-oriented. Thus, when used, they do not lead to stigmatisation of the involved children.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

The project team highlighted three main factors (drivers) that helped them with social experimentation. The first driver was that the project team were aware of the previous positive experiences with FGCs not only in other national contexts (e.g. New Zealand) but also in a smaller pilot conducted in Italy called 'Riunioni di Famiglia' (2013-2014). The

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 2-5.

⁹⁶ DEFIS (2019). VP/2014/008/0274. Final activity report, pp. 2-3.

⁹⁷ EC (2019). Projects and organisations funded by the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), pp. 31-32.

second driver was that the EC demanded from the team to conduct a counterfactual impact evaluation with randomised trials. The evaluation helped to quantify, better understand and better disseminate the project's results. The third driver was very specific targeting, which later allowed the project team to find a niche at the policy level for their pilot. The project chose not to target heavily problematic high-school children (e.g. offenders) but focused on one specific group aged 11 to 14, who were experiencing mild well-being/performance problems. On the other hand, the lack of trust in a new method and lack of awareness among Italian public schools about its usage was a negative factor (barrier). It slowed down the implementation process by one year and decreased the number of participants (schools and pupils, from at least 600 pupils in one year to 540 throughout two years)⁹⁸.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

At the reporting date, the project was not being upscaled; it was still in the mainstreaming phase. The project team were waiting for relevant documentation on the long-term effects of the intervention from the Italian Ministry of Education. The project itself was a follow-up of the aforementioned 'Riunioni di Famiglia' pilot, aiming to consolidate its results and increase its external validity through a larger study sample.

However, there was evidence of progress that could lead to further upscaling. Some members of the project team were working on a similar project (called REACT) in Milan by then. Furthermore, Comuni Insieme serving 7 municipalities implemented it as one of the policy tools that are available to schools on request (when teachers need suitable tools to address the specific needs of some pupils⁹⁹). At the national level, positive results of the pilot might further motivate the government to fund similar interventions in the future, especially at the local level.

Theoretically, FGCs could be applied in other EU MSs (esp. in contexts with a high need for softer and preventive welfare interventions) due to their structural simplicity. To further promote the concept, the project produced a methodological manual on how to implement FGCs, which was a key sustainable and transferable project output¹⁰⁰. The Family STAR results were also shared with the FGC Network, a pan-European organisation, supporting FGCs implementers across 13 EU MSs¹⁰¹. The project team expected a particularly strong impact in Mediterranean countries, where educational inequalities and student dropout rates were prevalent and so too was the importance of family ties. During the implementation phase, however, the project team focused more on establishing FGCs in Italy (expanding to other EU MSs was not considered to be an option).

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability

The first driver of popularising the project results was the robust evaluation methodology. Running randomised controlled trials helped them produce solid evidence about FGCs' effectiveness that could be shown to policymakers (see subsection above). The second factor was a wholesome communication strategy, which included not only producing printed materials, interviews and documentaries but also organising an international conference on the FGCs implementation that also included a workshop on randomised controlled trials in education. The conference was a key factor that brought about the interest of local

⁹⁸ The project manager requested schools not only to participate in the FGC meetings, but also to collaborate in several organisational activities, essential to implement and evaluate the FGCs (i.e. data collection, contacts with the families, questionnaire administration).

⁹⁹ The agency covers municipalities of Baranzate, Bollate, Cesate, Garbagnate Milanese, Novate Milanese, Senago and Solaro

¹⁰⁰ DEFIS (2019). VP/2014/008/0274. Final activity report, p. 28.

¹⁰¹ See <https://www.fgcnetwork.eu/en/the-network/> for the list of participants.

policymakers; the project results stimulated Comuni Insieme to adopt the FGCs as one of their standard on-demand services. The conference also helped participants establish a wider professional network (e.g. in Finland).

On the other hand, project implementers were experiencing three challenges with regard to scaling/transfer. First, the evaluation process was challenging at times as it required a lot of financial and human resources. The team also faced significant delays on the side of the Italian Ministry of Education in terms of accessing data necessary for the publication of long-term results. Second, many Italian regions and their policymakers still lacked the knowledge about the FGCs concept as well as about counterfactual impact evaluations for social interventions. Third, the COVID-19 pandemic slowed down all their interactions with partners and the implementation of similar projects.

Project's internal and external coherence

- No evidence of synergies between the project and other EaSI projects was found. The project team suggested a more proactive involvement of the EC project managers, who should, in their opinion, stimulate synergies between different projects pursuing similar goals.
- No evidence of synergies with other EU Social Innovation actions was found either.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

The project team had assessed the programme's relevance as very high, citing three different factors. First, the relevant EaSI call's objectives ideally matched the needs of the project team. Not only did it allow them to test the FGC concept on a large scale, but also helped them to learn new administrative/financial/evaluation skills to continue with social experimentation. For example, after the implementation, some project team members participated in a similar non-EaSI project in Finland, which aimed to further promote the FGCs method. Second, participation in the programme helped the team to showcase the results of FGCs at a broader European level and confirm the method's credibility. The positive results of Family STAR may induce the Italian public administration to fund similar interventions in the future, especially at the local level. Third, the project team believed that the counterfactual impact evaluation requirement imposed by the EC was unique since they have not seen such requirements in other funding programmes. Without this requirement (i.e. if the project team relied on qualitative methods only) the results would not have been as evident. However, the project team also noted the lack of feedback from the EC on the evaluations that were conducted.

EU added value

There are two aspects in which the EU-added value was reflected in the phase of project implementation. To start with, according to the project team, the pilot could not have been implemented without the EU funding due to the fact that the national administration did not prioritise social experimentation as a policy line. While there were certain private foundations like 'Con i Bambini' willing to fund such initiatives as FGCs, their funding capacity was limited to small-scale pilots involving only 50-60 children. Furthermore, the project activities induced cross-border learning. Specifically, regional policymakers and practitioners in Italy as well as the project team themselves learned quite a lot about evaluation methodologies based on randomised control trials through their interactions with the University of York in the UK as well as with the members of an international expert committee overseeing the project (with British and American experts contributing to the project).

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INNOVCare

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Around 36 million people in the EU are affected by rare, often incurable diseases, representing a highly vulnerable and marginalised community. These people often face difficulties in accessing employment, school, leisure, transport or adapted housing and, therefore, struggle to live independently and escape poverty. Existing social systems, however, are usually designed around common diseases; they are often not flexible enough to take into consideration unprecedented health needs. Thus, the project attempted to better identify and suggest methods of addressing the social needs of those suffering from rare diseases (RD).

Project team (implementers): Asociata Prader Willi Din, Romania; Eurordis - European Organisation for Rare Diseases Association, France; Finovatis, France; Institut Za Ekonomska Raziskovanja, Slovenia; Judetul Salaj, Romania; Karolinska Institutet, Sweden; Zentrum Für Soziale Innovation Gmbh, Austria.

Objectives: (a) identify the main social needs and barriers that the target group faced; (b) test and promote the so-called integrated care model to help address those needs; (c) address the issues of complexity of care pathways and the lack of coordination between providers.

Methods: (1) a European survey on unmet social needs of people with RDs and their carers; (2) implementation of the integrated care model for addressing these needs through several case studies and case management; (3) development of implementation tools, guidelines and roadmaps to transfer the project results.

The proposed model approached care pathways from a multidisciplinary perspective, which enables the exchange of information and coordination between health, social and other support services at national, regional and local levels. The pathways linked health services with the social and support services that people with a rare disease and their families use on a daily basis. The model was channelled through special resource centres for rare diseases and regional case managers, which helped to relieve the burden of care management for patients and their families and carers.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents, incl. final report.

Effects

Contextual description of effects (evidence on measured impacts and results)

The project successfully accomplished its objectives as set out by the initial project proposal. Specifically, it first implemented the survey with a sample of more than 3000 participants from across 23 EU Member States. The results confirmed the project team's hypothesis that people with RDs and their carers often face not just disability, but also social exclusion, unemployment and economic hurdles. According to the survey results, 70% of the respondents had to reduce or stop their professional activity and 69% suffered a reduction in income¹⁰², which worsened their socioeconomic standing.

After the implementation of the suggested model through case management, the project team conducted a comprehensive evaluation based on semi-randomised trials¹⁰³ involving a sample of 116 participants in Romania. According to the evaluation, the project

¹⁰² InnovCare (2017). Juggling care and daily life: The balancing act of the rare disease community.

¹⁰³ There were some violations of the experiment's design. Due to an unpredicted dropout of several participants at one point; the project team had to replace them by recruiting new participants.

demonstrated distinctly positive results in two areas. In the first place, the treatment group demonstrated an increase in the beneficiaries' level of information about their disease, their rights and available services as well as in their capacity to manage their own care. Moreover, there was a reduction in the levels of the burden faced by caregivers¹⁰⁴. At the same time, the evaluation showed that there were only marginal improvements in the participants' ability to manage their own care. In-depth interviews with the case managers revealed that patients and their families often did not believe in their own capabilities to address their own needs. A share of patients would probably need this service on a long-term basis to become more independent in this respect.

Efficiency

The project failed to produce conclusive evidence on the efficiency of the proposed model. The results were mixed and not very clear, also because the duration of the project was too short, according to the project team. One of the most time-consuming factors was that the team had to develop a survey during the first stage of project implementation and it took them a while to proceed to the clinical trials. Furthermore, most of the participants did not want to disclose their financial information or other necessary socio-economic data, which complicated the evaluation of efficiency even further.

In terms of internal spending, the project performed rather efficiently, spending 13% less than envisaged in the initial grant agreement¹⁰⁵. The project team representative stated that it could have been possible to achieve the same results with even fewer resources, but then it would have resulted in low-quality outputs. She also spoke out against imposing a results-based funding condition on future projects stating that such a condition would undermine the entire concept of conducting social experimentation.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

The innovativeness of the proposed methodological approach manifested itself in three different ways. To start with, the project conducted the first-ever comprehensive pan-EU survey on the unmet social needs of people with RDs and their carers. Furthermore, the suggested model represents a classical example of service innovation. Specifically, patient social care pathways were optimised by horizontally integrating the national one-stop-shop service with regional case handlers¹⁰⁶. Having case management from the social sector rather than the health sector (e.g. speech therapists and social workers) had not been tried before. In other contexts, such actions were usually implemented with nurses before. The problem, however, was that they did not have such a broad competence in working with RD patients, which social workers usually possess. Additionally, developing a social policy project focused on RDs specifically had not been performed in Europe on such a large scale (only very small-scale experiments at the local level in France were discovered in the course of the literature review).

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

One of the key drivers of the project's success was active cross-border and cross-sectoral cooperation, which later on resulted in establishing the key sustainable output of the project, RareResourceNet. Furthermore, the fact that there was a lack of evidence on piloting social services tailored to the people with RDs across Europe greatly motivated them to bridge the research gap and was a driving force behind the project's application.

¹⁰⁴ See https://innovcare.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/INNOVCare_WP7_Evaluation-report_final-version.pdf pp. 69-70 on the differences in means between the treatment group and control group.

¹⁰⁵ €1,387,260.49 out of €1,595,531.72.

¹⁰⁶ EC (2015). Final Activity Report, VS-2015-0249, p. 3.

The project team faced several barriers when conducting the social experimentation project. First, several changes that happened in the legislation of Romania during the period of implementation prevented some of the patients from receiving the services they needed for free. In some cases, treatments were made available, but could only be accessed if the patient was over 16 years old. To solve the problem, the case managers had to provide advocacy to their patients and inform them about the local laws. That helped the patients to appeal to the local authorities and defend their rights. Also, the project team argued that the evaluation of social innovations, esp. through clinical trials, was extremely challenging. Specifically, evaluation methodologies must take into account the difficulty to engage and ensure compliance from control groups, who are aware that they are not receiving a social service provided to others, which also causes an ethical dilemma¹⁰⁷.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

Most project results were successfully embedded by civil society organisations and policy institutions. First, the project contributed to the national reforms on case management for people with disability and to the formal introduction of the case management profession into the Romanian national code of occupations in November 2018¹⁰⁸. Furthermore, NoRo (a local service provider) was offering the services of case management both offline and online at the time of the drafting. Another major change was that the newly established regional law for social assistance was, by then, requiring the local authorities in Salaj to hire at least one case manager for every 50 disabled people in the municipality. At the level of the same municipality, the NoRo centre continued to build on the INNOVCare experience and train case managers by including them in the community support network. Finally, the project established a European Network of Resource Centres for Rare Diseases – RareResourceNet¹⁰⁹, bringing together national one-stop-shop services to advance holistic high-quality care for RD and complex conditions across Europe. The Network was still functioning as of 2021 due to the support provided by its members.

Nevertheless, the project team still continued their mainstreaming activities (esp. the search for funding). The team developed several roadmaps for project transfer to Spanish, Romanian and Austrian contexts¹¹⁰, and also developed transferable principles and guidelines for their implementation. Furthermore, the project was analysing scaling opportunities of the pilot beyond RDs (i.e. to other pathologies and to social care for people with disabilities at large) at the reporting date.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability

First and foremost, the project was initially developed with an eventual goal to upscale it at the European level through the developed Network (e.g. already during the pilot they had an advisory group with representatives from various EU MSs; the results of the pilot were disseminated by the EC expert group to ensure that those involved the ESF representatives). In the second place, another driver of scalability/transferability was that the project team developed roadmaps for several Member States as a part of the initial implementation plan. In its external communication strategy, the project systemically

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 58.

¹⁰⁸ EC (2019). Projects and organisations funded by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), p. 40. For the legislation, see the specific legislation on the organisation, operation and financing of community care (GO 18/2017 on Community Health Care, art. 6, letter j: [Ordonanța de urgență nr. 18/2017 privind asistența medicală comunitară actualizată 2021 - Lege5.ro](#) and GD 324/2019 - which are the methodological rules for implementing GO 18 / 2017): [NORMA 23/05/2019 - Portal Legislativ \(just.ro\)](#), Art.10, letter: b, h, j, k, l, u, Annex nr. 5.

¹⁰⁹ <https://innovcare.eu/social-services/rarerresourcenet/>.

¹¹⁰ https://innovcare.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/9.4. RoadMaps_final.pdf.

stressed its intention for upscaling; as well as the reasons and potential ways of doing so¹¹¹, which helped to attract the attention of policymakers. Moreover, the Romanian national and regional authorities endorsed the project, making the political prospects for the continuation of the case management service in other Romanian regions rather positive. Also, the digitalisation of some of the proposed services (e.g. patient case management as a virtual service) helped to overcome the difficulties of the pandemic.

On the other hand, the lack of funding available for upscaling in Romania (despite political interest) both at the regional and national levels was the key factor that prevented the project from upscaling in a quicker fashion. The Ministry of Health representatives confirmed that they would be willing to cover a share of current/future expenditures related to human resources (e.g. hiring nurses in their country), however, not long-term infrastructure-related costs. Furthermore, according to the project team, their mainstreaming strategy was still seriously hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the pandemic exacerbated the financial situation in the region (Romania) and further decreased the willingness of the potential investors to consider social experimentation.

Project's internal and external coherence

No evidence of synergies between the project and other EaSI projects was found. According to the project teams, the areas of project implementation were very distinct, which largely prevented them from cooperating with other projects (even though they regularly attended and still attend EaSI conferences). The project team noted that the EC could have stimulated learning synergies and cooperation on cross-cutting issues like communication or conducting evaluations, which could be useful for all projects.

With regard to external synergies, the project successfully established connections with the second Joint Action on RD (RD-Action, 2015-2018¹¹²). This led to some learning experiences through engaging with relevant RD stakeholders as well as strengthening the capacity of their own European Reference Networks (ERNs) to support integrated care. To increase these synergies, the project suggested creating an online hub, where all these programmes would be listed with short descriptions and clear application instructions, pointing out that there was a lack of awareness about such European programmes among project partners and other social policy partners.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

There is mixed evidence on the programme's relevance for this specific project. On the one hand, EaSI remained a unique programme in the sense that it was 'a little bit bolder about social experimentation' than other European programmes like ESF or those at the Member States level, which was EaSI's biggest advantage. Furthermore, the programme allowed not only to establish networks at the EU level but also to develop the necessary evaluation skills¹¹³. That said, the project team believed that there was also a variety of other approaches (not just social innovation), which could have been used in order to address the needs of the target population in question. For example, direct funding of the involved institutions (like the European Resource Network of Resource Centres) could have been an alternative method.

¹¹¹ See e.g. https://innovcare.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/INNOVCare-Results_October-2018.pdf.

¹¹² <http://www.rd-action.eu>

³¹ZSI (2018). The effects of a case management approach on the quality of life of rare disease patients in Salaj, Romania: a pilot randomised control trial of efficacy. Evaluation Report. pp. 123-124, available at: https://innovcare.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/INNOVCare_WP7_Evaluation-report_final-version.pdf.

The project team also admitted that the priorities of the call were not specifically tailored to them or focused on RDs (since it was funded by DG EMPL). They had to 'make themselves relevant' (i.e. adjust the project application documents) in order to be eligible. Specifically, they passed the relevance criteria because they applied by referencing a one-stop approach methodology in their application. However, they believed that when it comes to the calls for long-term care, healthcare should not be taken out of the scope of the EaSI programme. They stressed that it is important to keep EaSI aligned with the EU Social Pillar, which also includes health and long-term care. In their opinion, that could help the project to show impacts at the EU-level first and then gradually be transferred to the national level.

With regard to information circulation, the policymakers admitted that they did not really receive any relevant information on EaSI-like programmes and social innovations developed in their framework. They suggested that institutionalised mechanisms of information exchange (e.g. memoranda of understanding) could be used as a tool to ensure the systemic spread of information amongst the national authorities.

EU added value

INNOVCare's participation in EaSI demonstrated the intervention's EU added value in three different dimensions. First, the pilot itself could not have been implemented without EU support due to the lack of interest and/or funding for social experimentation at the national level. Second, project outcomes were initially designed to be transferred and upscaled across the EU, which would effectively support both the EU and MSs in implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights by addressing unmet social and employment needs of vulnerable populations¹¹⁴. Transfer and upscaling roadmaps were developed for three EU Member States. Moreover, the project created a strong and sustainable partnership, the aforementioned European Network of Resource Centres for Rare Diseases, helping to group national one-stop-shop services and better coordinate RD actions at the EU level¹¹⁵.

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- EC (2019). Projects and organisations funded by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI).
- Innovcare (2018). Possible pathways to patient-centred, holistic care for RD Patients and patients with complex needs in Austria, Romania and Spain, https://innovcare.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/9.4._RoadMaps_final.pdf.

¹¹⁴ EC (2018). Final Activity Report, VS-2015-0249, p. 62.

³³ EC (2019). Projects and organisations funded by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), p. 41.

INSPIRE

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: The project team established that the social services system of Rome lacked a single, unified system of tools shared between the city and its different municipalities to register and assess the citizens' needs and to provide assistance in a tailored fashion. Specifically, the pilot was designed to contribute to the national social services reform, which aimed at meeting the demand for individualised support and improving the system's low-quality results.

Project team (implementers): Private-public partnership of Roma Capitale – Dipartimento Politiche Sociali, Sussidiarietà e Salute (Department for Social Policies, Subsidiarity and Health) in collaboration with third sector-organisations (Comunità Capodarco, Coop. Manser, Coop. Il Grande Carro, Forum del Terzo Settore del Lazio, Studio Come).

Objectives: To create a more efficient integrated system of services that could meet the needs of fragile people relying on the beneficiaries' resources and on proximity networks, thus having a positive impact on the promotion of social entrepreneurship.

Method: As a part of its efforts to create a more efficient integrated system of social services, the project conducted two types of mapping activities. First, it mapped innovative services for fragility care that could have been used in the context of Rome. Second, it also mapped unutilised urban facilities and conducted a feasibility study on how these could be used for better provision of social services by the project implementer. Based on that, the project developed a welfare sharing model of designing and providing care services based on integrated care, customisation, collective intervention, enhancement of the beneficiaries' resources and proximity networks, as well as promotion of social entrepreneurship.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents, incl. final report.

Effects

Contextual description of effects (evidence on measured impacts and results)

The project team established a one-stop-shop, where the services for fragile people were provided. Apart from that, to support experimental services and the management and enhancement of proximity networks, an information system based on a Social Network Architecture (SNA) called SICS (Information System for a Solidarity-based City) was implemented to make it possible for community workers to manage proximity networks; bring together the needs of citizens with the appropriate resource closest to them; identify new needs through a back data analysis of the services¹¹⁶. The SICS aims at informing community workers about the citizens' needs in real-time as well as efficiently communicating the citizens' status among different stakeholders.

The project team conducted a comprehensive counterfactual evaluation of the proposed approach with a control group. That way the project team aimed to verify whether the suggested care model actually improved the efficacy and effectiveness of social care for fragile people in Rome. Specifically, experimental services were assessed in four separate areas¹¹⁷. These were impacts on 1) relatives' burden; 2) impact on health status; 3) empowerment to plan the future; 4) personal autonomy and social well-being.

¹¹⁶ INSPIRE (2018). E-Book: SERVIZI INNOVATIVI PER LA POPOLAZIONE FRAGILE A ROMA; DEFIS (2018). Final Activity Report, VS-2015-0120, p. 20-23.

¹¹⁷ DEFIS (2018). Final Activity Report, VS-2015-0120, p. 24.

The evaluation results showed a significant improvement after the intervention in all dimensions of the assessment. The control group, on the other hand, showed no improvement and deterioration in some cases. Specifically, in the relatives' burden area, the number of relatives who declared they did not have to disregard personal hobbies for care reasons increased up to 12% after the treatment, while the percentage remained the same in the control group. In the area of health status, the treated group with excellent and very good health conditions increased up to 7%, while the control group only up to 1%¹¹⁸.

Efficiency (focusing on why the project's solution is better than the existing ones)

The Inspire project, in addition to the counterfactual impact evaluation, was subjected to an independent efficiency assessment, the results of which were published in a separate study¹¹⁹. The possible effects of the larger-scale adoption of collective services and the fallout in terms of demand satisfaction were identified and described¹²⁰.

The evaluation showed that a new proposed composition of services caused a reduction in waiting lists (for social services) with the same financial resources¹²¹. The estimations suggested that by shifting 10% of the hours given by traditional services to the INSPIRE project's services, the pilot achieved cost savings of 5.7% for the Saish service (disabled people assistance) and 9.3% for the Saisa service (older people care). The project team estimated that savings of 12% and 20.5% could be achieved by increasing the share of shifted hours to 20%¹²². There was also a reduction in the costs of collective services (such as socio-occupational workshops for the intellectually disabled) from €19/hour to €10.25/hour of individualised home care. Finally, while the study could not quantify some of the non-tangible impacts, the effects of feeling helpful and participating in productive activities experienced by the end beneficiaries should also be taken into account.

With regard to internal project management, the project team believed that the resources made available for the project were well-balanced and sufficient. They stressed, however, that with fewer resources it would not have been possible to involve an adequate number of people to experiment, test the model and quantify the efficiency indicators.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

The project represented a classical organisational innovation and its innovative content was reflected in two aspects. First, new services with a collective dimension were tested during the project implementation period (e.g. socio-occupational laboratories, tutoring, solidarity condominiums and networking methods) through the creation of neighbourhood networks for the participation of citizens in the programming of social services. Second, the project attempted to experiment with innovative system actions by attempting to capitalise on the unutilised urban facilities as well as the facilities confiscated from criminals.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

There were two key drivers, which boosted the project's social experimentation process. First, the project team conducted a thorough mapping and literature review of the existing innovative practices, which could be applied in Rome's case. This allowed them to develop a tailored implementation approach toward a greater variety of citizens' needs. Furthermore,

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/Valutazione_di_efficienza_dei_servizi_Inspire.pdf.

¹²⁰ EC (2018). Final Activity Report, VS-2015-0120, p. 25-26.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² https://www.comune.roma.it/web-resources/cms/documents/Valutazione_di_efficienza_dei_servizi_Inspire.pdf.

the project actively capitalised on using the existing unused infrastructures such as abandoned urban facilities. Thus, organising social services allowed the project team to boost the pilot's efficiency.

On the other hand, the project team commented that the project implementation period was too short for a wholesome assessment of the effects and argued that it should be extended to 36 months. Furthermore, due to the lack of cooperation on the side of the National Agency for Confiscated Assets, the project team could not fully implement the concept of using confiscated spaces along with the abandoned ones (i.e. using the facilities and property confiscated from criminal groups). Overall, coordination between different stakeholders as a part of the partnership was rather challenging.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

The project results and the project team's communication activities demonstrated that it successfully proceeded from mainstreaming to embedding¹²³. At the policy level, the system tested by INSPIRE was included in the 2019-2021 Social Plan of Rome and in the latest municipal plans on the provision of social services, which was confirmed by policymakers. Furthermore, the SICS App developed in the project was being used in several Rome municipalities to support proximity networks and school communities¹²⁴ at the reporting date. The project team, however, were still working on further mainstreaming and seeking new upscaling options. As a part of its mainstreaming strategy, they aimed to implement INSPIRE throughout Rome and to disseminate the results through ESF Mutual Learning Processes. According to the interviewees, they secured funding from the ESF as well as the Italian National Operational Programme (NOP) on Governance and Institutional Capacity (2014-2020).

Barriers and drivers of transferability/scalability

There were three success factors, which served as the main drivers for INSPIRE's scalability. To start with, the project's evaluation showed superior effectiveness to the existing system of social services provided for fragile people in Rome. Furthermore, in its implementation and dissemination strategies, the project team relied on the involvement of local communities in Rome, raising awareness about the pilot. According to the project implementers, this also helped to concentrate political attention on the project results. Moreover, there was still wide availability of abandoned urban spaces across the potential territory of upscaling, which could be used by the project in the future¹²⁵.

On the other hand, the project team saw the lack of either financial or administrative follow-up from the EC after the pilot implementation as one of the key factors stalling their project's transfer/upscaling. Besides, political factors (i.e. a change in the national government) became a major negative factor in the course of mainstreaming since the new administration was less willing to fund social experimentation at the national and local levels.

Project's internal and external coherence

- No evidence of synergies between the project and other EaSI projects was found. The project team confirmed this and stated that 'better synergies and better

¹²³ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=21748&langId=pt>.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ As of late 2019, Rome contained approximately 200 public and private buildings of this kind.

coordination between direct (EU-managed) and indirect funding could be vital' for the new programming cycle.

- No evidence of synergies with other EU Social Innovation actions was found during the project implementation period¹²⁶.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

There was a mixed perception of the intervention's relevance by the project team. On the one hand, they found the call goals and objectives relevant to their profile as social experimenters, which eased their application process. Furthermore, they also stressed the importance of EaSI as a unique European programme aimed at fostering social experimentation with no similar alternatives. Finally, the EaSI programme significantly contributed to the team's ability to develop new innovations and conduct similar social experimentation projects (e.g. recently the team presented a structurally similar project in the framework of the ESF+ aimed at adults with particular frailties, who are excluded from purely home-care services).

On the other hand, the project team were also somewhat critical of the programme structure and conditions. Specifically, they argued that the project implementation period was too short and that it lacked any follow-up on matters related to financial sustainability and scalability on the side of the EC. To address this problem, the project team suggested creating a catalogue of the successfully funded social experimentation projects as well as a digital communication platform, which could facilitate the transfer of the developed social innovations into other organisations and/or Member States. Furthermore, the project team believed that EaSI should also have addressed the issue of potential political barriers to upscaling/transfer already at the stage of the project call development. Specifically, they thought that national public bodies participating in EaSI must be (legally) bound to incorporate positive elements of the pilot results during the post-implementation phase. The team argued that this could help all project implementers avoid political changes nullifying the results of the experimentation in the long run.

EU added value

The EU added value of the project team's participation in the programme was reflected in three aspects. To start with, it meant 'organisational learning and the testing of products, methodologies and tools suitable to be employed within the structural policies of the sector'. Also, the project team could not find sufficient funding for their activities at the regional or national level, arguing that politicians are often focused on maintaining the existing solutions and unwilling to dedicate resources to social experimentation. The policymakers admitted that although there were more social innovation funding opportunities available by then, there were not that many in 2013-2014. Finally, the team's participation in EaSI helped to provide greater exposure to other funding programmes such as the ESF and the Italian NOP. The project team intended to capitalise on these contacts for further upscaling and dissemination of project results.

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¹²⁶ Some interactions with ESF and EU-funded NOP took place after the project implementation.

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PACT

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: The 2007-2008 financial crisis caused a sharp increase in the levels of poverty in the region of Castilla y León (Spain) and in the number of people living off the minimal social benefits, who could not or did not want to get reemployed. This has become a long-term issue for the region ever since. The local social services providers had been looking for a preventive and proactive response, which could also guarantee more efficient use of resources and avoid the risk of causing chronic dependence on subsidies.

Project team (implementers): A partnership between several Spanish regional and local public authorities including the Social Services Authority of the Castilla y León Regional Government (main beneficiary), the City Councils of Valladolid, Salamanca and León, the Provincial Deputation of Valladolid as well as the University of Valladolid and 'Asociación Red Europea de Lucha contra la Pobreza y la Exclusión Social de Castilla y León'.

Objectives: (a) create common tools for social workers and professionals, which could support the personalisation and adaptation of social responses provided by case coordinators; (b) incorporate the anticipation capacity into the system using the big volume of available data; (c) develop ontologies that explain the processes of exclusion, identify risks and help with preventive actions.

Method: The project's experimentation method consisted of three main strategies. The first one was a network to coordinate efforts between public services and private social solidarity initiatives, using procedure exchange, joint intervention protocol and shared resources. In the second place, the project implemented a person-centred model of social intervention for inclusion both through multidimensional diagnosis in situations of inclusion/exclusion and through a comprehensive and positive approach that empowers the individual. Finally, it also developed information management software for population segmentation. The tool was based on mathematical information-processing models which select the most opportune intervention actions in each case and which allow for preventive intervention through an early warning system to prevent chronic situations.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents, incl. final report.

Effects

Contextual description of effects

The PACT project successfully achieved all of its objectives as evidenced by its counterfactual impact evaluation¹²⁷. The project team developed a number of sustainable outputs, which were being used by the local authorities in Castilla y León at the time of writing. Specifically, those include several software programmes and methodological guides – a model of shared-summarised social record connected with an internal PACT Network software; an intervention manual; a Multidimensional Tool for Social Exclusion Diagnostics¹²⁸; as well as software for proactive interventions. The series of tools and systems was highly ranked both by 84% of social service professionals and 89% of users as useful and relevant.

At the target group level, despite successfully producing and piloting the software, the project team could not produce conclusive results on the intervention's long-term impacts (which caused them to develop another project – PACT-2, see the next sections).

¹²⁷ EC (2018). Final Activity Report VS-2015-0211, p. 41.

¹²⁸ Includes the following dimensions: monetary, home and environment, employment, health, personal and relational and self-evaluation.

Furthermore, the formal development of the alliances, which were embedding the project results at the policy level, was still in process. The project team had recently signed an official agreement of common understanding with its partners, but even as of May 2021, the necessary legislation was still being developed at the local and regional levels.

Nevertheless, the project also had an important strategy at the policy level – the development of Law 4/2018 from July 2 (Law on the organisation of the Network of Protection and the Inclusion of People and Families in Situation of Major Social or Economic Vulnerability in Castilla y León). This legislation reflected the influence of the approaches and learnings of the PACT project on the regulations and the organisation model of the system as a whole¹²⁹.

Efficiency

The project team failed to quantitatively measure the pilot's efficiency, arguing that it was very hard for the project to quantify the results and impacts pointing to different factors. First, because of the limited funding, the target samples were relatively small (180 people). Moreover, many impacts of the project were very long-term and after just finishing the pilot, it was not possible to measure them. At the reporting date, they were trying to measure impacts more accurately through PACT-2, but with a different population group. Nevertheless, the project team also argued that due to the implementation of a one-stop-shop approach, the end beneficiaries of the social services saved more time (even though no estimations were provided).

In terms of project management efficiency, the project team spent exactly the allocated sum of grant money. According to their calculations, the project could not have been implemented with fewer resources. The only negative factor for the project team cited was the lack of experience and skills required for reporting on an EU-level project, thus slowing down the project team in fulfilling their administrative tasks at certain stages and causing some delays. With PACT-2, the internal project implementation costs fell significantly because they invested only in staff since all the entrance costs were borne by the first PACT project.

The project team spoke out against the payment-by-result condition. They argued that if the EaSI paid only for tangible outcomes, it would not have been possible for them to conduct the research for this project and to test various concepts. The team stressed the social experimentation nature of the project. According to them, social experiments need both time and money to find out whether their approach works or not.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

The innovative content of the project can be classified as a product innovation (due to the development of new types of analytical software and diagnostic tools). The project combined two interconnected strategies, which manifested its innovative content at the regional level: on the one hand, the development of public-private partnership for intervention in situations of social exclusion; on the other hand, proactive social investment¹³⁰. The first focused on a new way of organising services through a public-private partnership integrating information, resources, responses and learning. The second part involved experimenting with a new approach to care provision (such as developing diagnostic tools; tracking software, etc.). This approach was also innovative due to its

¹²⁹ EC (2018). Final Activity Report VS-2015-0211, p. 17.

¹³⁰ https://www.dgaspccbacau.ro/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/CommunicationWebPage_Intervention_PACTproject_3.pdf.

proactive and preventive nature and the fact that it uses population segmentation techniques for prevention.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

The key driver of the social experimentation process was that the project team were a part of the policymaker circle at the regional level. The constant support of the policymakers – both at the legislative and operational levels (financially) – allowed for quicker implementation as well as for embedding the project results at the policy level.

On the other hand, there were two key barriers. First, the project team lacked the experience and skills required for reporting on an EU-level project, as mentioned above. This slowed down the implementation process because the team had to learn these skills as the project went on. Furthermore, another barrier was the lack of opportunities to develop joint activities with other projects – unlike in H2020 – which could have created financial synergies or generated new ideas.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

The project results were further upscaled in Castilla y León and picked up by the regional government. The Regional Government of Castilla y León invested more than €250,000 into developing a continuation project, PACT-2, considering upscaling the project based on the lessons learned, developed tools and working practices. Despite the implementation process being significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, PACT-2 progressed with its activities¹³¹. The project team, however, stressed that they were still developing further mainstreaming plans for dissemination of the project outputs across all the provinces of Castilla y León, which was why more efforts, esp. through potential PACT-3, would be required.

Furthermore, the project aspired to serve as a reference for other administrations at the national and EU level¹³². Its outputs were being implemented across Castilla y León, particularly in the third sector (with NGOs like Caritas or Red Cross). With regard to transfer to other national contexts, the project team outlined detailed recommendations and conditions for transferring the project model. However, during the interview, the project representatives stated that they were quite sceptical about transferring the entire PACT model due to the differences existing in the field of social service provision for the economically deprived populations. The project team argued that for a successful transfer of the model, it would be necessary to maintain institutional involvement, adjust the model and tools and establish references for the future intervention.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability

Two factors were identified, that significantly boosted the project's scalability. First, the pilot was designed with the engrained idea of eventual upscaling (as a part of the regional development strategy). This allowed the implementers to outline some preliminary steps for PACT-2 during the finalisation stages. Moreover, apart from the traditional dissemination means, such as printed materials or publication of deliverables on its website, the project disseminated its results across the EU through a number of workshops conducted in multiple MSs, including Romania, Hungary, Poland, Ireland and Portugal¹³³, helping to raise

¹³¹ PACT 2 (2021). INTERVENCIÓN PACT-2 Conclusiones del Proyecto, pp. 2-3.

¹³² EC (2019). Projects and organisations funded by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), p. 44.

¹³³ See e.g. <https://www.dgaspcbacau.ro/proiectul-european-pact-proactive-case-based-targeted-social-inclusion/>; EC (2018). Final Activity Report VS-2015-0211, p. 42.

awareness about the project results in other EU MSs and further expand the Network developed by the project.

With regard to other barriers, the project team admitted that the project's transferability is limited for two other reasons. First, the project model was designed specifically for the region of Castilla y León and, if transferred, it would require major adjustments in the types of services provided. Second, the model itself was labour-intensive and required changes to the patterns of social services intervention; provision of specific training for the specialists involved; and, in some cases, changes in their institutional roles. Third, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented them from further necessary measurements of effectiveness and efficiency in the PACT-2 project. Finally, the social media and online dissemination efforts of the project were not very systemic and sustainable. For example, the project website was not available for more than a year as of July 2021¹³⁴, while the project's social media accounts stopped their dissemination efforts by 2019¹³⁵.

Project's internal and external coherence

The project experienced significant learning synergies with INSPIRE as well as the other two Spanish projects (RESISOR and ERSISI), which were all funded under 2014 and 2015 calls. For example, the RESISOR team were in Castilla y León, in a technical exchange, to study how the PACT team organised and managed the unit-based social history and reports. The project team admitted that even though both teams were in the same country and worked in a similar field, they would not have discovered each other's existence, had it not been for EaSI. The lack of an annual national social service platform in Spain is a key issue here. Nevertheless, no evidence of financial complementarities was discovered.

Finally, while the project was aware of the other European funding programmes, it did not experience any external synergies with them either. According to the interviewed policymaker, however, there were at least two similar Spanish initiatives at the time. Both the project team representatives and the policymaker agreed that the key problem hindering cooperation was a lack of coordination between various regions in Spain and across the EU in terms of social policies. Oftentimes the team members were not even aware of the existence of those initiatives until their participation in EaSI.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

EaSI's relevance for the project was high for several reasons. First, the programme successfully addressed not only the needs of end beneficiaries but also the project team's organisational needs because the call's goals and priorities matched very well with PACT's concept (one-stop-shop and inter-sectoral cooperation). Overall, the team were extremely satisfied with the principles and goals outlined in the 2014 call, stating that they did not require any adjustments. Furthermore, according to the interviewed policymaker, the project also significantly increased interest in the concept of social innovations at the regional level. If there were no European initiatives in this area, there would be no push and the regional and national governments would not get interested, the policymaker admitted. Also, while the implementers were aware of alternative funding sources at the European level, EaSI was thematically closer to what they envisaged in terms of addressing explicitly social needs through innovation. Hence, the project team were more likely to secure funding with EaSI. As for the national funding opportunities, those were available, but in a very limited fashion and not for large-scale social experimentation. At a later stage, those funds were used for continuing and upscaling the project at the regional level.

¹³⁴ <http://www.pact-project.eu/en/>.

¹³⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/PACTproject.eu/>.

EU added value

There are two aspects in which the EU-added value was reflected in the project. To start with, the EU funding allowed the project team to experiment and evaluate a planned intervention and adjust it accordingly on a larger scale (due to the national funding being available, but rather limited). The PACT project, according to the project team, operated in the relevant areas of EU policies – the Europe 2020 target of poverty reduction; the recommendations of the European Semester and the agenda of the Social Investments Package; as well as the reinforcement of various principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights¹³⁶. Furthermore, participation in EaSI helped the project team with gaining the skills and experiences necessary for working with EU projects and European public procurement. It also raised awareness about the EU funding opportunities among the representatives of the Spanish public sector at the regional level in Castilla y León.

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¹³⁶ EC (2019). Projects and organisations funded by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), p. 45.

RESISOR

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Up until 2014, the information management systems used in the Spanish region of Andalusia for the purposes of social service provision were fragmented and incomparable. Therefore, the region included the implementation of a Regional Single Social Record (RSSR) as one of its main political strategies in social services. While Andalusia had some experience in the implementation of an electronic health record, the idea of digitally integrating both social and healthcare systems became a regional innovation.

Project team (implementers): A Spanish public-private partnership between the Regional Ministry of Equality and Social Policies (RMESP) of Andalusia (main beneficiary), the City Council of Dos Hermanos, the Andalusian Agency of Social Services and the International University of Andalusia on the public as well as AYESA, DomusVi, ISOTROL and Sopra Steria on the private side.

Objectives: (a) vertical and horizontal integration of existing social services through the creation of a one-stop-shop system; (b) improvement of effectiveness and efficiency from the point of view of users and professionals.

Method: The project team decided to develop the so-called Regional Single Social Record (RSSR) system, which was a special digital tool aimed at improving the quality of social services provided to the citizens; facilitating the integration of personal information from different sources into one electronic document; with all of the information of the beneficiary of the resource or service.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents, incl. final report.

Effects

Contextual description of effects

The most important result of this project was the creation of a one-stop-shop system for social records. The Electronic Single Social Record of Andalusia (ESSR) was the first experience of Single Social Record in Spain, especially with such a large scope¹³⁷. The project team achieved successful vertical integration of the information systems at the local and regional levels between the City of Dos Hermanas, where the pilot took place, and the Regional Ministry of Equality and Social Policies¹³⁸. Horizontal integration was achieved through cooperation between different stakeholder types (e.g. the regional public sector joined hands with Sarquavita, a private social service provider through the course of project implementation). The new RSSR system was designed to coherently replace the Social Services User Information System (SSUIS) and System for Autonomy and Care for Dependence (SACD) and a few other smaller systems, which had been in place across different social service sectors¹³⁹.

The project conducted a separate evaluation of the intervention effects through a series of before-and-after studies of target groups through surveys, which were then substantiated through qualitative interviews with independent experts. According to the results of the evaluation, the implementation of the suggested one-stop-shop model resulted in slight improvements in their working environment (by 3%) as well as improvements in general communication as well as communication with the citizenry (by 3%). Overall, the services

¹³⁷ EC (forthcoming). EaSI Report on Projects and Organisations, vol. XII, 2020, p. 20.

¹³⁸ DEFIS (2019). Final Activity Report, VS-2015-0205, pp. 12-15.

¹³⁹ <http://www.resisor.es/images/descargas/Libro-Blanco-INGLES.pdf> pp. 23-24.

quality index increased from 24,14 to 25,73 by 6,5%. At the same time, the system did not show any significant progress in the area of information integration, where the levels of improvement remained around 0% or, in some instances, even lower.

Efficiency

The project failed to provide any evidence of proving the financial efficiency of its proposed solution, if compared to the existing alternatives. The project team, however, pointed out that they did not aim at assessing efficiency in the first place; this was not their initial goal. Their task focus was to create an effective cohesive system across the indicated regions, which they successfully accomplished (see above). Thus, in terms of saving time and ensuring data comparability/cohesion, their pilot demonstrated superiority, if compared to the previous systems in place.

The project representative supported the idea of imposing results-based conditionality arguing that it could guarantee effective implementation. However, he noted that such conditionality must be applied with certain restrictions. Specifically, the social experimentation projects, which aim at examining whether a certain idea works or not, should not be punished for delivering negative results.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

RESISOR designed and developed a novel system in which complex records of citizens' social data could be stored in one place and can be easily accessed anytime both by the citizens and social service professionals. According to the project team, the concept of data interoperability was a major innovative part of the project, representing an organisational innovation at the regional level. At that time in 2014, when the pilot only began to stimulate administrative cooperation across different social service data management systems in Spain, this concept was not very common. Furthermore, the project team believed that the achieved level of coordination between different administrative bodies was another good innovative practice for the region.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

Persistent support of the local policymakers was the most important driver of social experimentation in this project. The project team not only received administrative and political support from the regional ministries but also had an opportunity to act within a special legal framework drawn upon by the regional government for the implementation of the RESISOR concept. The second driver was the learning opportunities provided by EaSI – for example, through interaction with other projects as well as thematic EaSI conferences and sessions, which allowed the project to establish broader networks across Spain.

On the other hand, the project team faced a number of challenges in the course of the project implementation. The first group of challenges was mainly GDPR and ICT-related due to the national legislation being rather strict in aiming to protect highly sensitive social security data. Furthermore, integrating the information management systems was met with some resistance in certain local administrations as specialists were rather conservative and had to be convinced to use a new approach. Finally, the implementers also had to deal with the limitations of specialised personnel that work with care organisations as well as tight project budgets¹⁴⁰.

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.resisor.es/images/descargas/Libro-Blanco-INGLES.pdf> p. 8.

Scalability/transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

The project was successful in its upscaling/transfer efforts, effectively transitioning from mainstreaming to embedding. The project team contributed to the structural reforms in Andalusia, notably through the potential future options for the use of the RESISOR tool offered in the White Book published by the project team¹⁴¹. The project was upscaled in a system called CoheSSiona aimed at further fostering cohesion of the social service systems across various Spanish regions. CoheSSiona consolidates all the information from business procedure information systems.

There is evidence of the project results being embedded at the policy level. After the pilot finalisation, the team became a part of a special working group, where all the Spanish regional ministries of social affairs are represented. The ESSR in Andalusia received its legal basis in the new Law of Social Services, article 47, and was developed taking into account the overall requirements of the Law. Furthermore, the White Book of the ESSR was adopted by the Regional Ministry of Equality and Social Policies and the Agency for Social Services and Dependency of Andalusia¹⁴². The Regional Governments of Asturias and Canary Islands already expressed their interest in replicating the experience of RESISOR.

According to the project representative, their current upscaling plans were also endorsed by the national government in 2019-2020, which led to further mainstreaming efforts. Specifically, the project team were trying to receive more funding for further expansion at the reporting date. They had already secured several donors – specifically, FDDER as well as Red.ES. The total amount of funding that they received was €20 million. Furthermore, the project team were still developing new partnerships and networks through the EaSI meetings and cooperation with regional ministries in Spain. On the technical side, the project team were integrating new procedures into the RESISOR system: e.g. residential care, and infants care (esp. with regard to mistreatment). They were also working on the acquisition of new infrastructures and on the starting of a Technical Office of Interoperability for e-Government Data.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transfer

The first key driver behind the project's scalability efforts was that it was initially designed with the goal to upscale in national and European contexts. It was presumed that RESISOR would start integrating new procedures of the regional Ministry in the area of social services (and not only those initially integrated into the pilot). Also, the project team developed a comprehensive upscaling strategy for the pilot. Specifically, the White Book of the RSSR established the roadmap for the future of the RSSR and its extension to the overall public and private system of social services in Andalusia¹⁴³. Moreover, regular contacts with policymakers across the country and persistent networking were essential to establishing business connections with other regional governments and ministries. Besides, the project outputs were produced being sustainable in nature (i.e. software, training modules and handbooks) and were circulated as widely as possible. For example, copies of the project's White Book were even available on Amazon¹⁴⁴.

The key barrier to their scaling efforts became the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly slowed them down since the working group of the Spanish regional ministries of social affairs was closed. In early 2021, the project team relaunched the efforts again and at the

¹⁴¹ EC (forthcoming). EaSI Report on Projects and Organisations, vol. XII, 2020, p. 20.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ <http://www.resisor.es/images/descargas/Libro-Blanco-INGLES.pdf> pp. 53-56.

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.amazon.com/Informe-Evaluaci%C3%B3n-Proyecto-RESISOR-Regional/dp/8479933445>.

time of the drafting they were cooperating with the regional ministries that were interested in their project; mainly Galicia, Castilla Leon as well as Catalonia. The project team argued that if they successfully established themselves at the regional and national level, they could proceed to the European level too. That said, the project team representative lamented the lack of knowledge and/or guidance on the relevant EU funding programmes, which could help them with additional funding and project scaling as of now. He stated that most of the funding schemes were either not fitting or that the application procedure was too convoluted.

Project's internal and external coherence

The project experienced both internal and external synergies from participation in the EaSI programme. Exchange of experiences in applying the one-stop-shop model took place with the Government of Castilla y León in the framework of the PACT project. In that context, the RESISOR project representatives visited the PACT facilities in Rome. Externally, there were fewer synergies, but the project team had used opportunities to present their project to the ESF+ representatives. Furthermore, in 2016, RESISOR was presented as a commitment in the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing reference site and was awarded, as other initiatives, with a maximum score of four stars¹⁴⁵.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

The programme's relevance was perceived as relatively high. At the time of their application, EaSI was the only programme at the European level, which funded social experimentation interventions. The programme provided them with the crucial funding necessary for the first stages of the innovation's development as well as allowed greater exposure to stakeholders both at the national and European levels. The project team also believed that the goals of their call for projects were formulated adequately and ideally corresponded to their needs as social innovators (due to their focus on promoting the concept of interoperability).

One important problem that the project team saw with EaSI was that it focuses only on funding social experimentation pilots rather than on continuous support of social innovations. The project team thought they could have benefitted more from follow-up contacts with the EC after the pilot.

EU added value

First, the provided funding significantly accelerated social experimentation. The blueprint of the Law of Social Services established in the year 2014 the right to have a single social record for each of the citizens in Andalusia as a key tool of the public system of social services¹⁴⁶. However, there was not enough regional and/or national funding available for the pilot implementation. The EU funding facilitated the starting point of the RSST production in Andalusia. Without it, the RSSR implementation would have been delayed significantly, since the Law of Social Services was approved at the end of 2016.

Furthermore, the project team benefitted from participating in the project as a team of social innovators as they established partnerships with other EaSI projects (e.g. PACT) as well as potential client networks across Spain and Europe. This created knowledge spillover effects, which could not have happened, had the project been implemented in a regional/national context only.

¹⁴⁵ See e.g. here https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311899166_European_Innovation_Partnership_on_Active_and_Healthy_Ageing_-_EIPonAHA_-_Andalusia_RS_4_stars

¹⁴⁶ EC (2019). Final Activity Report, VS-2015-0205, p. 14.

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Vouchers for the provision of flexible child-minders service to workers with nonstandard work schedules

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Even before 2014, the Latvian childcare system envisaged the provision of childminders service to workers with standard work schedules. However, ca. 35% to 40% of the labour population in the target municipalities consisted of workers with non-standard schedules, who were in need of more tailored assistance. Latvian parents generally prefer the option of hiring childminders at home rather than sending children to kindergartens (due to unwillingness of doing extra travel at irregular hours). Thus, the service was designed as a tool, which could help to improve the parents' work-life balance.

Project team (implementers): Ministry of Welfare of the Latvian Republic.

Objectives: (a) find an optimal childcare arrangement for workers with non-standard working schedules; (b) find optimal conditions for intersectoral partnership and self-regulation practices; (c) find a long-term model of subsidising and developing flexible childcare services.

Method: One of the strategies for the reconciliation of work and family life is concentrated on the provision of childcare services for employees. The project suggested the concept of flexible childcare arrangements for Latvian enterprises with non-standard work schedules. In the model suggested by the project team, the work schedule and organisation remained relatively invariable, but employees were stimulated to delegate childcare duties to specially provided childminders or other authorised caregivers.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents, incl. final report.

Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured results and impacts)

This programme was piloted between 2015 and 2018 in three municipalities of Latvia with 150 potential recipients. The model attempted to balance between the social needs of employers (productivity; an optimal range of employment; low employee rotation rate; decrease in voluntary dismissals) and employees (work-life balance; possibility to use childcare services during their working time)¹⁴⁷.

The project evaluation did not show conclusive results on the impacts of the service. It used a comparative experimental design with a control sample (150 participants in the intervention group and 150 participants in the control group). An assessment of the project's short-term results based on surveys showed that the service improved the organisation of family life, as well as satisfaction with life¹⁴⁸. Furthermore, job satisfaction rates also proved to be higher compared to the control group¹⁴⁹. Moreover, service recipients showed higher motivation to provide co-financing for continuous implementation of the measure than the control group¹⁵⁰. However, the hypotheses about the positive effects on employment figures

¹⁴⁷ https://www.lm.gov.lv/sites/lm/files/data_content/easi_project_dkvisit1.pdf

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.researchgate.net/project/Vouchers-for-the-provision-of-flexible-child-minders-service-to-workers-with-nonstandard-work-schedules>; Projektu Un Kvalitātes Vadība (2018). Study Under the Project Vouchers for the Provision of Flexible Child-Minders Service to Workers with Nonstandard Work Schedules.

¹⁴⁹ The project team points out that these changes have occurred despite an overall drop in job satisfaction observed in the cities participating in the project.

as well as about employers' readiness to participate in the provision of the service in the long run were rejected.

With regard to sustainable outputs, the project team developed a website, which was designed to publish the project results as well as good practices from different countries on the implementation of work-private life balance initiatives¹⁵¹. The website functioned under the auspices of the Latvian Ministry of Welfare. Another tool for evaluating family-friendly childcare arrangements in the workplace for workers with non-standard work schedules was developed in cooperation with the Latvia's Institute of Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility, InCSR (see more details below).

Efficiency

The project was subject to an independent efficiency evaluation, which showed positive results¹⁵². With regard to the intervention's impacts service costs fell during the period of project implementation, incl. and costs of childcare services by 12%. Regarding the efficiency of resource utilisation, it was deemed high as well¹⁵³. All planned results had been achieved at the time of evaluation with just 85% of financing utilised.

The main factors that affected efficiency negatively was the high administrative burden related to the provision of services (see above). Furthermore, according to the project representatives, they faced problems with staff rotation due to the fact that for each employer replacement they had to receive an official approval of the EC. This created additional administrative and time costs, which could have been avoided.

With regard to the idea of introducing a results-based funding condition, the project team thought that imposing such a condition would be possible. They would still have applied, had it been in place. That would mean, however, that the project's initial phase would require the involvement of additional stakeholders (e.g. academia representatives). Moreover, they admitted that for some social experimentation projects it could be challenging to implement such a condition.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

The proposed model was not innovative conceptually, since it was already in use in Denmark and other EU MSs and no content-related changes were made to it (e.g. in target groups). However, at the time of implementation it represented a service innovation that was new to the Baltics region and, specifically, Latvia. Structurally, another innovative part of its implementation was that the project did not have the direct goal to change the situation of the target group, but rather to find the optimal model for the provision of childcare support¹⁵⁴. The intersectoral cooperation approach between the public and private sectors in this area was also new to Latvia. An additional element of social innovation in this project was the improvement of the social and financial well-being of families, through the creation of new social relationships between employers, employees and childcare practitioners¹⁵⁵.

⁶⁸ Sia Weitner (2018). Study 'Evaluation of Results under the Project Provision of Flexible Childcare Service for Employees who Work Non-Standard Hours'.

¹⁵¹ See www.darbsungimene.lv

¹⁵² Sia Weitner (2018). Study 'Evaluation of Results under the Project Provision of Flexible Childcare Service for Employees who Work Non-Standard Hours', p. 30.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p. 31.

¹⁵⁴ EC (2018). Final Activity Report, VS-2015-0206, p. 3.

¹⁵⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1416&langId=en&reviewId=260>

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

The project team faced many barriers in the course of implementation and suffered at least three delays. First, there was an unexpectedly low interest among the target groups (esp. employers) in the pilot's concept at the initial stage of implementation, which resulted in some implementation delays. Furthermore, the initial time period foreseen for implementation was too short because it did not take into account the time the target group needed to get used to the service and to share the benefits¹⁵⁶. Similar behaviour was observed among employers. Moreover, almost all participating parties had to face significant administrative burden due to the fact that childminder's services were provided through public procurement (resulting in excessive paperwork). Additionally, contracts had to be concluded between four different parties – parents, employers, municipalities and Ministry representatives, which was a major legal complexity, especially at the initial implementation stages. Finally, the project implementers believed that they should have also involved the representatives of the academia in project implementation to ensure better and wider coverage of its results in scientific publications.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

In terms of scaling, the project did not manage to embed the pilot at the policy level due to the lack of funding. Neither did it succeed in establishing a long-term model of subsidising and developing flexible childcare services in Latvia. However, the Ministry of Welfare was still attempting to mainstream the concept of vouchers at the national level to date. Specifically, it was planning to prepare a report to the government on the introduction of the service, including changes to the legal framework in order to apply a reduction of Personal Income Tax on the employer's support for this service. The service was included in the new policy initiatives proposed by the Ministry of Welfare¹⁵⁷.

The project's evaluation framework for childcare arrangements was transferred and was used for the evaluation of childcare arrangements of various businesses in Latvia by InCSR, at the time of the drafting. On their end, Latvian municipalities were trying to expand the range of childcare solutions, which were available by then (e.g. extend the existing co-financing system for the babysitters in order to attribute these solutions to those working non-standard time in Jelgava and Riga; support within the framework municipal social services using experience gained in Valmiera; more active use of the register of childminders).

The pilot raised some awareness about the concept of vouchers for the provision of flexible childcare arrangements to workers with non-standard work schedules among Latvian enterprises (e.g. Air Baltics, national theatres). Nevertheless, the InCSR representative admitted that the local businesses were not very likely to uptake the practice because most of the industries employing people with non-standard working hours focused on low-qualified jobs (e.g. in retail). Due to the high potential costs of the measure as well as unresolved tax issues, its uptake was highly unlikely, if compared to the alternatives.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability

The main driver of the Ministry's ongoing attempts to upscale the concept was that it was slowly gaining ground in the private sector after the implementation of the pilot, thanks to the intersectoral cooperation platform they established during the pilot.

¹⁵⁶ EC (2018). Final Activity Report, VS-2015-0206.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 17.

That said, the pilot also faced significant barriers on its way to upscaling. The first barrier was the unwillingness of many employers to take over the full responsibility for funding for the scheme after the pilot had been implemented¹⁵⁸. Eventually, it led to the restructuring of the service's concept by the end of the pilot implementation. In the new concept, co-financing would have to come from all four parties, i.e. the state budget, municipalities, employers and parents themselves. Second, the change in political administrations in Latvia throughout the post-implementation period also resulted in the change of policy priorities of the government, which was not very willing to fund such interventions to date.

Project's internal and external coherence

- No evidence of synergies between the project and other EaSI projects was found. The project team confirmed this citing thematic differences with other projects and suggested narrowing down the thematic scope of the future calls.
- No evidence of synergies with other EU Social Innovation actions has been found during the project implementation period.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

There is mixed evidence on the relevance of the EaSI programme for the project. The project representatives argued that the call priorities were thematically relevant for their pilot and its target groups, which was one of the main reasons why they applied. They did not see any major challenges in that regard but stressed that more follow-up would be necessary from the EC side, especially after the implementation with regard to upscaling/transfer.

In the project team's view, EaSI remains the only major source of funding for social experimentation at the EU level due to its size and willingness to financially support experimentation projects. As of 2014, they did not see any other alternatives to it at the European level, although they admitted that receiving funding through other programmes (e.g. ESF, EEA childcare) was easier then than it used to be before.

Finally, there were also contradictory opinions about the relevance of the social experimentation model in the context of this project. Both interviewees agreed that there could have been other ways of potentially addressing the social needs in question – for example, through direct funding or a combination of measures (e.g. a legislative reform combined with new modes of service provision and direct funding).

EU added value

There is no conclusive evidence on the EU added value to this project. On the one hand, the European dimension of the project implementation process played an important role in their motivation to apply since they specifically wanted to see how the practice works in other Member States. For example, the project implementers gathered new skills and project management experience through an exchange visit to Denmark, where a similar childcare system had been in place at the national level for a longer period of time¹⁵⁹. Furthermore, participation in the EaSI's Lisbon Conference allowed the implementers to exchange best practices with other project teams. However, no cross-European partnerships were established as a result.

¹⁵⁸ During the 1st stage of the implementation of the project (4 months), the childcare services were funded entirely by the project. In the 2nd stage (2 months), 80% of the costs were funded by the project and the remaining 20% were covered by external stakeholders. In the 3rd and 4th stages (4 months), the ratio was 60% to 40%.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 20.

Financially, the final report of the project stated that the pilot could not have been implemented without the EU funding due to the lack of national funds and policy prioritisation¹⁶⁰. However, during the interview, the project team admitted that the pilot's implementation could have been possible in cooperation with local municipalities (even though it would not have been guaranteed).

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¹⁶⁰ EC (2018). Final Activity Report, VS-2015-0206, p. 24.

CASE STUDIES: 2015 CALL**Bridging Young Roma and Business****Contextual part: Summary**

Needs: Prejudice against Roma is widespread in both Bulgaria and Hungary. For this reason, young educated Roma often lacks access to quality white-collar employment in private companies.

Project team (implementers): A cooperation between three non-public partners: the NGOs Open Society Institute Sofia (OSI); Autonomia Foundation and the Central European University as research partner.

Objectives: The pilot's operational objective was to test a model of integrated service delivery for the access of young Roma into the private sector labour market. The strategic objective was to decrease youth unemployment among the socially disadvantaged Roma group by making beneficiaries more competitive in the labour market.

Method: The pilot targeted job-seeking Roma with at least completed secondary education or Roma in the final two years of secondary schools for dropout prevention. The approach rested on three pillars: (1) prepare beneficiaries for recruitment processes and the work environment; (2) in-school tutoring; (3) engage employers in (1) and (2) and assist them in developing sensitive recruitment strategies. Beneficiaries were set up for the labour market not only by improving their skills but also by putting them in touch with employers.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents.

Effects**Contextual description of effects (measured results and impacts)**

The project counterfactually evaluated its primary objective: reducing unemployment among young well-educated Roma. A group of 280 Roma (150 in Hungary and 130 in Bulgaria), aged between 18 and 35 were enrolled in the treatment group. The project evaluation has not produced conclusive results on impacts on labour market participation, income or job satisfaction because the outcomes of the recruitment preparation were different in Bulgaria and Hungary. However, the pilot was an overall success because nearly 30% of the participants from both countries found employment at a private company and most of them became regular employees. In addition, an initiative promoting diversity in workplaces was formed and the project implementers were often approached by major corporations requesting consultancy on corporate diversity and integration policies.

In Bulgaria, 30 out of 130 participants found employment, including two contracts from office visits, two from the dropout prevention strand and three from interviews with partner company Lidl. The remainder found jobs outside of the project by drawing on their new skills. However, there were no statistically significant positive effects on labour market participation, income or job satisfaction. In fact, participants' income was slightly below that of the control group, as beneficiaries had become 2.5 times more likely to pursue further education because of the intervention. In fact, approximately 30% of Bulgarian beneficiaries returned to university or changed their current studies, while 50% indicated their skills improved. Hence, the pilot generated gains in terms of education and personal development, but not in terms of employment. This result was unexpected.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ DEFIS (2019). VS/2015/011/0422. Final activity report.

In Hungary, 50% of the beneficiaries who participated in training sessions improved their employment situation within six months, as opposed to only 26% in the control group.¹⁶² Fourteen participants found jobs with partner companies, 29 through personal contacts, and 13 through open calls. The latter underpins the effectiveness of the skills training. The skills training noticeably improved job application and selection process skills, especially realistic self-esteem, self-awareness, communication skills, interview techniques, and tailoring CVs to an opening.¹⁶³

The impacts of the dropout prevention differed, too. In Bulgaria, 90 out of 170 participants took the final matriculation exams and 83 passed them. Their average scores were 15% higher than that of the control group. In Hungary, only eleven students participated in 2018, followed by nine the year after.¹⁶⁴ No data is available on dropout prevention in Hungary.¹⁶⁵

Employer engagement has raised awareness about and openness towards the needs of minority groups (not only Roma) by producing guides for employers and establishing the platform 'Diversity Pays Off' in Bulgaria, both in close cooperation with HR managers. This helped increase the employment of qualified Roma, particularly in Hungary, where the network of partner companies reached 18 during the pilot implementation.¹⁶⁶ Another 10 were project partners in Bulgaria, but few directly hired Roma participating in the project.¹⁶⁷ Although the pilot encouraged companies to adopt new, sensitive recruitment policies and to participate in the pilot's training activities, few partner companies introduced formal diversity strategies.¹⁶⁸

The pilot failed to generate any policy impact because the Bulgarian and Hungarian political contexts remained unfavourable towards social innovation, as the project team noted. As is discussed in further detail in 'Relevance for EaSI,' the pilot resulted in more companies turning to the project implementers for consultancy on company diversity and inclusion policies.

Efficiency

The project team estimated their model resulted in cost savings per participant of approximately €2,000 compared to similar projects (VA, 2021). This estimate included the entire array of services provided from training, internships and personal career coaching to various national and local events.

The project could have been implemented using fewer resources at the expense of the quality of services and evaluation. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that most training activities could have been delivered online. However, working with a target group as vulnerable as young Roma, who often lack digital literacy or access to it, would have lowered the quality of the services and the effects of the pilot. Furthermore, the extensive evaluation efforts would not have been possible with fewer financial resources.

The project team would have applied for EaSI, if there had been a payment by results condition. That is because they were convinced of the efficacy of their approach and,

¹⁶² MESSING, V. & ÁRENDÁS, Z. 2019b. Report on the impact of Bridge to Business programme on participating Roma youth. CEU CPS.

¹⁶³ DEFIS (2019). VS/2015/011/0422. Final activity report.

¹⁶⁴ DEFIS (2019). VS/2015/011/0422. Final activity report.

¹⁶⁵ MESSING, V. & ÁRENDÁS, Z. 2019b. Report on the impact of Bridge to Business programme on participating Roma youth. CEU CPS.

¹⁶⁶ MESSING, V. & ÁRENDÁS, Z. 2019a. Report on the impact of Bridge to Business programme in Hungary: How did corporate partners benefit? : CEU CPS.

¹⁶⁷ DEFIS (2019). VS/2015/011/0422. Final activity report.

¹⁶⁸ MESSING, V. & ÁRENDÁS, Z. 2019a. Report on the impact of Bridge to Business programme in Hungary: How did corporate partners benefit? : CEU CPS.

moreover, because of the close, productive and supportive cooperation with the EC representatives. The project team commended the communication with the EC and that it felt as though the EC was part of the process, rather than giving instructions from outside without considering the project's realities (VA, 2021).

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

The main innovative aspect of the pilot was that it reorganised existing types of services into an integrated package of services. While similar projects tend to provide only employment training; only in-school tutoring and dropout prevention; or only employer engagement, this pilot combined all three, thus, bringing together a well-rounded set of stakeholders: NGOs, large private companies and researchers (Messing et.al., 2019a). The pilot not only targeted the beneficiaries themselves but also involved potential employers. According to the project team, this link to employers is often missing in interventions seeking to improve the employability of vulnerable groups.¹⁶⁹

Several practices, targeting both labour demand and supply, were innovative because they introduced entirely new services to the main beneficiaries as well as companies. First, many of the soft skills (e.g. time management, effective communication, teamwork) taught in training are not covered by the Bulgarian education system. Furthermore, the 'Diversity Pays Off' initiative, which promoted diversity in the labour market and at the workplace, was the first of its kind in Bulgaria. Further practices such as HR dinners for networking, micro-internships (1-day company visits where Roma could get to know the workplace, engage in discussions and vice versa), targeted recruitment of Roma by partner companies, and training partner companies on workplace inclusion and diversity practices were newly introduced by the project implementers.¹⁷⁰

Barriers and drivers of innovativeness

The most important driver of the project was the expansion of the pilot's target group to include HR professionals. This enabled beneficiaries to establish links to potential employers with ease, for example, through HR dinners and mini-internships. Involving HR experts in the recruitment training helped tailor those activities to the needs of the labour market. For example, learning materials on CV and cover letter-writing, and job interview preparation were drafted in collaboration with private sector HR experts. Other outputs, such as the guides on diversity at the workplace, were developed collaboratively between the project team and HR experts. The collaborative exchange of ideas, practices and views also led to the creation of the 'Diversity Pays Off' initiative.

There were two main barriers. To start with, the project revealed structural mismatches between Roma's professional profiles and labour market realities. In Hungary, approximately 80% of the participating young Roma lived in rural settlements and were unable to physically reach potential employers who were primarily based in the capital city. Either public transport was inadequate, or the cost of relocation was too high (Messing et al., 2019a). Another mismatch in Hungary was between educational backgrounds or career interests and the jobs available at partner companies. This was likely due to lower quality education in most Roma schools and poor national language skills. Moreover, structural discrimination against Roma in Bulgaria and Hungary hindered recruitment. Despite many firms' general interest in recruiting more Roma, many lacked the outreach into Roma communities, sensitive selection criteria and knowledge/experience about how to prevent Roma from dropping out. Finally, willingness to implement such policies, gain such

¹⁶⁹ DEFIS (2019). VS/2015/011/0422. Final activity report.

¹⁷⁰ DEFIS (2019). VS/2015/011/0422. Final activity report.

knowledge and overcome prejudice against Roma out of businesses' own volition was low as well.¹⁷¹

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

There was no attempt at transferring or upscaling. However, the 'Diversity Pays Off' initiative continued its advocacy work beyond the pilot's end, becoming a key sustainable output (VA, 2021).

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

There were no attempts at upscaling because the project team failed to attract additional funding. This happened because they were unable to locate any relevant EU-level calls for applications for funding and pointed out that the EaSI programme did not provide any upscaling mechanisms either. There was also no national funding available, because of a lack of political commitment in both Bulgaria and Hungary to support such pilots (VA, 2021).

Project's internal and external coherence

There were no synergies between this pilot and other EaSI projects. The project team noted that there were attempts by the EC to facilitate communication between pilots, but the projects themselves, as well as the implementing organisations, were too different thematically.

While the project team were open to establishing synergies with social innovation projects focusing on Roma outside of EaSI, there was none during implementation (VA, 2021).

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

The project team believed that fostering social experimentation and EaSI was the most appropriate response to the social needs addressed in the pilot precisely because of EaSI's innovation-friendliness. The project team noted that the EC's supportiveness, the EaSI programme's flexibility in responding to problems as well as its experimental nature (where failing is allowed) was exactly what the local social innovation system needed. In addition, there were no noteworthy policy options supporting young Roma in Bulgaria or Hungary, other than social innovation. Indeed, the pilot was demonstrably more cost-efficient and achieved better results than any existing policy. At the same time, all the 2015 call's priorities were relevant and were addressed. In fact, the project team chose to apply for EaSI funding for just that reason.

Another aspect of EaSI's relevance was that it significantly improved the project team's capacity as social innovators. The new contacts with employers, which were made during the pilot, allowed OSI (the project coordinators) to expand their collaborations with private companies on bringing young Roma into employment. While for many employers in Bulgaria and Hungary diversity, Roma inclusion and sensitive recruitment were not top priorities, some large corporations such as Coca Cola Bulgaria or SAP began hiring OSI as consultants helping these companies to introduce diversity and inclusion policies. In addition, the project team were able to gather valuable data on the labour market positions of young Roma in Bulgaria and Hungary that had not been previously available (VA, 2021). The data was still in use at the reporting date.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

EU added value

The project team believed that a similar pilot could have been implemented without EaSI funding, albeit at a significantly smaller scale regarding research and monitoring. Since the project team had implemented a similar initiative before, the primary need was to accompany the pilot with extensive research and monitoring. This aspect would not have been possible without EaSI funding as the Bulgarian and Hungarian political contexts are generally unfavourable when it comes to funding social innovation and particularly social experimentation (VA, 2021).

Another part of the EU added value was that the pilot fostered cross-border learning in three distinct ways. First, the project team believed that insights from the pilot informed the EU policy on diversity and inclusion for the 2021-2027 budgeting period. Furthermore, the project team established contacts with diversity promotion from Germany, France and Spain, one of which featured as a key speaker at the pilot's final conference. Finally, the pilot allowed for cross-border comparison of results since it had been implemented in two different countries. The results showed that an innovative project cannot always be transferred in a completely identical fashion to a different country because the specificities of service delivery and the results differ between countries (VA, 2021).

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ERSISI

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: ERSISI was the response of the Regional Government of Navarra to high levels of unemployment, increased poverty and social exclusion, rising expenditure on the previous regional minimum income scheme, on the one hand; and shortcomings in public service delivery (especially job activation measures, insufficient cross-departmental coordination and lacking continuity between measures offered by employment and social services), on the other.

Project team (implementers): A public partnership between the Department for Social Rights of the Regional Government of Navarra (project leader), the Navarra Employment Services, the City Council of Tudela, the Mancomunidad (free association of municipalities) of Social Services of Alsasua, Olazagutía and Zordia and the Public University of Navarra.

Objectives: Prior to the project, the regional government had passed a new law that expanded eligibility for the regional guaranteed basic income and introduced a right for people in need to receive all the necessary support for full integration into society. ERSISI sought to test an intervention that would enhance the implementation of that law by integrating the delivery of social and employment services for the purpose of reintegrating recipients of regional guaranteed minimum income, as well as national employment subsidies, into the labour market.

Method: ERSISI took place in two pilot areas over 21 months. The project delivered integrated and personalised services through pairs of case handlers who were liaising with social and employment services as well as other service providers on beneficiaries' behalf, supported by an interoperable digital assessment and planning tool as well as so-called Local Employment Groups.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents.

EffectsContextual description of effects (measured results and impacts)¹⁷²

Having counterfactually evaluated labour market outcomes for the first four of eight groups (90% receiving regional minimum income; 10% national employment subsidies), the ERSISI team succeeded in boosting participation in activation measures and increasing employment. Participation in activation measures among beneficiaries was significantly higher than in the control group six months after the intervention. Moreover, there was a statistically significant increase of 8% in beneficiaries obtaining at least one employment contract within six months after participation. However, there were no significant improvements in months spent in unemployment and permanence in the minimum income system. The evaluation, furthermore, identified factors rendering participation in activation measures particularly difficult: long-term unemployment, age (55+), language difficulties and precarious economic or housing situation.¹⁷³ According to the project team, Local Employment Groups failed to deliver discernible effects on beneficiaries' employment levels or training opportunities.

¹⁷² Results are based on the evaluation of half the participants. The further evaluation has been interrupted by the pandemic, but the project team assert that trends for the subsequent waves follow similar patterns. The total number of participants was 502.

¹⁷³ 32020b. Integrated Delivery of Services for Minimum Income Recipients: Preliminary Results of the Impact Evaluation of the ERSISI Project in Navarra. Gobierno de Navarra; DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0567. Final activity report.

The pilot also improved cooperation between social and employment services. Just before ERSISI's onset, the social and employment services in Navarra were merged into one department. The project teams stressed that both services hardly communicated before the merger, leading to inefficiencies in service delivery. As a result of ERSISI, coordination and exchange of information between social and employment services improved by values of 7.4 and 8.6 out of 10 respectively.¹⁷⁴

Efficiency

A cost evaluation was not part of the project evaluation. The project team estimated that, in the long run, fewer people would need the guaranteed basic income as more and more recipients would enter employment because of ERSISI's intervention. While maintaining a low professional-beneficiary ratio was economically costly,¹⁷⁵ the project team believed this to be outweighed by the positive long-term effects. However, they failed to present any evaluative evidence supporting this hypothesis.

The pilot could have been implemented with fewer resources. That is because the project evaluation could have been implemented without EaSI funding as the regional government maintains an ongoing collaboration with the project's research partner. Nevertheless, the extra funding enabled the project team to hire academic staff to exclusively work on the evaluation. The ICT tools facilitating the integration of social and employment services, however, could not have been developed; less staff could not have been contracted to work specifically on ERSISI with any less funding. Indeed, 99.4% of the originally allocated grant was used.¹⁷⁶

The possibility of receiving the EaSI funding on a results basis rather than as a grant was met with scepticism. Within this context, the project team recalled the project's kick-off meeting with the EC in Brussels where they were told that negative results would not be problematic. In fact, they considered there was a value in negative results because learning that some models did not work was just as important.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

ERSISI was innovative because it constituted a new way of providing existing services and established a new way of stakeholder cooperation. First, the existing services of employment and social services were integrated by multidisciplinary pairs of case handlers – one specialising in job activation, the other in social work – taking care of one beneficiary. Together they provided individualised support by referring them to the appropriate social and employment services and monitoring their progress. Case handlers were aided by a newly developed digital project application for co-assessment of social exclusion, individual potential and employability, writing diagnostic reports, drawing up so-called Personalised Social Inclusion Plans as well as gathering data for project evaluation. In the process, the databases of Navarra's Social Rights Department and Employment Service became interoperable, allowing for shared individual assessments and action plans. Furthermore, ERSISI committed an extra fund budget of €40,000, designed to meet training needs that the existing offers of social and employment services did not cover. Training activities funded this way included courses on digital literacy; self-esteem and conflict management; and mindfulness sessions to combat stress, amongst others.¹⁷⁷ Finally, ERSISI created a new form of stakeholder cooperation through Local Employment Groups; a forum

¹⁷⁴ 2020a. Claves y resultados del modelo de atención integrada de ERSISI. Gobierno de Navarra.

¹⁷⁵ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0567. Final activity report.

¹⁷⁶ DEFIS (2019b). VP/2015/011/0567. Final financial statement.

¹⁷⁷ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0567. Final activity report.

composed of representatives from public and private stakeholders. Their purpose was to adapt training offers to current labour market needs as well as to ERSISI beneficiaries' skills and to find ways to expand the offer of activation resources.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

A crucial driver was the abundance of workshops, consultations and other regular meeting places provided to improve the pilot. Joint training sessions featuring the case handlers and social and employment services staff facilitated open-mindedness to the integrated service delivery and strengthened the collaborative work. ERSISI's interdisciplinary approach to case handling was another driver. The case handler pairs complemented each other with their respective areas of expertise, thus combining the resources of the social and employment systems effectively and allowing to adapt the intervention to everyone's needs. This individualised support also allowed case handlers to build trust with beneficiaries, which proved beneficial to ERSISI's objective.¹⁷⁸ According to the project team, another driver was the EU commitment to ERSISI through EaSI, which was important when the regional government changed during the process of project implementation. While the new government eventually committed to the project, having EU backing allowed the project team to continue working without interruption.

One limiting factor (barrier) was the short-term nature of some activation measures (e.g. Spanish language courses), leaving longer-term needs unmet. In addition, the project team believed that social and labour market inclusion for the most deprived is a rather slow process with results manifesting only in the long term. The pilot's evaluation, however, captured the progress made in the short to medium term only (measurements were taken at the end of the intervention and six months after), meaning that the method is insensitive to those long-term effects. In response, the project evaluation continued beyond the end of the project (see below). Another challenge was the new working dynamics – caused by the implementation of integrated services – that created uncertainty about the new (not yet fully settled) intervention/working protocols. Finally, the Local Employment Groups remained the least developed and successful aspect of ERSISI because of conflicting interests on part of the participating stakeholders and the groups also showed a lack of influence over the design of employment policy at the local level.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

The project was successfully embedding its results at the regional level. Already during the last stage of the project, the team began transferring the model to the city of Burlada in Pamplona County. The current Government of Navarra, furthermore, is politically committed to transferring some elements of the programme during its 2019-2023 term. As such, the evaluation of results beyond the project's end date was commissioned. In addition, a refined version of ERSISI, called AUNA, was being implemented in six more towns in Navarra. AUNA focused on the elements of ERSISI that worked well according to the project team (person-centred activation model, coordination between social and employment services, the tools and applications developed during ERSISI), while also adding some new content. AUNA involved social service practitioners more closely. The final goal was to extend this model across Navarra. According to the project team, all these activities were financially supported by the regional government without external funding.¹⁷⁹

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

The main driver of scaling and transferring ERSISI's model was the wholesome communication strategy. The communication efforts at the local and regional levels – especially various workshops on integrated social service deliveries, conferences, congress and seminar presentations as well as participation in summer courses – stirred considerable interest. As the result, the Regional Governments of Asturias, Castilla y León, Basque Country and Valencia as well as several municipalities in Navarra (e.g. Pamplona County) expressed interest in the model, and the Navarra Regional Government featured ERSISI's goals in its key social policy document (Strategic Plan of Social Inclusion 2018-2021).¹⁸⁰ The second driver was the political commitment from the regional government as well as relevant municipal councils to the transfer. The project team believed that ERSISI would have been terminated otherwise. In addition, the political commitment opened up the possibility to effect changes in the relevant strategies of Navarra Regional Government as well as legal regulations, should the need arise.

One barrier was that the case handlers were not able to continue working for public services due to difficulties in the recruitment process and, thus, would not be able to assist in transferring the knowledge.¹⁸¹ A second barrier was ineffective time management. The project team admitted that applying the ERSISI model in real life required extensive training on how to implement integrated services on top of the staff's conventional tasks (despite their high qualification).

Project's internal and external coherence

The project team were in contact with the project promoters of PACT and RESISOR from the 2014 EaSI PROGRESS call. Joint sessions were organised in order to share information and knowledge on their respective models. More profound synergies were prevented by the difficulty to coordinate schedules and by the varying specifics of different projects, despite having similar approaches.

The project experienced no external synergies with other EU programmes. Similar coordination occurred with the SISO project implemented by the Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha and co-funded by the ESF. SISO developed a tool to identify individuals at risk of social exclusion and vulnerability.¹⁸² Furthermore, the project team sought out advice from other one-stop-shop models found in Germany, Finland and the Netherlands as part of a one-day workshop.¹⁸³

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

There are three factors that contributed to EaSI's relevance to ERSISI. First, the priorities outlined in the 2015 EaSI PROGRESS call aligned well with the Navarra Government's social policy strategy of reducing poverty, unemployment and social exclusion by improving continuity between social and employment services. The latter had already been partially addressed by merging the regional social and employment services into one department before the pilot's onset. As such, the call's priorities, especially the requirement to implement a one-stop-shop, fitted this political framework well. Also, EaSI was the only European funding option because Spain's ESF Operational Programme 2014-2020 did not include social experimentation. Furthermore, EaSI helped the project leaders as social innovators. Specifically, Navarra's Department of Social Rights gained experience in

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² CASTILLA-LA MANCHA. Herramienta de diagnóstico de situaciones de vulnerabilidad y/o exclusión social [Online]. Available: <https://www.castillalamancha.es/node/257416> [Accessed 11/06/2021].

¹⁸³ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0567. Final activity report.

working on a European project. Drawing on the experience of ERSISI, the department was able to win another EaSI grant for a project (FORLAN) that combines employment and education. Indeed, participation in EaSI seemed to have triggered a 'wave of innovation', as the project team put it.

EU added value

Three factors describe the EaSI's EU added value in the context of this project's implementation. First, the project team believed that ERSISI could have been implemented without EU funding through EaSI, but on a smaller scale and less effectively. While the ERSISI had already been designed and partially funded by the Regional Government of Navarra, the additional funds were necessary for the project team to be able to hire professional staff dedicated to ERSISI as well as to develop the relevant online tools aiding the integration of services. Besides, the project team benefitted from some limited cross-border learning. The Government of Navarra joined the European Social Network because of ERSISI and the project team sought out advice from other one-stop-shop models found in Germany, Finland and the Netherlands as part of a one-day workshop.¹⁸⁴

Finally, the exposure gained from participating in the EaSI programme aided the project team's efforts to draw attention to their model nationally. Specifically, they participated in the Spanish national Ministry of Social Rights' Network of Social Inclusion because the network's purpose is to foster the integration of social service delivery. Furthermore, the project team established networks with other Spanish regional governments interested in the ERSISI's model through presentations. All of this was enabled through the exposure gained from participating in EaSI. However, the project team noted that they were unaware if their experience had been shared with other Member States by the Commission.

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¹⁸⁴ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0567. Final activity report.

ESTI@

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: ESTI@ responded to a growing number of poor, unemployed and homeless individuals following Greece's declining economic situation between 2010 and project onset. By 2017 the country wide unemployment rate stood at 27% (the highest in the EU) and average gross income had dropped by 30% since 2009. ESTI@'s pilot locations were in two of central Athens most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, where the effects of the crisis were felt hardest.

Project team (implementers): A partnership between public (City of Athens and City of Athens Homeless Centre) and semi-public (Athens Development and Destination Management Agency – ADDMA) bodies, NGOs (Praksis; Network for Children's Rights; Solidarity Now, Fainareti) and the private sector (First Elements Euroconsultants)

Objectives: The project targeted vulnerable individuals – especially young individuals – and sought to test a new model of integrated and comprehensive service provision. The goal was to reintegrate beneficiaries into society by guiding them into employment and into sustainable housing. For that reason, the project not only featured employment, but also a host of accompanying services designed to aid the transition. In providing these services, ESTI@ also sought to combat discrimination and reduce gender inequalities.

Method: The project implemented two one-stop shops (Single Entry Points – SEPs) with strong in-house capacities. Services on-site included psychological support, medical services, legal aid, childcare, child-related consultancy, advice and support for pregnant women and employability services. Case handlers were the beneficiaries' first point of contact and would refer beneficiaries to on-site but also external services.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents.

Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured results and impacts)

ESTI@ all but achieved its main target: 18% (target: 20%) of beneficiaries who participated in employment-related activities found employment. The project also achieved its quantitative targets. The total number of beneficiaries was ~28,000 with 15,000 receiving support from case handlers through psychological sessions, internal (>11,500) and external (>21,000) referrals. A total of 3,500 beneficiaries (target: 3,000) used employment services and 5,500 training sessions were conducted (target: 4,500). Having served and assisted 150 people, the social entrepreneurship programme led to 4 new social enterprises and 67 beneficiaries further developing their business ideas. Also, 7,500 children (target: 6,000) took part in daycare activities. The uptake of medical services in both SEPs has risen from a combined monthly average of 1,400 in 2017 to 1,700 in 2019. Five thousand beneficiaries sought legal services with 4,000 cases having been resolved during the project. Lastly, support workers reached out to over 670 homeless people, distributing more than 690 first aid kits and providing 1,400 referrals to other services of the SEPs.¹⁸⁵

The City of Athens also concluded that it achieved four 'aspirational' targets: easier access to a range of social services; development of integrated services; better links between public and private organisations and wider collaboration among stakeholders.¹⁸⁶ This was based

¹⁸⁵ DEFIS (2019). VS/2015/011/0210. Final activity report.

¹⁸⁶ EUROPEAN SOCIAL NETWORK. ESTI@ Project - Employment enhancement and social service integration [Online].

on the number of service users as well as the extensive cooperation between public and private service providers at the SEPs.

Efficiency

The project team failed to present evaluative data on the method's efficiency since it did not collect data on cost savings compared to existing solutions. Public budgets in Greece are organised by expenses rather than projects. For example, there would be a budget for the salary of social workers and a separate one for facility rentals, rather than one unified budget for projects like ESTI@. This prevented the project team from calculating the cost for existing solutions, let alone a cost difference.

According to the project team, ESTI@ could not have been implemented with fewer resources due to the obstacles the local NGOs faced in delivering services in the SEPs. At the time of the pilot, the City of Athens faced budgetary restrictions that forbade them from hiring new personnel of their own. Consequently, external service providers who themselves incurred significant costs needed to be involved in the pilot for service delivery. Allowing all involved entities to deliver their services smoothly would not have been possible with fewer resources. Furthermore, with less money, the model could not have been expanded to a second site during the pilot.

The project team believed that results-based funding by unit cost per capita would have been more appropriate for ESTI@. With unit cost, the service provider should receive funding only once service was delivered to a beneficiary (e.g. legal consulting, a medical examination, job counselling). Given that ESTI@ has quantified its results primarily by the number of services delivered, such a funding mechanism does seem appropriate. In fact, the project team believed that being able to offer to be paid based on results upon their own initiative might give them an edge over competitors in the competitive selection process for the EaSI calls or other competitive funding programmes.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

ESTI@ was innovative because it constituted a new way of providing existing services and a new way of stakeholder cooperation. First, the previously separate operations of various public and private service providers were harmonised and physically concentrated in two SEPs. Case handlers occupied a key role in integrating the various providers and services as they were the beneficiaries' first point of contact. They were trained to assess the eligibility for services, guide them to the most appropriate internal and external services and give psychological support. Two ICT tools aided case handlers by allowing staff to access all social services offered by the City of Athens, including external services. Furthermore, the project implementers built networks with other services offering municipal bodies and NGOs that were not part of the SEPs. In addition, the employability service's social entrepreneurship strand heavily involved the local social entrepreneurship scene in its operation (info point, lectures and workshops for future social entrepreneurs) as advisors, trainers and good practice cases.¹⁸⁷

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

The first driver was the size of the SEPs. All project partners were exposed to a larger and more stable inflow of beneficiaries. Data sharing procedures were put in place, allowing them to plan and allocate resources more efficiently. This also created extra value for beneficiaries, for example, through joint activities and through the variety of specialised services operating smoothly in one space. A second driver was the large network of pre-

¹⁸⁷ DEFIS (2019). VS/2015/011/0210. Final activity report.

existing cooperation with other service providers outside of the SEPs. This allowed case handlers to refer beneficiaries to a wide variety of external services. Users of the in-house employment service could, for instance, benefit from the City of Athens' job openings database, while users of the SEPs' medical centres had access to specialists such as dentists, lung specialists and endocrinologists whose services were not available in-house.¹⁸⁸

The first challenge was organising stakeholders of different types (municipal bodies, NGOs and companies) with employees of various employment statuses into one integrated body of service delivery. The second challenge was an unexpectedly large volume of (formally) unqualified or inexperienced refugees and immigrants. This affected the kind of employment services provided (stronger focus on communication skills, Greek labour market norms and labour rights) and led to the project not meeting its contacts with employers and job referrals targets (30% and 40% respectively below target).¹⁸⁹ The third challenge was the municipality's inexperience in handling EU grants. Confusion on the part of the city's finance department with the allocation of a 30% advance payment from the EaSI grant led to a one-year delay in distributing those funds to project partners, according to the project team.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

The ESTI@ project itself was an upscaling effort to some extent. The first SEP (Athens Solidarity Center) was already operational thanks to funding from the EEA and Norway grants as well as Open Society Foundations before the pilot had started. It had been run by EaSI co-beneficiary SolidarityNow in cooperation with the municipality.¹⁹⁰ During ESTI@, the model was implemented at a second site (SEP Patissia) which originally operated as a medical centre.¹⁹¹

After the pilot, the Athens Solidarity Centre continued to be operated by SolidarityNow, having attracted €2 million from the EEA and Norway funds.¹⁹² SEP Patissia also remained in operation, but with the financial support of the municipality. However, there were no other Greek municipalities implementing ESTI@'s model.¹⁹³ In addition, the City of Athens attracted an additional €6 million in funding from the ESF to convert three more municipal health centres into SEPs. The first began its operation in January 2020, while the other two followed in November of the same year. Based on the success of ESTI@ as well as the three new centres, the city council also pledged to provide integrated social, medical and employment services in all seven city districts in the future. Finally, the ESTI@ project made one of its two databases for social services in Athens available to the public free of charge.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability

The first driver of scalability is that all deliverables were planned with upscaling in view. In fact, some of the project's outputs (SEP Manual, blueprint and guidelines for space requirements of a SEP) were being used to guide the upscaling process. The second driver was the project results themselves. The success of the integrated model of service delivery in two separate locations has convinced the City of Athens to make the unanimous decision to pursue further upscaling. Additionally, the positive results most likely convinced the Greek

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ DEFIS (2019). VS/2015/011/0210. Final activity report.

¹⁹⁰ SOLIDARITYNOW. 2021. Athens Solidarity Center [Online].

¹⁹¹ DEFIS (2019). VS/2015/011/0210. Final activity report.

¹⁹² EEA GRANTS. 2021. Athens Solidarity Center [Online].

¹⁹³ DEFIS (2019). VS/2015/011/0210. Final activity report.

ESF decision-makers to contribute €6 million, in the view of the policymaker responsible for upscaling. In fact, the project team were certain that mainstreaming the ESTI@ model would not have been possible without that additional ESF funding.

The main challenge to upscaling was bureaucracy. Because of legal restrictions on public bodies paying for costs incurred by external contractors, the City of Athens could no longer have NGOs providing services in the service centres. Instead, the city needed to hire its own personnel, which was a challenge of its own because of the budgetary restrictions in the aftermath of the Greek financial crisis and new forms of cooperation with NGOs needed to be found. The second challenge to upscaling was posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from the shutdown of the three newly opened centres during the lockdown periods, the pandemic caused a disproportionately high demand for medical services, while employment and social services received relatively low interest.

Project's internal and external coherence

There is no evidence of synergies with other EaSI funded pilot projects. In fact, the project team stressed that they were not interested in such synergies because their focus was on strengthening the cooperation between Athens' public administration and Greek NGOs.

The Department of Social Solidarity, Welfare and Equality of the municipal government, which was responsible for ESTI@, implemented another socially innovative project in cooperation with the city department responsible for refugees which began during ESTI@'s implementation period. The project was called Curing the Limbo and was funded by the EU's Urban Innovative Actions programme and was implementing a model like the HomeLab¹⁹⁴ project's Social Rental Enterprises but aiming at refugees. ESTI@'s project promoter used her experience with winning and handling EaSI funding to jump-start Curing the Limbo.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

The project team believed the EaSI programme's relevance to ESTI@ to be high for three reasons. First, some of the EaSI PROGRESS call's priorities were highly pertinent to the project. ESTI@ was implemented in line with the Municipal Social Policy Programme 2015-2019. The programme's four core pillars, which ESTI@ addressed through the integrated provision of employment, social and health services (combating extreme poverty, reducing social discrimination, promoting welfare and health services and horizontal actions), aligned with all of the EaSI call's priorities.¹⁹⁵ In addition, the fact that user numbers at the SEPs established during upscaling doubled after one month and increased five-fold in the months after confirmed that there was a need for such a service. In the second place, participating in EaSI strengthened the City of Athens' capacity to deliver social policy by developing cooperation with local NGOs. As the project team noted, implementing meaningful social policy without EU funding was almost impossible without involving NGOs due to the budget constraints, that municipal governments continued to face. Finally, the project team opted for EaSI funding over ESF because the ESF in Greece tended to favour proven methods and over EEA grants because the municipality would not have had the flexibility to hire new staff.

EU added value

There is evidence of two aspects of EU added value to the ESTI@ project. To start with, the pilot would not have been possible without European funding. That is because national

¹⁹⁴ HomeLab is another project that has received funding through the 2015 EaSI PROGRESS call.

¹⁹⁵ DEFIS (2019). VS/2015/011/0210. Final activity report.

funding for social innovations tends to favour empirically proven models. In addition, according to the project team, the rather bureaucratic way, in which the Greek public administration operates, slowed down the implementation of innovative projects, thus, holding them back.

Furthermore, the City of Athens learnt how to deal with EU-funded projects. Before ESTI@, the municipality had never actively sought European funding for social policy projects, not even through the ESF. After the project and thanks to not only the pilot's results but also the newly gained experience in applying for EU funding, the municipality was able to win ESF funding for upscaling the model and for the Curing the Limbo project. However, the project team considered that another unsuccessful bid for funding under EaSI PROGRESS discouraged the new city administration which took office in 2019 from seeking EaSI funding again.

The project team prioritised improving the City of Athens' capacity to cooperate with NGOs and making the local community aware of the new integrated services. As such, the project team reached out to domestic policymakers and stakeholders rather than international ones.

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HELP

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: In the City of Westminster, London, the demand for social housing outstripped the supply with the average waiting time for a four-bedroom apartment sitting at 25 years. At the same time, social benefits were capped following a welfare reform, rendering any type of housing much less affordable for the unemployed residents of Westminster. The project team identified the need to tackle this double challenge of unemployment and homelessness (which is associated with inter-generational poverty), poor mental and physical health as well as relationship difficulties.

Project team (implementers): A public-private partnership led by the City Council of the City of Westminster. Co-beneficiaries were the London-based charity Vital Regeneration and the international NGO FEANTSA.

Objectives: The City of Westminster had been running HELP since 2006 with an initial focus on personalised case work with the goal of improving employment outcomes only. EaSI HELP was the continuation of the original HELP project but with updated objectives: (a) establish and test a personal case handler-based one-stop-shop that would incorporate housing, employment and welfare benefits services for Westminster households (primarily families) who experienced or were threatened by homelessness; (b) help to move those residents from insecure housing and unemployment towards self-sufficiency and control over their housing and employment situation.

Method: Personal case handlers assisted the target group in navigating the social housing and employment system, reducing the number of assessments and application difficulties that users need to deal with. The case work focused on households' assets and barriers to unemployment. Case handlers were supported by case conferences which featured the case handlers themselves as well as representatives from all relevant government and third sector (e.g. employment, housing, financial capability and social services) stakeholders.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents.

Effects**Contextual description of effects (measured results and impacts)**

The project achieved its quantitative targets after a robust counterfactual impact evaluation. In total, 484 households registered for the programme (against a target of 500). In terms of mid-term results, 207 individuals started a new job and 138 were able to maintain their employment because of the project (with targets of 175 and 125 respectively). However, only 115 against a target of 175 individuals could access sustainable housing.¹⁹⁶ The project showed effective results in all four counterfactually evaluated indicators. Unemployment was reduced by 7% compared to the control group, average earnings increased by £1,294 per year, and EaSI HELP beneficiaries were more likely to move out of temporary accommodation (21 net moves out in the treatment group versus only 7 in the control group). The rent arrears of the members of the treatment group remained static, while those of the control group grew by £300.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0380. Final activity report.

¹⁹⁷ JOHNSON, P. 2018. EaSI HELP Final Report. Westminster City Council.

EaSI HELP's main policy outcome was that it highlighted institutional shortcomings of how different national policies interacted to the detriment of families in temporary accommodation. For example, household benefits were capped in the UK and funds got deducted from a housing allowance, meaning that families could not afford rent in central London locations like Westminster unless they worked. In addition, childcare was not free for children aged less than two and childcare allowances tended to be insufficient to cover the childcare costs in central London. In addition, the hours of operation of such services did not permit commuting. All those costs were difficult to pay for low-income residents and, if housing costs could not be met, families could only go into temporary accommodation.¹⁹⁸

Efficiency

The project team provided detailed calculations of its service efficiency. On the one hand, EaSI HELP did not lead to greater efficiency in terms of reducing staff cost or the cost of delivering the service compared to previous iterations of HELP.¹⁹⁹ On the other hand, the project's formal cost-benefit analysis showed that there were significant public savings through its positive effects on clients and, consequently, a more efficient allocation of existing resources. There were fiscal benefits totalling £906,000 from reduced benefit claims (£524,000), reduced rent arrears (£136,000), beneficiaries moving out of temporary accommodation (£117,000) and increased tax revenue (£129,000). There were also public benefits totalling £1,108,000 from increased employment (£529,000) and improved well-being (£579,000) in beneficiaries. In terms of cost-benefit, this meant that for every £1 invested, EaSI HELP yielded £1.23 worth of fiscal benefits and £1.51 of public benefits over its two-year lifespan. Note, however, that HELP's cost-benefit analysis excluded costs incurred for evaluation and dissemination and was based solely on the cost of front-line delivery (£367,000 in 2017).²⁰⁰

The project team asserted that EaSI HELP could not have been implemented with fewer resources because of staff costs. They argued that the project budget as it unfolded was just right to maintain the needed ratio of team members per beneficiary. These beneficiaries were highly vulnerable and, thus, reducing costs by removing staff would have increased each team member's case load. This would have reduced the amount of time and attention that could be dedicated to each client. It is noteworthy that the union grant paid out to the project team as per the Final Financial Report was approximately 25% below the size of the EU grant listed in the List of Awarded Grants of the 2015 EaSI PROGRESS call.²⁰¹ The reason for this difference was that initially all salaries were budgeted by the project team based on salary levels the local authority would pay. However, a significant portion of roles was filled by EaSI HELP's charity partner, who had lower salary levels. The charity partner was unwilling to adjust because that would have made those working on EaSI HELP disproportionately high paid compared to their peers and those higher salaries would have made it more difficult for the charity to compete in future funding bids.

Finally, the project team would have been opposed to receiving results-based EaSI funding. That is because there was a risk that the EaSI HELP approach would not work. One of the project team representatives, being a public authority, would not have been able to take the risk of hiring extra staff and introducing innovative elements to HELP, in case there would have been a risk of becoming ineligible for EaSI funding for producing undesired results.

Innovativeness of the project

¹⁹⁸ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0380. Final activity report.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ JOHNSON, P. 2018. EaSI HELP Final Report. Westminster City Council.

²⁰¹ DEFIS (2019b). VP/2015/011/0380. Final financial statement; DEFIS (2016). VP/2015/011. Grants awarded as a results of the call for proposals VP/2015/011.

Innovative content

The model tested by EaSI HELP was a process innovation whose innovativeness lay in a new integrated way of delivering existing services and new ways of cooperating between institutions. EaSI HELP is the continuation of another programme by the name of HELP. The original HELP was an employment support programme for people in temporary accommodation. EaSI HELP innovated this programme by integrating employment support with housing support and by involving more institutions and stakeholders. EaSI HELP did not introduce any inherently new services. Personalised case handlers had been part of the original HELP just like the HELP café model, which provided meeting points for beneficiaries to seek self-help. Integration was achieved by setting all involved services in one building and by introducing multistakeholder case conferences where action plans for individual clients were determined and immediate issues beneficiaries were facing were coordinated. In addition, EaSI HELP introduced a few new roles to facilitate the integration: a Financial Capability Officer (FCO) as well as a few new specialist roles from the national government's Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and social services.²⁰²

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

The concept of case conferences (see 'Context' box and 'Innovative Content' section) also was the project's main driver of innovativeness (see the context for the definition). According to the project team, the case conferences also solved the issue that the different services and stakeholders involved were not allowed to access each other's databases due to GDPR. In those conferences, information could, however, be shared manually which allowed problems to be resolved faster. As a result, they provided an excellent forum for collective problem-solving. One result was a significantly improved housing outcome for beneficiaries after some badly functioning placement processes were discontinued in favour of better ones.²⁰³

The project's first barrier to social experimentation was having to work along with the legal requirements of the UK's social welfare system, which limited the ability to innovate and take risks as current statutory requirements had to be met. This particularly limited the development of a joint assessment tool and, consequently, cost savings for the various involved stakeholders and hindered procurement of a sufficient amount of suitable properties for the housing branch. The project team had to work around relevant requirements first before beneficiaries could receive effective personalised counselling.²⁰⁴ Another challenge was integrating all stakeholders with their different financial governance, IT and salary regimes as well as varying professional objectives into a single one-stop-shop. Difficulties were most pronounced between person-centred roles, such as case handlers, and resource-centred partners, such as the housing team.²⁰⁵

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

The HELP model was in the mainstreaming and in the embedding phase at the time of drafting this report. First, several Westminster City Council employees involved in the project had since moved on to different positions and departments. Interview results showed that those employees were trying to include the positive aspects of EaSI HELP (i.e. holistic one-stop approach, multi-skilled personalised case handlers, helping people to address

²⁰² DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0380. Final activity report; JOHNSON, P. 2018. EaSI HELP Final Report. Westminster City Council.

²⁰³ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0380. Final activity report.

²⁰⁴ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0380. Final activity report.

²⁰⁵ JOHNSON, P. 2018. EaSI HELP Final Report. Westminster City Council.

multiple barriers) into their everyday work. This seemed to be particularly true for the employment support as well as regeneration sections of the city council. In fact, the former project coordinators who had since moved on to project director roles for regeneration projects kicked off an innovative project in North Westminster on the topic of co-producing with communities.

Furthermore, the project was able to attract national funding through the so-called Flexible Homelessness Support Grant worth £383,543 between May 2019 and October 2020 for another project that used EaSI HELP as a key reference point regarding the aspects of EaSI HELP that were considered to be most successful. These were personalised case handling and round table case conferencing models. This funding was designed to support local councils in combating homelessness and the City of Westminster chose to spend it on continuing HELP. The key difference was that this new intervention focused on beneficiaries who were at risk of needing temporary accommodation rather than beneficiaries who were already in temporary accommodation. Moreover, the project was no longer going to work alongside statutory services; they would instead cooperate with early intervention services, with whom they had previously worked on another successful pilot. In fact, this shift was initiated during the project after the interim evaluation.²⁰⁶ The rationale behind the shift was that providing temporary accommodation is rather expensive for city councils in the UK.

However, upscaling efforts were as successful as expected, according to policymakers and preliminary evaluations. While each £1 spent on HELP yielded a return of £1.9 and other indicators showed improvements (benefit claims, prevented evictions, well-being, prevented homelessness),²⁰⁷ the new upstream intervention had no effect on the number of households in need of temporary accommodation as at the time of writing. As a result, the council was investigating the possibility of refocusing back on people already living in temporary accommodation, based on EaSI HELP's good results. In addition, it appeared that neither the new way of working introduced by EaSI HELP nor the model itself had become a mainstream part of Westminster City Council's operations.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability

The first driver was the rigorous counterfactual evaluation conducted as part of the pilot. This helped attract additional national funding for the continuation of HELP because the pilot results were proven to be successful and valuable in a scientifically robust way. Furthermore, all interviewees confirmed that HELP was one of the best-received projects run by the city council. Particularly, they stressed that the most valuable elements (in accordance with the evaluation) were being introduced into their workflows and projects by some of the former project team members as good practices.

The first barrier to upscaling/transfer was related to the target group. During the pilot, the project worked primarily with families with children. However, according to the project team, such families often become homeless because of evictions, making it harder to identify them before becoming homeless. The second barrier was related to data sharing. In principle, the city council seemed to have all the data required to implement a targeted upstream intervention focusing on prevention. However, despite the progress made through EaSI HELP's round table case conferences, GDPR concerns continued to prevent the council from accessing all necessary data in a joint way.

Project's internal and external coherence

There is some evidence of internal synergies since the project team were in extensive contact with the HomeLab project of the same call. They exchanged thoughts on the two projects' ways of operating and the differing contexts. The project team also took every

²⁰⁶ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0380. Final activity report.

²⁰⁷ WESTMINSTER EMPLOYMENT SERVICE. 2020. HELP Evaluation Report: Our story from May 2019 to July 2020.

opportunity to participate in EaSI conferences and meetings. The result of these exchanges was that the project team felt empowered to continue pursuing the integration of social services.

There is no evidence of synergies with other social innovation projects.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

There are two aspects to EaSI's relevance for EaSI HELP. In the first place, there was a clear need for social innovation since different national policies pertaining to people in temporary accommodation were shown to have compounding effects on each other. Moreover, a workshop with the national cabinet office conducted by the HELP team exposed that policymakers were often unaware of those compounding effects. For this reason, the project team believed that social innovation was the most appropriate response. In the second place, the priorities of the relevant EaSI PROGRESS call were pertinent to the target group. The call's emphasis on one-stop-shop solutions was relevant because many of the aforementioned compounding effects and duplications were caused by the lack of communication among the different departments, which beneficiaries were involved with.

The project team also highlighted the focus on reducing social exclusion as particularly relevant. That is because the City of Westminster often places residents seeking temporary accommodation in cheaper parts of London. Moving residents of Westminster to temporary accommodation located in other parts of London is a significant contributor to social exclusion because residents are removed from their home neighbourhood and social environment. In response, EaSI HELP started a HELP café in East London to provide a meeting point for such residents.

EU added value

EaSI HELP reflects the EU added value in three ways. First, EaSI allowed HELP's integrated approach to be tested and evaluated locally. The project team believed that had such an approach been imposed upon the local community by means of national policy it would have been met with significant scepticism. That is because the approach would not have been developed and tested directly with the community like EaSI HELP did. Indeed, as it turned out, EaSI HELP has become one of the most successful and well-regarded projects within the City of Westminster precisely because it was developed and tested locally, as the interviewed policymaker confirmed. The EaSI funding was what allowed the project team to set up this pilot and test it locally. Furthermore, EaSI HELP could not have been implemented by relying on national funding only because of the lack of funding sources, which were flexible enough to accommodate HELP's type of integrated service delivery at the time. While there were separate calls on either homelessness prevention or employment, these topics were never combined. Moreover, EaSI HELP's team benefitted from cross-border learning opportunities. The project team attended most meetings with other EaSI project promoters and learnt about their single entry point approaches. The main benefit was that the other projects also implementing one-stop-shop models allowed EaSI HELP's team to use that as a framework to state that integrated service delivery with personalised case handlers is the right approach.

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HomeLab

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: The rental housing markets in Central Eastern Europe (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) are rather small and highly privatised. At the same time, social welfare payments are often not enough for recipients to cover their daily expenses, let alone housing costs. As a result, there are high levels of housing insecurity.

Project team (implementers): The project was coordinated by the Budapest-based Metropolitan Research Institute, while the pilots were implemented by five charities, NGOs and not-for-profit organisations: From Streets to Home Association (HU); Habitat for Humanity (PL); Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta (HU); People in Need (SK); Romodrom (CZ). Budapest Institute for Policy Analysis was the research partner.

Objectives: HomeLab sought to test and establish the innovative Social Rental Enterprise (SRE) model in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The target groups were members of vulnerable and marginalised groups at risk of losing their homes. The pilot aimed to enable beneficiaries to sustain housing and employment and foster regional labour mobility. The Slovak and Czech pilots also sought to combat discrimination against Roma people.

Method: HomeLab was implemented in five sites across the four countries, all of which provided housing, employment, and social services in an integrated form, although the specifics varied from site to site. 'Floating' field workers were the first points of contact for beneficiaries and facilitated all three types of support.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents.

Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured results and impacts)

HomeLab attained its employment and housing goals with the 175 participating households. Results were evaluated counterfactually drawing on a three-round survey. For each pilot, dedicated housing and employment indices were constructed based on the survey results. There were significant improvements in beneficiaries' housing conditions. All five pilots showed statistically significant results at a 5% confidence level. In the Polish pilot, for example, the housing coefficient rose from -0.424 during treatment to 0.765 after in the treatment group as opposed to 0.264 to 0.451 in the control group. This effect was most pronounced in those with the most marginalised housing circumstances at the start of their respective pilot. HomeLab also improved clients' employment situation, although not for those with relatively good employment positions at the start. In the Veszprém pilot, for example, the employment index for the treatment groups rose from -0.899 to 0.318 as opposed to 0.250 to 0.263 in the control group. There was also a correlation between the level of marginalisation and the frequency of services provided in three of the five pilots. Moreover, there were sizable improvements in general satisfaction of life, especially among those with the most marginalised housing positions.²⁰⁸

The project failed to meet its objective of fostering regional labour mobility. The project team planned on relocating beneficiaries from Eastern Hungary and Slovakia to Veszprém and Bratislava respectively, but labour market booms in those eastern areas rendered this action unfeasible.

²⁰⁸ SOMOGYI, E., et.al. 2019. HomeLab - 'Integrated Housing and Labour Services in Social Rental Enterprise Model'. Final Report.

Finally, HomeLab had some policy impact in three different countries. A national call on SREs took place in Poland based on the Polish pilot's results and advocacy. The Czech pilot led one of the pilot municipalities to provide housing to vulnerable groups in integrated neighbourhoods. In Hungary, lobbying by the involved NGOs established housing policy as a visible issue in national and regional elections. Note that the project team had not provided backup evidence as at the reporting date.

Efficiency

The project team provided no concrete estimates of the pilot's efficiency. They admit that the pilot was not more cost-efficient than the existing solutions. HomeLab focused on incubating a new way of integrated service delivery that yields better social outcomes rather than more cost-efficiency. Incubating such models requires above-average working hours, leading to higher costs.²⁰⁹

According to the project team, implementing HomeLab with fewer resources would not have been possible as the budget was tight even with EaSI funding. Indeed, the project used more than 98% of the initially allocated grant.²¹⁰ The project team, furthermore, noted that the EaSI grant provided the seed capital that allowed them to launch the project in the first place.

The project team would not have applied for results-based EaSI funding. They believe doing so would have forced them into seeking 'easy-to-deal-with' beneficiaries with lower chances of dropping out of the pilot and higher chances of showing positive results. HomeLab, however, helped a target group with some of the most complex problems. As such, delivering on expected results would have been difficult.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

The SRE model was innovative because all five implementers developed the capacity to deliver integrated services by building formerly missing service elements and integrating them with existing ones, thus making the local social sector more effective in addressing the target group's needs. The Hungarian implementers, for example, introduced employment services. The Polish ones only provided advocacy before, but never housing or employment services. Social service provision integrated the households and employment support strands. Following their clients' journey all the way, social field workers would be the ones organising employment support and appearing as mediators between clients and landlords. They would also facilitate 'background' support necessary for maintaining households' improved housing and employment situation. These included support on administrative issues (e.g. finding legal advice or applying for benefits), advising on household budgeting and finances and debt counselling.²¹¹

In addition, the effort of procuring adequate housing options for beneficiaries led to new forms of cooperation between institutions which varied between pilot locations. This was innovative because these modes of cooperation had not been tested in Central Eastern Europe before. The Polish pilot, for example, cooperated with Warsaw Municipality to renovate and sublet social housing and with private landlords to maintain and again sublet dwellings. The Slovak pilot cooperated with a local bank to provide micro-finance to clients

²⁰⁹ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0375. Final activity report.

²¹⁰ DEFIS (2019b). VP/2015/011/0375. Final financial statement.

²¹¹ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0375. Final activity report.

and with the municipality to legalise existing dwellings.²¹² Meanwhile, the Czech pilot sourced dwellings almost exclusively from the private market by cooperating with socially sensitive real estate agencies. In all pilots, the implementers appeared either as the managers of the housing stock or as intermediaries, but always as guarantors and mediators towards the landlords.²¹³

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

The first driver was that the project team were able to identify household indebtedness as the main barrier to finding sustainable housing and work. This facilitated building a network of debt management experts and other specialised support services.²¹⁴ Another driver was the pilot implementers appearing as guarantors towards public and private landlords. This was vital in mitigating the widespread fear among landlords that socially vulnerable tenants will not pay rent and behave anti-socially.

The first barrier was that many participating households were highly indebted or in arrears, despite available debt counselling. These high levels of debt discouraged affected participants from taking up legal work because they had to expect to have large shares of their salaries withdrawn by creditors to cover that debt. Financial stabilisation – intended as the basis for sustainable housing – could not be achieved for some clients. The consequence was high fluctuation among beneficiaries in some pilots. The second barrier was that the pilots focusing on discriminated minorities struggled to find housing for their clients, even those who would have been able to pay rent reliably, due to widespread prejudice against those groups (esp. Roma). Finally, the survey design used for the evaluation study proved too demanding for some beneficiaries because of its extent (three survey rounds) and content. The project team also found it challenging to develop an evaluation tool that is sensitive enough to capture a diverse target group and concluded that the group's small sample size limited the evaluation's feasibility.²¹⁵

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

Following the end of the project, all five pilot implementers were planning on continuing and expanding their SREs.²¹⁶ For example, one Hungarian implementer (the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta) launched cooperation with two more municipalities.

In addition, the project coordinators (MRI) were partnering with the City of Budapest and one of the Hungarian HomeLab partners (From Street to Home Association) to establish an SRE run by the City administration. This project won additional funding from the European Social Catalyst Fund (ESCF). The ESCF would contribute a maximum of €100,000 to the creation of an implementation plan and at least €600,000 to implement the model. The implementation plan was being developed at the reporting date.²¹⁷

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability

²¹² SOMOGYI, E., et.al. 2019. HomeLab - 'Integrated Housing and Labour Services in Social Rental Enterprise Model'. Final Report.

²¹³ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0375. Final activity report.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ ESCF. 2020b. Frequently Asked Questions [Online].

The first drivers were the national workshops, the EU level engagement and the dissemination of information that occurred during the experiment. They all drove HomeLab's ability to continue all five pilots and upscale some of them. The second driver was represented by the networks of local stakeholders, which the pilot's implementers built during the project. These were going to be drawn on for continuing and upscaling all five pilots.²¹⁸ The third driver was that the HomeLab team found an investment opportunity in the ESCF with well-matching priorities. The ESCF sought social innovations that addressed, amongst others, poverty, marginalisation and homelessness, which had already been piloted by experienced social experimenters.²¹⁹ All these conditions could be fulfilled thanks to participation in EaSI. The final drivers, as the interview with the project team showed, were changes in Budapest's municipal leadership. A new city administration took office in 2019 and had since begun developing a housing strategy. The draft strategy included the establishment of a city-run SRE. This enabled the partnership to join forces with the new administration, apply for ESCF funding and start working on the implementation plan.

The barriers encountered by the upscaling efforts in Hungary pertained to political and structural issues outside of the project team's control. First, Hungarian municipalities had, according to the project team, limited resources to fund social housing because there was no national funding available for that. Furthermore, Budapest and Veszprém were experiencing high levels of vacant but renovated flats because of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, landlords tend to be apprehensive about lowering rent to levels appropriate for social housing and taking on the risk of housing vulnerable people.

Project's internal and external coherence

There were limited internal synergies between HomeLab and other EaSI projects. The project team visited the HELP project's final conference and both project teams cooperated with the international NGO FEANTSA, albeit in different ways. FEANTSA was a co-beneficiary of HELP, while the HomeLab team participated in two conferences organised by FEANTSA.²²⁰ There was also contact with the Hungarian partner of the Bridging Young Roma and Business project. However, no synergy went beyond exchanging thoughts on problems, possible solutions and other ideas.

Externally, HomeLab were in contact with the Athens-based Curing the Limbo project which implemented a SRE like HomeLab but dedicated to refugees. It was co-financed by the EU's Urban Innovative Actions initiative which provides funding for experimental solutions for sustainable urban design.²²¹ The project team were, furthermore, building up a network of cities in Southern and Eastern Europe outside of the EaSI programme to promote the SRE model.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

According to the project team, EaSI's relevance to HomeLab was high due to three factors. To start with, establishing SREs was the most adequate local response to tackling the lack of affordable housing for the most vulnerable. The project team considered that improving the currently lacking welfare provision in the project countries alone would not be sufficient to solve the housing problem. That is why social innovations such as SREs are needed. In the second place, the priorities of the relevant call were all highly pertinent to HomeLab because those facing homelessness meet most of the issues the call addressed

²¹⁸ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0375. Final activity report.

²¹⁹ ESCF. 2020a. Call for applications 2020 [Online].

²²⁰ DEFIS (2019c). VP/2015/011/0380. Final financial statement; DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0375. Final activity report.

²²¹ URBAN INNOVATIVE ACTIONS. 2021. What is Urban Innovative Actions? [Online].

(employment problems, poverty, exclusion from housing, quality education and services, etc.). HomeLab's response was to introduce one-stop shops where all these issues would be addressed, just as the call demanded. Finally, participation in EaSI helped the project partners who implemented the different pilots on the ground to develop their capacities as social innovators. As evidenced above, some of the NGOs expanded their services thanks to HomeLab and EaSI's seed funding.

EU added value

There were three aspects of EU added value in HomeLab. First, the fact that there were pilots in four Member States set it apart from other EaSI projects. Also, relying solely on national funding would have been unfeasible as social innovation was not a policy priority in any project country. Relying on such funding, had it been available, would have made it difficult to implement the pilot in all countries because requirements and priorities might have differed between countries. As a result, the EaSI funding was necessary to serve as the seed capital for starting HomeLab, as the project team put it. Moreover, the extra exposure gained from participation in EaSI helped bring about additional interest in the model. Having piloted SREs in several countries generated a solid evidence base showing that the model worked in various contexts. The partnerships with the influential international NGOs FEANTSA, Housing Europe and Habitat Europe²²² helped disseminate the model and the results to a wider European audience.

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²²² Housing Europe's Polish chapter implemented the Polish pilot. FEANTSA and Housing Europe were external partners.

MISSION

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Before the pilot implementation, high levels of fragmentation in Flemish social service delivery had led to a high level of non-take-up of employment service among disadvantaged families at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Fragmentation in this context refers to a variety of actors attempting to provide employment services in the same family. Thus, there was a need for more integrated and proactive social service delivery.

Project team (implementers): A partnership featuring two public offices and three research partners and led by the Public Centre for Social Welfare (OCMW) of the municipality of Kortrijk. Other partners were the Flemish Government Agency for Family Support and Childcare, Kind en Gezin (K&G); as well as the University of Antwerp, the University of Leuven and Howest University of Applied Science.

Objectives: The MISSION project sought to pilot and evaluate an integrated approach to social service delivery among disadvantaged families with young children in the Flemish municipality of Kortrijk. The goal was to raise the take-up of local employment services among the target group.

Method: The pilot implemented a model of outreaching case management, where case handlers would reach out to young families upon childbirth and then proceed to provide individualised and integrated social and employment support wherever needed. The total intervention period was set at 12 months. Case handlers were supported by an innovative ICT tool and a strong partnership among public, private and civil society stakeholders.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents.

Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured results and impacts)

MISSION's results were positive and achieved the aim of higher local employment services take-up in the target group. Services were provided to 131 families. 63% of households had no regular employment; 30% had only a single earner. The intervention raised the uptake of additional financial support in the short term (37.5% of families in the treatment group; 17.9% in the control group six months after intervention onset), while take-up of employment and training programmes increased significantly (42% in the treatment group; 36% in control group one year after intervention onset). In addition, the pilot demonstrated that non-take-up was due to the organisation of services at the local level. The project also effected organisational improvements in the way stakeholders delivered their services on 57 occasions.²²³

However, the project did not change income, housing or living conditions among the participating families within six months. These areas are regulated by national or Flemish regional law and, as the result, the case handlers had little scope to make decisions on behalf of the families, unlike in the areas which demonstrated improvement.²²⁴

At the policy level, MISSION's results fed into local and national policy. Two principles of Kortrijk's 2020-2025 anti-poverty plan (early detection of and intervention against poverty

²²³ VAN LANCKER, et.al. 2020. MISSION: Mobile Integrated Social Services Increasing Employment Outcomes for People in Need. Kortrijk: OCMW Kortrijk.

²²⁴ DEFIS (2019). VP/2015/011/0007. Final activity report.

risks, outreach work) originated from MISSION's experience. Several municipal social policy measures were built on MISSION (e.g. expanding technology use, financial support for better access to private childcare, financial incentives for new childcare initiatives).²²⁵ At the national level, inputs from the project informed the national policy on family welfare ('One Family, One Plan') and the relevant regional ESF programme.

Efficiency

Despite not having calculated a specific figure, the project team estimated that MISSION was more costly in the short run but would likely cause cost savings in the long run, because the pilot increased beneficiaries' use of financial benefits. In addition, the model of outreaching case management required new staff to be hired and trained, which led to higher staff costs. In the long run, however, MISSION would help beneficiaries find stable employment faster, thus, making them less reliant on social benefits.

Implementing the project with less money would not have been possible. The project team stressed that the size of the EaSI grant was just right to address all their ideas and needs. That was because the pilot's practical implementation (i.e. hiring necessary staff, launching the online tool) in connection with the academic evaluation was expensive and the Municipality of Kortrijk was only able to pay for it thanks to EaSI. In addition, the EaSI funding enabled the project team to test their new model, while not having to compromise on the day-to-day work of implementing social policy and delivering social services based on the existing model. The project's financial report showed no irregularities.

The project team criticised the idea of results-based EaSI funding. They believe the purpose of an experiment is to find out whether an approach works. Committing to certain results beforehand contradicts that purpose. Investors of experimental models should not expect all pilots to deliver certain results. Instead, the goal should be that at least some experiments generate the desired results. While the head researcher did make some positive predictions, the project team would most likely not have applied for results-based EaSI funding precisely because of the inherent uncertainty of experiments.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

MISSION introduced a new service and new ways of delivering existing services and cooperating between institutions. The pilot created new services by introducing outreaching case management and by launching a new ICT tool. Outreaching case handling was a new model of social service delivery whereby social services actively approached potential beneficiaries on positive pretexts (childbirth in this case). The new ICT tool (Sien Online) had two sets of functions: a public function allowing users to identify applicable rights, and benefits; a closed function where case handlers managed their cases and the research team collected. The new case management model was a new way of delivering existing services, too. Case handlers were 'generalists' trained to identify their clients' needs and to refer them to the right services and benefits available in the municipality. There were 25 public and private service providers active in Kortrijk, including the project coordinators (Kortrijk's public centre of social services). Finally, the pilot introduced a new way of cooperation between institutions. Extensive stakeholder cooperation through a so-called multidimensional multistakeholder network (MDMA), holding representatives from all 25 social service providing organisations and institutions active in Kortrijk, was established. The MDMA facilitated structural improvements in social service delivery, especially improving accessibility and alignment.²²⁶

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

Barriers and drivers of innovativeness

The first driver was that case handlers facilitated the MDMA's work by signalling organisational barriers to efficient integrated service delivery using their on-the-ground experience. The second driver was the cooperation with Kind en Gezin (K&G). Being the Flemish Government Agency for Family and Child-related matters, they had extensive reach to the target group and a well-developed tool for assessing families' vulnerability. This allowed for swift identification of potential beneficiaries. The third driver was the pilot's solid evaluation method. Having collected data from beneficiaries, case handlers and service providers, including through more than 200 interviews and the Sien Online platform, allowed for the triangulation of data and, therefore, for drawing well-founded conclusions. The final driver was the positive 'entry point.' Unlike conventional social work, MISSION entered the picture on positive pretexts, namely childbirth, and without a particular agenda other than providing help wherever and whenever needed. This allowed for better and closer relationships of trust to be built.

Structural barriers represented one of the obstacles faced. Case handlers could not achieve much on behalf of their clients, whenever relevant benefits or services were bound by the national or regional policy. Such issues were, for example, encountered in the housing, education or tax systems. Another barrier was the narrow target group. The pilot focused on vulnerable families with newborn children only because of K&G's data. It did not reach other vulnerable families, for example, with older children, without children, or pensioners. In addition, 64% of participating mothers were not readily available for the labour market. Hence, the intervention might have been more impactful with another or a less narrow target group. Furthermore, case managers found the intervention period was too short. The results showed that increasing take-up of employment measures only began a year after the intervention's onset. Work on employment only began late in the intervention, because the first months needed to be spent building trust and fixing short-term problems. Lastly, K&G's vast range of services on offer led to the agency being active in subject families alongside case handlers. This undermined the integrated provision of social services, at times leading to contradictory advice being given by K&G and the case handlers.²²⁷

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

MISSION's outreaching case management model was fully implemented by the Municipality of Kortrijk's Public Centre for Social Services (OMCW). This means that the model no longer only extended to families with young children but to everyone seeking social services at the OMCW. The municipality did so by investing its own money without relying on external funding, based on the pilot's positive results.

As for transference, the Flemish government committed funds to make the Sean Online accessible to residents of all Flemish municipalities. Linking the system to the Crossroads Bank for social security, building eID capacities (e.g. for automatic allocation of benefits) and expanding to become an 'integrated social file' was in planning at the time of the drafting. Furthermore, several other Flemish municipalities were experimenting with the outreaching case management aspect of MISSION as well. Finally, the Flemish government was introducing a new policy named 'family coaches' which was based on inputs from MISSION and whose implementation would be overseen by one of MISSION's project partners (K&G). There were no plans of transference in other Member States, according to the project team.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

²²⁷ Ibid.

Full implementation in Kortrijk's OCMW was driven by the case handlers themselves. Their work on the ground allowed them to expose bottlenecks. In response, organisational changes could be made in the short term and the insights could be utilised to improve the model for the upscaling. The main driver for transferring outreaching case management to other Flemish municipalities was the project's outstanding visibility thanks to the European dimension. The project team were able to disseminate their results to representatives from various Flemish municipalities and from the Flemish Association of Cities and Municipalities through presentations and a Dutch language 'how-to' manual.²²⁸

The main barrier to implementing outreaching case management to the entirety of Kortrijk's OCMW was the change in management. After all, staff were confronted with a radical change in the way they were required to work and think. Before they would work from their offices only providing the OCMW's in-house services and by then they were expected to work from their clients' houses. Some were able to make the change quickly, while others were held back by fear of and hesitancy toward that new model.

Project's internal and external coherence

The project team attended study meetings with 2015 call's HELP project and was in contact with PACT's 2014 call. However, all exchanges with other EaSI projects were superficial and there is no evidence of financial/non-financial complementarities. EC-organised opportunities for exchange did not allocate enough time for a meaningful exchange of ideas. The project team considered such an exchange would require at least three days of intensive collaboration.

While MISSION was aware of other social innovations outside of the EaSI programme, it did not engage in any in-depth collaborations. Hence, no evidence of external synergies was discovered.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

The project team cited three factors why the EaSI programme was highly relevant for MISSION. First, all priorities of the 2015 EaSI PROGRESS call perfectly aligned with the social needs in the Municipality of Kortrijk and the project team's plans. No changes or compromises needed to be made, allowing for MISSION to be tailored to the local needs. Furthermore, social innovation was the most appropriate response to addressing the non-take-up of social services in the municipality. The project evaluation showed that the existing organisation of social services was causing non-take-up. The pilot and the innovative model of outreaching case management demonstrated superior results as take-up grew. Finally, EaSI was the most relevant EU level funding opportunity because EaSI was most tailored to the project's needs and, as the 'efficiency' section showed, MISSION was implemented exactly as envisaged. Other sources were less keen on providing funding for a social experimentation project. Belgian ESF was, for example, mainly available for already proven employment measures.

EU added value

The main EU added value was additional exposure. The project generated significant interest at the Flemish regional and at Belgian national levels. The project team attributed this to the fact that due to the European dimension, the public recognised that MISSION was a serious project, implemented by serious people with serious funding. Thanks to the exposure, other municipalities, universities and even countries would approach the project team for guidance and for the pilot's results. According to the project team, those

²²⁸ Ibid.

stakeholders were interested in the project because of MISSION's comprehensive policy response involving a focus on the user perspective, stakeholder involvement, an online tool and extensive evaluation. Examples of this heightened interest were that the project made headlines on national media on the day of the final conference²²⁹ and that a presentation of the project results before the Belgian Minister for Social Welfare was scheduled but had not taken place at the time of writing.

The second aspect of EU added value was that the project could not have been implemented with Belgian national, Flemish regional or Kortrijk municipal funding, because these levels of government are conservative in funding large scale experiments such as MISSION, which incur large expenses for evaluation and implementing costly but unproven measures (e.g. development of an online tool).

Finally, participation in EaSI provided the opportunity for cross-border learning. MISSION gathered an EU Advisory Board consisting of representatives from Barcelona and Rotterdam, which were cities facing similar challenges, the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), the European Social Network (ESN), and networks of social authorities such as the Knowledge Centre Social Europe (KCSE) and the European Network of Social Authorities (ENSA). The aim was to gain valuable insights on key issues that MISSION might face. The board met three times during the implementation phase.²³⁰

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²²⁹ WAUTERS, R. 2019a. In Kortrijk pakken ze armoede persoonlijk aan. DeMorgen, 29/11/2019; WAUTERS, R. 2019b. Persoonlijke aanpak van armoede werkt. DeMorgen, 29/11/2019.

²³⁰ Ibid.

SIPA

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: In the North of the Franche-Comté region, the offer of labour market integration services was fragmented due to the lack of cooperation between local actors, and was also perceived as too normative, rigid and lengthy, leading to the disconnection from people facing long-term unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. They did not register nor used the existing mainstream structures and services anymore, becoming an 'invisible public' for these labour market institutions. In the Montbéliard area, local actors faced a significant decline in public attendance of social, training and employment structures, in particular, the most vulnerable people (+50 and -26) despite their existing and increasing needs.

Project team (implementers): A public partnership between two French organisations (associations), l'Institut de l'Entreprise et de l'Innovation Sociale (IDEIS) and the Association Intermédiaire DEFI (work integration).

Objectives: The overall goal of the SIPA project was to experiment in the Metropolitan Community of Montbéliard with new forms of (re)mobilisation of the public far away from employment. Target groups were people who were distant from employment, struggling with social and professional integration, with specific vigilance on young people, refugees and women. The project focused on providing fast and simple answers to beneficiaries' immediate needs.

Method: Opposite to the classical approach with institutions waiting for people to come, the method experimented by SIPA consisted of 'going to' the most fragile, disengaged and unidentified people, to create new links between this public and the existing structures in the area. The project was structured around three axes: (1) mobilise the public in their living environment and encourage them to come to 3 SIPA sites (two inhabitant liaison counsellors per district and four advisers in SIPA spaces); (2) propose to them adapted personal support allowing to reconnect with the existing employment local structures and tools (three liaison counsellors in adapted support); (3) create collaborative partnerships and actions between local stakeholders (employment, social, cultural) to ensure better and tighter coverage of the territory.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents, incl. final report.

Effects**Contextual description of effects (measured results and impacts)**

SIPA achieved most of its objectives, although the initially planned counterfactual evaluation was replaced by a qualitative one. The main outcome was the increase in public attendance of employment services dropouts, reversing the trend, thanks to the actions of the counsellors and to collaborative actions of remobilisation (for instance Recrut'café) in the neighbourhoods where the audience lived. The three new SIPA sites reached out to 51,459 people, with an increase of 24% over three years (target 10%), and a satisfaction rate from the users of 97%. In particular, 88% were satisfied by the adapted support provided, 50% declared they had never been accompanied before, 90% of them benefitted from other support schemes resulting from their experience with SIPA, and 30% registered in a local association (16% before SIPA).²³¹ The results in terms of return to local employment mainstream structures were lower than expected, with 2124 registrations (target 3000), due to an economic recovery pushing people to employment rather than support and training. From them, 537 benefitted from the proposed adapted support provided by the counsellors,

²³¹ Results global indicators SIPA project

and 249 people either reintegrated into a local public training or employment scheme or found a job (target 200), with many young dropouts reintegrating Youth Local Structures (Mission Locales).²³² As a result, the project team concluded that the 'mobilisation' of disengaged people in their living environment could bring them back to local employment and training structures and stakeholders.

The improved collaboration between all local actors (socio-cultural, employment, enterprises) was another key outcome, with 43 collaborative actions against an initial target of 36 (for example, a 'reversed' employment forum for young people, presenting their competencies to enterprises). In addition, 853 'partner events' allowed local actors to present their service offer to this vulnerable audience in the SIPA sites. To ensure access to public services, a local point of support helped bridge this gap. The final conference FESTI'JOB presented the project with forums allowing the public and partners to exchange in an innovative user-friendly format. The new multiple partners' events were sustained with a monthly frequency, which was even more important for the project team.²³³

Policy impacts were mixed. The development of local governance through committees composed of local partners and users/inhabitants was more mixed. Despite some tangible results (territorial diagnosis, some collaborative actions), very few inhabitants participated, feeling uncomfortable with technical and strategic discussions with local stakeholders. However, SIPA project was recognised and supported by the regional authority in charge of work, employment and training policies (DIRRECTE), leading to the involvement of SIPA team in a national study on the 'identification of invisible audiences'²³⁴ that became a national issue. In addition, the existence of the 'invisible public' became more well-known, leading to the national call for project PCI Reperage, and might have led to similar approaches.

Efficiency

The cost of the experimentation was compared to existing solutions and no estimate was provided. The project team said that estimates could be made, but the comparison would only provide a rough approximation, implying combining costs of several existing services, provided separately and delivered differently.

However, the coordinator's assumption was that such a pilot had a rather important cost that would not decrease in the short term. The final cost was higher than initially planned (15% increase: €1,573,139 instead of €1,366,568), entirely using the EU grant (€750,000) and investing more own resources.²³⁵ The main factor impacting cost was the intensive intervention model centred on finding, reaching out to and counselling people who were no longer registered with employment services. It took time to get a steady increase of people, gain visibility and sustain local partnerships, which were providing good results at the reporting date. Development over a 6 year period would be more interesting and would allow a return on investment. For instance, the number of social liaison counsellors could be reduced once the dynamic has started. According to the project coordinator, SIPA could not have been implemented with a lower budget, rather well-calibrated.

The project might have applied for an EaSI call with payments based on the result, depending on the type of results expected and how they would be measured. Results in terms of transfer and upscaling, for instance, are difficult to achieve for small organisations, this would affect the overall performance of projects led by small organisations and discourage them to apply. In experimentation, many factors can lead to lower results, and

²³² SIPA (December 2019). Final activity report. VP/2015/011/0429.

²³³ SIPA (December 2019). Final activity report. VP/2015/011/0429.

²³⁴ Les jeunes « invisibles » : ni en éducation, ni en formation, ni en emploi et ni en accompagnement en France et en Europe.

²³⁵ SIPA Final financial statement.

external factors and means should be assessed too. Having indicators is important, but totally linking the payment to results obtained is dangerous. This type of funding could lead to some rigidity, quite opposite to the nature of experimentation.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

SIPA was more an organisational innovation and a new way of delivering services at the territorial level, than a new service per se. Its innovation approach was based on 'going to people' in their living environment to propose immediate and adapted solutions instead of waiting for them to come to established structures imposing long, heavy and standardised registration processes and not meeting their expectations. The key aspect of the SIPA model was that it introduced a new profession of multifaceted counsellors who identified vulnerable people not covered by employment services and provided them with individualised but systemic accompaniment towards employment. This was implemented through social *ilotage* (local inhabitant liaison counsellors meeting people in streets, markets, etc.) as well as through partnership *ilotage* (liaison counsellors meeting disengaged people in the local partners' structures (social centres, neighbourhood associations, cultural services, etc.)). These special counsellors delivered a unique proximity service, thanks to the fact that they combined both the knowledge of the local population and of the local structures that could be mobilised to help solve the person's immediate problems. SIPA was one of the first in France to employ a 'going to people'-type model and to trial an intervention targeted at the 'invisible public' on this large scale with practical and long-term actions involving multiple partners. Previous projects on the same target group were rather punctual and narrow.²³⁶

Furthermore, the partnership dimension was also innovative because it integrated the work of employment and socio-cultural organisations, which was previously not the case in France. IDEIS, already used to cooperate with other training and employment partners,²³⁷ engaged with new local actors from the cultural and the social sectors (sport associations, Youth Houses, social centres etc.) and built multifaceted and more holistic projects in people's environment that better answer their needs. The partnership adopted a practical approach, creating collaborative actions and using 'alibi events' (Recruit' café, Recruit' sport, meeting with employers in a cultural or sport association, cultural action, etc.) to attract people in a more informal way and encourage them to make the first commitment.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

The main driver of the project was the provision of a simple and fast response to the urgent needs of the most fragile population. Counsellors played a key role here. They considered their global situation and the immediate obstacles faced in their lives, even those that were not employment-related, instead of fragmenting social and employment needs, for instance. It was faster because the counsellors had the adequate network and names of organisations and people who could provide solutions, knock at the right door immediately, and explain the situation concisely, avoiding long hours spent searching for the right interlocutor; a lengthy registration process discouraging the most vulnerable ones. They did not act in people's place, but with them, simplifying the approach. The other driver lay in the support of a local network of employers and actors from the cultural and social sectors, which eased a fast overall integration and improved job search results.²³⁸ The way the system was organised in France fragmented employment and social and cultural services activities. While local actors did show a willingness to cooperate, they lacked the time and space to collaborate and overcome these structural barriers. The SIPA project gave them

²³⁶ SIPA evaluation report (December 2019) – l'Aventure G. Guthleben.

²³⁷ IDEIS website: <https://www.ideis-asso.org/>.

²³⁸ SIPA (December 2019). Final activity report. VP/2015/011/0429.

the opportunity to exchange and collaborate on real actions over time, beyond some 'one shot' working groups or discussions about synergies. Collaboration with social and cultural services was particularly helpful as it allowed to identify and reach out to people not registered anymore in the employment services in a more informal way, and to better bridge existing services provided in a separate manner otherwise.

There were several barriers. First, the counterfactual evaluation initially envisaged could not be applied due to the difficulty to maintain regular contact with the 'non-captive' target group, and consequently, the comparison between a control group and a target group was not possible. Second, the project struggled to identify liaison counsellors, with all relevant competencies, but also the adequate attitude and soft skills. Furthermore, the local governance was supposed to take place in two different committees, one for the partners, and one for the users. The lack of participants on the inhabitants' side led to the merging of the two committees which had not worked; the project and discussions were too technical for inhabitants to fully participate. The project coordinator indicated that this challenge had been underestimated and should have been better supported with some prior preparation for the inhabitants.²³⁹ Finally, an evaluation committee of SIPA was meant to meet once a year, with the main two local authorities initially supporting SIPA, Montbéliard Agglomération and the Doubs Department. It only met once, preventing further upscaling in the Doubs Department as planned.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

Upscaling took place at a smaller scale than planned. Upscaling to the rural department of Doubs as well as wide dissemination at the national level with the view of duplication in other French territories did not occur as planned.²⁴⁰ However, the national call for the PIC project (Plan for Investment in Competences, with a call for experimentation projects to secure employment pathways, ensure basic skills background, answer to companies' needs and upskill the labour force) financed the second phase of SIPA, geographically expanded in the north of the region. One of the five topics was dedicated to territorial projects on 'identification and mobilisation of invisible audiences' to prevent long-term labour market distancing. While there seemed to be increasing interest in SIPA's methodology and target group, the coordinator interestingly pointed out a limitation to the upscaling and transfer: this approach was useful but should complement the traditional one rather than replace it.

While there was no exact replication of the SIPA project elsewhere, there was evidence of transference. During the project, contact was established with Spanish, Belgian and Italian stakeholders. At the end of the project, SIPA contacted both EU and additional partners again, to share its results and tools. This raised their interest and gave birth to an ERASMUS+ project, ReSolution²⁴¹ (Sep. 2019-Oct. 2021), with Spanish, Belgium, Hungarian, French and Italian partners, inspired by SIPA and capitalising on all tools and approaches developed in those countries to remobilise people far away from employment. They were creating a common methodology and a toolkit for professionals working with this audience, where all the tools and lessons from SIPA were turned into teaching material via Tutorials and MOOC on 'New forms of remobilisation' alongside the tools from the other countries.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability

²³⁹ SIPA evaluation report (December 2019) – l'Aventure G. Guthleben.

²⁴⁰ See 'Drivers and Barriers of Social Innovation' section. SIPA Grant Agreement. VS/2016/0206 (FR).

²⁴¹ ERASMUS+ Project ReSolution <https://www.projectresolution.eu/en/resolution-project-erasmus-lets-go/>.

The main driver of upscaling is related to the regional support SIPA received from DIRECCTE.²⁴² Thanks to the support received, IDEIS and the SIPA team applied to a national call for projects in 2019-2020 (National Plan Investment in Competencies (PIC) 'identification and mobilisation of invisible people') and launched the second phase of SIPA, expanding its geographical scope in the north of the region (ReSolution project). A second driver was that the project itself foresaw contacting international stakeholders. Although nothing eventuated during the implementation period due to a lack of transnational dimension, the project team were able to fall back on those contacts to launch the ERASMUS+ project.

The first barrier related to upscaling in France was that employment policy priorities at the national level changed away from experimentation and upscaling, and started focusing on youth employment as a result of Covid recovery activities. Thus, the upscaling in the north of the region was stalling as of the date of this report. The second barrier was that EaSI was not very well known in France, and the EaSI label did not open many doors. The link between the EC level for EaSI and the national level (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and ESF Managing Authority) was missing and prevented smooth transitions between sources of funding and support to change of scale. The third barrier related to transference to the other Member States which was not possible during the implementation period. It did not materialise because the specific characteristics of France did not exactly match those of other EU countries, despite there being the common challenge of remobilising people who had dropped out of regular support systems. The final barrier, relating to transference but also to upscaling, was that IDEIS, being a small structure, lacked the relevant network within France and abroad as well as the resources necessary to efficiently disseminate results and transfer the approach to other EU regions and countries. After all, upscaling and transferring require a lot of resources at or even after the end of a project. Enhanced support from the national and EU levels, with more guidance when preparing the proposal to better plan this step would be helpful. On the 'receiving side', organisations or territories ready to try out and implement the pilot developed elsewhere should be better informed, prepared and supported to successfully manage this transfer. An innovative project transforms internal structures quite drastically.²⁴³

Project's internal and external coherence

No synergies between the project and other EaSI projects were found. Contacts established during the EU EaSI conferences raised interest but did not lead to any concrete collaboration due to a lack of time and resources. The coordinator suggested adding working groups or workshops for more in-depth exchange between sibling projects and mutualising results, with the support from the EC.

No evidence of synergies with other EU social innovation actions was found either.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

The project team identified three aspects of EU added value. First, no other EU funding was known by IDEIS that could have been adapted to this experimentation. The project team considered ESF as an alternative funding source. However, the authority managing ESF resources in France (DIRECCTE) advised them that ESF was not appropriate for social experimentation. In addition, the project team believed the ESF to be too 'heavy' as it was being managed indirectly by regions (too slow in making payments, monitoring and rules such as eligibility criteria were discouraging for stakeholders). The SIPA coordinator, furthermore, noted that, from past experience, implementing experimentation in developing

²⁴² See 'Effects' section.

²⁴³ SIPA evaluation report (December 2019) – l'Aventure G. Guthleben.

countries (Africa, Maghreb) with EU funding was easier. Moreover, EaSi priorities from the call were wide enough to tackle social needs from different angles, covering various fields, which was rich and interesting. This call allowed different types of actors to participate, opened the typology of services for the public, which was much appreciated compared to other national calls, too rigid and top-down, not taking into account the heterogeneity of territories and needs, crucial to design an adequate answer and lead to innovation. Apart from this limited and focused national call, no other funding possibility existed at the time. ESF was explored but judged too heavy. Depending on EU resources, it would be interesting to have more EaSi calls (every quarter or semester). No other project of that size was completed after SIPA. Finally, the organisation's capacity increased internally, integrating the logic of the project and the need for evaluation. A social experimentation working group was set up but was on hold at the time of the drafting, due to the high pace of work in small social organisations. The quality of the monitoring for the EC team and the personal involvement was very appreciated by the project team.

EU added value

There were two aspects to the EU added value. First, the pilot could not have been implemented without the EaSi funding because there was no national or regional programme or funding source supporting social experimentation at this scale. In addition, funding tends to be limited and quite targeted in terms of scope or activities. The one national call that did fit the project team objectives (PIC) turned out to be more limited and inappropriate. In the second place, despite the absence of European partners, internal practices in the project team evolved thanks to the European dimension of EaSi; SIPA team were regularly invited by French and European partners to present the project results and developed new contacts with other European partners from Belgium, Hungary (Galileo Progetti) and Spain (CEPS Projectes Socials), as well as the [Réseau International des Cités des Métiers](#), from France, and shared the project results with them. This improved the understanding of other environments and raised the need to create common tools. This new network, further expanded, led to a new ERASMUS+ project (ReSolution), aiming to create a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on forms of remobilisation in Europe, and started in September 2019. No national or regional funding led to the project's opening to other policies and practices.²⁴⁴

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²⁴⁴ SIPA evaluation report (December 2019) – l'Aventure G. Guthleben.

TSUNAMI

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Individuals suffering from severe mental illness demonstrate extremely low labour force participation; lower than most other groups of disabled people. Integration into the labour market is a particularly complex task due to the nature of their illness and the associated social stigma. TSUNAMI was born out of the belief that these barriers can be broken down with the right policies and incentives.

Project team (implementers): A public-private cooperation between the Piedmont Regional Government (project coordinators) and Agenzia Piemonte Lavoro as well as ASVAPP, Stichting Economie en Cultuur, Fondazione Adecco per le Pari Opportunità, Inforcoop and EXAR Social Value Solutions. Note that EXAR Solutions were the main point of contact for this project and any mention of the project team refers to them. EXAR did stress that the involvement of the Piedmont region and other public institutions ensured public ownership of all results.

Objectives: The project sought to test a support-to-employment intervention targeted at unemployed individuals with mental illness in the Piedmont region. The pilot's methodology was based on the Individual Placement Support (IPS) methodology. The aim was to bring more people with severe mental illness into employment, compared to a control group.

Method: TSUNAMI'S support-to-employment approach was centred on job coaches assigned to a beneficiary. The job coaches organised traineeships for the beneficiaries, supported them throughout the process and later assisted them in the job search. Coaches also liaised with traineeship-providing companies to swiftly resolve any issues.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents.

Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured results and impacts)

The project did reach its target of bringing people into traineeships. This being a structural objective of the intervention, there was a significant increase in traineeships beginning between the treatment and control groups within the first 12 months after the intervention's onset. However, TSUNAMI failed to meet its primary target of increasing employment among the treatment group. While 433 people participated in the treatment group, the intervention demonstrated no improvement in beneficiaries finding a job within 12 months of the intervention's start.²⁴⁵ It should be noted, however, that the counterfactual impact evaluation carried out by TSUNAMI and cited above only captures short- to medium-term effects.²⁴⁶

In addition to the counterfactual evaluation, the project team also carried out a qualitative analysis to capture some additional aspects which, they believe, a quantitative approach alone could not capture. The qualitative analysis showed improvements in motivation, willingness to work as well as general mental health among the treatment group. Based on those results, the project team considered that TSUNAMI might show positive long-term

²⁴⁵ TSUNAMI (2019). Impact Evaluation – Final Report.

²⁴⁶ These counterfactual evaluation results are based on the outcomes of 75% of beneficiaries, as they have been admitted to the project in stages, according to the latest impact evaluation available. The project team do not note, however, any change in the general trend with the results of the remaining 25%.

effects on beneficiaries' employment situation; data were still not conclusive at the reporting date.

Efficiency

The project team compared costs to a programme of the regional government (Buono Servizi al Lavoro Disabili) which they believed to be most similar to TSUNAMI's objectives. The programme sought to empower and guide disabled people in accessing the labour market. In comparison, TSUNAMI realised cost savings of approximately €400 or 23%. This calculation did not only include the cost for delivering the actual service but also costs incurred for intervention design, coordination between project partners and staff training.

The project team did not believe that TSUNAMI could have been realised with fewer resources. After all, they used up approximately 92% of their initially awarded EU grant.²⁴⁷ However, they highlighted two structural barriers which prevented improving operational processes, thus, restraining TSUNAMI to be implemented more cost-effectively. First, there was a lack of coordination between Piedmont PES offices and companies who had committed themselves to recruit people with disabilities.²⁴⁸ Furthermore, the project team believed the registration criteria for beneficiaries should have included not only individuals who had already registered their mental disability with the PES office but also those who had obtained a so-called 'functional diagnosis.' This relates to the pilot's problems with recruiting enough 'subjects'.²⁴⁹

Finally, providing the EaSI funding based on results rather than as a grant was met with criticism from the project team because such a condition would have imposed a higher business risk, as the project team argued. The result of such a higher business risk would have been that the consortium would have adopted a more conventional methodology, thus more likely to succeed; and the most vulnerable prospective beneficiaries would have probably been excluded as they were more prone to produce unexpected outcomes. In addition, the project team considered that results-based funding would not have allowed for a robust evaluation dimension including a randomised-controlled trial as TSUNAMI did. The TSUNAMI consortium would have possibly not applied for EaSI funding for those reasons.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

TSUNAMI's IPS methodology represented a new but integrated way of delivering existing services provided by the project's various public and private partners. The idea behind IPS in TSUNAMI was to rapidly place beneficiaries in competitive employment settings through three to six months of traineeships, followed by a minimum of a three-month intensive assisted job search, and general support for beneficiaries as well as traineeship provided by the job coach. During the traineeship, beneficiaries were meant to acquire the skills necessary for becoming competitive in the labour market. During the traineeship, job coaches would liaise between beneficiaries and their respective employers on reducing beneficiary-specific distress and tension factors. Following the traineeship, job coaches would assist beneficiaries in finding employment by organising activities aimed at equipping them with the tools necessary for a successful job search. These included CV writing, reflecting on the traineeship and identifying potential employers. Job coaches, furthermore, built support networks consisting of public and private specialist support services, territorial Public Employment Services (PES), the local Mental Health Department, as well as other

²⁴⁷ DEFIS (2019b). VP/2015/011/0390. Final financial statement; DEFIS (2016). VP/2015/011. Grants awarded as a result of the call for proposals VP/2015/011.

²⁴⁸ See 'Barriers and drivers of social experimentation'.

²⁴⁹ Also see 'Barriers and drivers of social experimentation'.

foundations and volunteering organisations. If needed, beneficiaries could be referred to their respective services flexibly. Meetings with relevant employers in the region were also held with the purpose of establishing tracking and assessment mechanisms for beneficiaries' progress.²⁵⁰ According to the project team, TSUNAMI represented the first initiative that tested IPS at a large scale in Piedmont.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

One driver was that the project team were aware of the successful application of the IPS model in the United States and in some European states during the 2000s. Another driver was the pilot's management information system GEPAL (*Gestione Politiche Attive del Lavoro*) which allowed the job coaches to register their daily activities. The resulting data was the most valuable source for TSUNAMI's extensive dissemination and monitoring of project activities (monthly reports on TSUNAMI website) and for steering discussions, along with the data from the regional Labour Market Information System (SILP). The evaluation itself was driven significantly by the collaboration with the third sector and external research institutions, as the project team asserts.²⁵¹

TSUNAMI also faced some barriers related to the experiments' participants. First, uptake was low either because possible candidates were deemed not suitable by the job coaches or because candidates were not interested in participating all the way. In fact, only 14% of the initial experimental group started a traineeship and only 9% went on to receive support in searching for a job²⁵². Furthermore, the project team feared high levels of 'contamination' (sharing information, while encountering each other at PES or mental health services) between members of the treatment and control groups which led them to adopt a rather elaborate randomisation protocol²⁵³.

Scalability/Transferability:

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

There was evidence of both scaling and transfer. In terms of scaling, the Regional Government of Piedmont launched a programme called Special Projects worth approximately €2 million, which aimed at promoting and enhancing new practices and interventions for people with disabilities. There were three projects following a similar IPS model to TSUNAMI being funded through the Special Projects programme. The amount of funding attracted was approximately €350,000.

In terms of transfer, the project team partnered up with the promoters of the 2016 EaSI PROGRESS call's RIAC project – the public employment office of the City of Offenbach, Germany – to draw up a proposal for another EaSI project that was readapting TSUNAMI's approach to other Member States. The goal was to merge TSUNAMI's IPS model with RIAC's methodology of speed management²⁵⁴ to achieve greater speed in bringing people with disabilities into employment. In addition, the project team were in the process of developing a network with Spanish public employment offices with the purpose of planning another intervention where TSUNAMI's model could be transferred. However, both efforts remained in the design phase without any additional funding having been won at the time of writing.

²⁵⁰ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0390. Final activity report.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² TSUNAMI 2019. Impact Evaluation - Final Report.

²⁵³ DEFIS (2019a). VP/2015/011/0390. Final activity report.

²⁵⁴ RIAC sought to speed up the integration of vulnerable people (especially refugees) into society.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability

The first and main driver of transferability was the 2nd EaSI Conference held in March 2021, because it significantly contributed to the pilot's exposure. The project team noted that the conference was the main opportunity for getting in touch with other EaSI project promoters. Both transfer efforts cited above are the result of networking done during the conference. The second driver was the project's internationally-minded dissemination strategy. Having been a predominantly national consortium, the project team realised that rallying interest beyond Italy would be challenging. In response, they attempted to exploit all available opportunities at the EU level. Participation in the EaSI conference is a good example.

Project's internal and external coherence

There was evidence of synergies between TSUNAMI and RIAC. The project promoters connected at the 2nd EaSI conference and subsequently began developing another EaSI proposal. In addition, the project team were in the process of commencing two ERASMUS+ projects in cooperation with RIAC's promoters. In contrast to the EaSI proposal, only governance-related aspects (i.e. project evaluation and multistakeholder partnerships) were being transferred from TSUNAMI's and RIAC's EaSI experience.

There was no evidence of synergies with other European programmes and actions pertaining to social innovation or experimentation.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

Evidence on EaSI's relevance to TSUNAMI was mixed. On the one hand, at least parts of the project could have possibly been implemented using other EU funding. While the project team were unaware of any other EU funding, they have identified the ERASMUS+ Adult Action Axis and the EU4Health programme as sources that could have funded TSUNAMI, while evaluating options for scaling the pilot. They considered that ERASMUS+ could have supported a part of the pilot, which was focused on training beneficiaries as well as job coaches. EU4Health being a programme that partly focuses on people with mental illness, might have offered scope for funding at the intersection of how social and labour policy affect mental illness. However, EaSI was the only programme that fits all of the project team's objectives.

On the other hand, EaSI's relevance might be considered high because the 2015 EaSI call's priority of implementing an integrated one-stop-shop approach was highly relevant to the region. That was because the Italian regional governments had the policy and operational competences on issues affecting people with disability (i.e. employment, services and social and health systems). However, these services were fragmented, not well integrated and hardly cooperating, according to the project team. As such, an integrated model was needed to increase the efficiency of interventions on the relevant target group. In addition, the project team saw no alternative to social innovation precisely because of the aforementioned need to remedy said fragmentation. They noted that any policy alternatives, such as a not yet existing long-term strategy on how to promote inclusion and diversity promoting HR policies in companies, can only be complementary.

Finally, participation in EaSI helped the project team increase internal capacities. They noted an intensive but insightful project designing phase which has improved capabilities relating to project design, implementation and, most importantly, scientific evaluation of social experimentation. Having realised the importance of social impact evaluation, the project team cited that they became more willing to work in an impact-oriented way and to integrate data through monitoring and evaluation in future projects (e.g. ERASMUS+). In

addition, TSUNAMI resulted in a sustainable network between the project's co-beneficiaries, who have been working with each other even after the project ended.

EU added value

The EU added value was reflected in two aspects. First, the project might not have occurred without EU level funding because national funding or philanthropic entities in Italy tend to favour proven approaches over experimental ones such as TSUNAMI, especially at TSUNAMI's rather large scale with different extra costs (e.g. for evaluation). Furthermore, TSUNAMI benefitted greatly from cross-border learning opportunities. The 2nd EaSI conference was of particular importance in this regard. The project was to use these opportunities to connect with the project promoters of RIAC of the 2016 EaSI PROGRESS call and to develop further innovations with them.

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CASE STUDIES: 2016 CALL

FIER

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Successful and efficient integration of migrants into both society and the labour market continues to remain a challenge across Europe, and this challenge is even more difficult for migrants with limited previous education which can hinder the acquisition of work and livelihood.²⁵⁵ Thus, their needs are not only on technical and hard skills but also imply a strong focus on soft skills, as well as on civic skills, combined to prevent social exclusion and poverty. Many regions experienced high numbers of refugees, among which Austria, Belgium, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Turkey, and still struggled with improving measures and strategies for faster and more sustainable labour market integration for this migrant population.

Project team (implementers): A partnership between twelve partners and one associated partner from six countries: Region Västra Götaland (coordinator), Public Employment Service (PES) and the City of Mölndal in Sweden; Pädagogische Hochschule Weingarten (PHW), Volkshochschulverband Baden-Württemberg (VHS), Baden-Württemberg BW Ministry of Education and The City of Stuttgart in Germany; Oslo VO Rosenhof and The City of Oslo adult education in Norway; Het Gemeenschapsonderwijs: GO! in Belgium; Land Salzburg, Austria; Yuva Association, Turkey; and the European Association of Regional and Local Authorities - EARLALL. Also as an associated partner, the Support Group Network Vänersborg (SGN), Sweden.

Objectives: FIER's stated goals and objectives were to develop 'instruments and strategies for a fast-track labour market integration of disadvantaged groups among refugees and asylum-seekers [...] to reach a fast and successful integration process in different European areas by developing quality competence assessment strategies, training curricula, self-empowerment initiatives, and a workplace language learning concept.'²⁵⁶ FIER targeted the more disadvantaged groups among refugees: women, young unaccompanied refugees, older refugees and refugees far from the labour market and with low levels of education.²⁵⁷

Method: The type and formats of activities carried out in the different regions might differ widely. While some of the partners focused on capacity building among their staff and at the institutional level, others carried out concrete activities. The project was structured around four phases accompanied by a project partner meeting, which included research, reviews and studies about barriers and drivers that might affect the pilots' development; fieldwork and first pilot activities; implementation of the regional initiatives to each action plan; and report on outcomes, results, best practices, conclusions and future initiatives. Activities piloted by FIER partners aimed at making the skills of immigrants visible by introducing validation and competence assessment procedures, particularly on soft skills (GO! and PHW); supporting the use of migrants' individual skills through guidance and self-empowerment initiatives (SGN); testing new formats of language training combined with work/vocational experience such as internships, part-time employment, and marginal employment (YUVA, Swedish Folk high schools, City of Mölndal, Swedish PES, Oslo Rosenhof, Land Salzburg, Jobcentre Stuttgart, VHS).

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents.

(Expected) Effects

²⁵⁵ EC (2020). Final technical implementation report, p.2.

²⁵⁶ Ibid, p.53.

²⁵⁷ Region Västra Götaland, Analysis unit (2020). Final thematic report and evaluation concepts, p. 6.

Contextual description of effects (measured results and impacts)

Assessing the effectiveness at the project level was highly challenging, as the project structure, monitoring and reporting focused on individual activities and projects of each partner rather than on results and impact at the project level. In this context, a counterfactual evaluation taking into account the very different activities developed by the 12 partners in the six countries would have been too complex. Instead, an overall evaluation of FIER was undertaken to analyse activities conducted by the different project partners, in order to identify good examples and contribute to the mutual learning, as well as to evaluate the project process and organisation. That said, despite proven expertise, the choice of an evaluator being part of the lead partner structure could be questioned with regard to independence.

Both the final evaluation and activity reports indicated that the FIER project and the 23 sub-projects developed under the FIER umbrella, testing new methods for the integration of third-country nationals into European labour markets, achieved their aims and exceeded most quantified targets, except for the number of companies reached. Over 2600 refugees were reached in guidance sessions, training and empowerment activities, far more than initially targeted (1000); more than 2300 stakeholders were contacted for active actions like conferences, study visits and personal dissemination activities, among others (target 500); 254 companies were contacted through company networks, personal contacts, with mentorship programmes and in language mentor training (target 500); 417 partners staff members participated in mutual learning activities (target 250), and 283 volunteers supported project activities (target 250). However, these indicators might have been defined differently by each partner,²⁵⁸ with some possible biases in the calculation.

From a more qualitative angle, innovative fast-track options for labour market integration of refugees were developed and tested by partners generally as planned, despite some challenges and according to their regional needs and integration structures, and were reported as a key positive result of FIER's approach. They included the creation of motivation and self-empowerment strategies for refugees, now a well-recognised prerequisite among FIER partners; the combination of language training and vocational education and training tested by the majority of FIER partners, preferably targeted at occupations and sectors with shortages or in great demand of labour, in collaboration with employers and companies.

Many of the project partners experienced a successful outcome from the training courses, with a high share of students integrated into the labour market like in Volkshochschulverband Baden-Württemberg with 90 % of the participants integrated into the labour market – many of them into full-time employment. The engagement from the companies was a lot better than expected²⁵⁹. Other types of positive effects for the beneficiaries were reported by partners, showing the holistic integrated approach of FIER, such as a strengthened social cohesion between the Turkish and Syrian communities²⁶⁰. To better assess migrants' skills, a new in-company language mentor concept²⁶¹ was developed to optimise workplace-based language learning for migrants, also improving ways of assessing individuals' language skills as well as an educational learning path for reception centres²⁶², focusing on soft skills assessment and providing citizenship education. The use of the EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals gave mixed results, positively used to create participants' profiles by some partners (Baden-Württemberg), others having faced limits (Sweden). All these methodologies and pilots have successfully developed thanks to the use of an

²⁵⁸ EC (2020). Final technical implementation report, p.30.

²⁵⁹ Västra Götaland region, analysis unit (2020). Final thematic report and evaluation concepts, p.14.

²⁶⁰ EC (2020). Final technical implementation report, p.19.

²⁶¹ <https://aww-phweingarten.de/de/weiterbildung/projekt-fier>.

²⁶² www.gofier.be

inclusive multistakeholder model involving a wide range of actors, such as public authorities and agencies, education/research institutes, non-governmental organisations, refugee organisations and public and private employers and companies.

At the organisation level, there was an increased awareness and necessity of fast-track integration and companies were also more inclined to look at the target group as a resource. The cooperation between partners from the same regions or countries working towards the same aim was also improved and sustained, notably in Sweden, Austria and Germany.

Efficiency (focusing on why the project's solution is better than the existing ones)

Estimation of an average cost at the project level was totally impossible because of the myriad of very different fast-track job integration initiatives and projects led by the 12 partners in six different countries. But no evidence was found that partners did this calculation for their local pilots, some stating that comparison would be difficult for totally new actions.

It was difficult to assess whether the project could have been implemented using fewer resources due to the lack of precise information provided by the project team, which might also vary between the different local activities. Some financial adjustments were made at the project level, described as efficient use of the funding to implement new activities rather than leaving some unspent budget. Funds from activities not performed (literature review of EU migrant integration policies, Swedish PES mapping) were allocated to other partners, resulting in additional activities²⁶³. As the majority of activities were new, it was rather difficult to compare them with any other integration scheme in terms of costs. The absence of national or regional funding to further develop activities might be motivated by policy priorities and did not automatically prove an absence of efficiency.

A result-based funding approach would be risky for social experimentation and partners might not have applied under those conditions. This approach could lead to underestimating targets to ensure they were reachable, and to target less vulnerable people, closer to the labour market and more easily 'employable'. Another risk was linked to the dependency of results on external circumstances nobody could control (pandemic, changes in regulations, policies, etc.). The control system would be very heavy.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

The innovative dimension of FIER at the project level lay in the development of various fast-track options for migrants' integration, with new approaches, tested in different regional contexts. It was rather a process-oriented innovation from the coordinator's point of view, as there was no common methodology or common tools, or products produced and used by all partners²⁶⁴. Initially planned, the cancellation of a literature review/assessment of existing policies in European countries related to refugees' access to the labour market hampers an evidence-based judgement on the innovative dimension of the project and its pilots. Innovation was self-assessed by each partner.

At the level of individual measures, innovations of all types were produced and innovative activities implemented encompass product/service innovation (new concepts and curricula produced like the civic educational path and the language mentor training in the workplace) and process innovation (provision of training organised differently).

²⁶³ EC (2020). Final technical implementation report, p.22.

²⁶⁴ AEIDL (2021). Interview with the FIER project team representatives (complemented by Email exchanges with several partners).

At the pilot projects level, different types of innovation (new processes, new services) could be observed. Land Salzburg in Austria achieved its objectives of self-empowerment and self-development of refugees through five different sub-projects within the region, never implemented before, all regarded as innovative approaches²⁶⁵. Baden-Württemberg highlighted a new cooperation model between regional partners, as stated before and three fields of innovation: (1) dual fast-track labour market integration classes for refugees; (2) training of language mentors at the workplace (new concept and methods); (3) empowerment – training for refugees by refugees²⁶⁶. Rosenhof School in Oslo created new innovative approaches to employment with short education and new ways of working together with the course participants, to create better fast-track integration, whereas Dalslands Folk High School developed a new course and a new job function of 'Integration coordinator'. YUVA in Turkey developed several initiatives with a focus on gender equality in their activities, which seemed innovative for the region, and offered courses in new territories.

The cooperation between FIER partners also sometimes resulted in some innovative initiatives because they were inspired and partially transferred from other partner countries and regions. A local support group on self-empowerment was created in Stuttgart, based on the Swedish SGN. Dual fast-track labour market integration classes for refugees in Germany were adapted from a Swedish model and further developed. The Rosenhof school in Oslo has been inspired by both German and Swedish FIER partners. The focus on the more disadvantaged groups among refugees (women, young unaccompanied refugees, older refugees, and refugees far from the labour market and with low levels of education) was new for some partners, leading to important efforts to reach out and change the perspective of some partners.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

The main driver was the multistakeholder collaboration for the regional and local pilots, bringing together a wide range of actors such as government, agencies and both public and private sectors, all of which had important roles to play to facilitate faster labour market integration. The experiences brought in rich and diverse expertise and proved successful²⁶⁷. Dialogue between schools and employers to meet both the needs of employers and of participants was mentioned by several partners. From reports, the strongest partnerships were rather between partners from the same country or region and led to mutual learning and new or reinforced cooperation (Sweden, Germany). Some exchanges between countries also happened but to a lesser extent (between Sweden, Germany and Norway for instance).

Another strength of the FIER project lay in the pilot studies, data collection and analysis used to plan pilot activities, in order to maximise the outcomes for the beneficiaries with the allocated resources. The research conducted by VHS Baden-Württemberg in cooperation with Jobcentre Stuttgart identified at what stages a competence profiling can improve the guidance process. The market research assessing the labour market's demands and the skills of Syrians in Turkey conducted by YUVA served as the basis to develop the training courses.²⁶⁸

Finally, working with refugees and not for them, empowering them to have an active role in designing and implementing fast-track combined language and vocational skills courses

²⁶⁵ EC (2020). Final technical implementation report, p.20.

²⁶⁶ AEIDL (2021). Interview with the FIER project team representatives (complemented by Email exchanges with several partners).

²⁶⁷ EC (2020). Final technical implementation report, p.26.

²⁶⁸ Västra Götaland region, analysis unit (2020), Final thematic report and evaluation concepts, p.8.

was another positive factor. All FIER partners adopted the self-empowerment methodology developed by SGN.²⁶⁹

Some obstacles were faced during the project implementation, mainly linked to changes in national policies or the refugee situation. However, most of them were overcome and alternative solutions were found. Stricter immigration policies affected Oslo and Salzburg, leading to difficulties in recruiting suitable participants or finding the right regional partners. In 2019, the loss of the 20% share of national or regional co-funding complementing the 80% of the EaSi EU funding was experienced by Jobcentre Stuttgart and the Swedish PES, both due to political decisions and more restricted migration policies. In Turkey, the cooperation with local authorities and the political uncertainty were challenging with regard to long term action plans. On the subject of the migration situation, Sweden registered a decrease in the number of unaccompanied young people, and the Folk High School in Dalsland had to reduce the duration of its course, due to too few applicants. Because of health issues and social conditions, some participants had to be transferred to alternative internships not directly aimed at work training and employment.

GDPR restrictions prevented the Swedish PES and the City of Mölndal from realising the mapping of the target group profiles because sharing registration of personal data was forbidden. So was the case for the use of the EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals to make competency validation and profiling more cohesive across national agencies and local stakeholders.

Scalability/Transferability:

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

The project's key messages and results were assessed by the team as valid in a 'multitude of contexts around Europe, these takeaways remain equally relevant wherever, and can easily be transferred and upscaled further. Upscaling has not necessarily been a goal, or intention of the project, though no limitations regarding the opposite have been stated, either.'²⁷⁰ Despite upscaling and transfer being structural elements of a social experimentation process, FIER partners did not plan nor deploy means to achieve this goal beyond dissemination. No transfer or upscaling to other regions or organisations beyond FIER partners had taken place at the time of writing.

However, the continuation of activities developed during FIER by most project partners following its conclusion and without EU funding, was already a successful achievement and embedding, consequently influencing policies.

In Baden-Württemberg, the concept of fast-track labour market integration classes for refugees became an integral part of the labour market integration policy of the Stuttgart Jobcentre, now supported by German funding. The concept was further developed and scaled up from initial sectors (hospitality sectors, warehouse and logistics and construction) to new ones (healthcare and sales), and around 20 new fast-track classes were expected during 2020. The empowerment strategy became the main basis of the integration strategy of the City of Stuttgart, and 'empowerment – training for refugees by refugees' classes were financed by the city. In Salzburg, all five activities started during FIER could so far be continued in an adapted way and further developed with the funding of the province of Salzburg. Some were funded by LEADER²⁷¹. The provision of vocational training for the refugees had been politically decided by the Norwegian government, and the Rosenhof school in Oslo project served as a test of an innovative model contributing to the Norwegian political agenda of finding ways to employ people with short educational backgrounds.

²⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 37.

²⁷⁰ EC (2020) Final technical implementation report, p.35.

²⁷¹ AEIDL (2021). Interview with the FIER project team representatives (complemented by Email exchanges).

YUVA also continued activities with SGN in a project called Fostering Social Inclusion in Multicultural Regions, supported by the Civil Society Dialogue Programme for Turkey funded by the European Commission.

Some partners, interested in developing their activities further and transferring their results, involved external partners from Spain and Italy, for instance. Salzburg sub-projects were designed in such a way that they could be transferred to other partners or regions at any point; an AMIF-application was prepared to this end. SGN, Oslo and Stuttgart also prepared an AMIF proposal. PH Weingarten's 'Train the Trainer' concept was developed in such a way that it can be made to fit any sector or company. Additional project applications (e.g. KA1/Erasmus+) were submitted to increase the type of projects dealing with these types of topics and subjects. The civic educational path from GO! also led to an Erasmus+ project application, involving Oslo.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

Drivers for scalability within the FIER partners region resulted from the multistakeholder approach, involving partners able to sustain and further mainstream good results and the reinforced partnerships at the regional level.

The biggest barrier was the fact that scalability and transferability were not a goal or an intention of the FIER project, which was surprising concerning a social experimentation project. The project coordinator pointed out the lack of emphasis from the EC on this point. However, the project proposal contained a transfer objective, with the identification of best/good practices under the responsibility of the lead partner, Region Västra Götaland. The evaluator stressed the lack of precise identification of best/good practices to be transferred, which was a big obstacle. Good practices were identified in the final activity report, however not always backed by strong evidence nor implemented in a structured way with upscaling / transfer plans. Recommendations, key messages and good practices are formulated in such a general way that it would be very difficult for any other region or organisation to adapt them in their own context without further support and guidance from FIER partners.

Project's internal and external coherence

- No evidence of synergies between the project and other EaSI projects was found.
- Some evidence of synergies or complementarities with other EU programmes (not automatically focused on Social Innovation actions) was found for some regional and local projects, as shown in the upscaling/transferability section. However, the complementarity was not simultaneous with FIER implementation but rather intervened to further develop the project's results.
- The Baden Württemberg region pointed to the absence of a link between EaSI projects and the regional and national ESF projects and programmes, not adapted to the innovative level of FIER projects from their perspective, set for seven years and dominated by classical stakeholders from the social sector.²⁷²

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

Most partners were already working in the field of migrant integration, including with the EC (info about the call from the Migration and Home Affairs DG), and looking for support to test and experiment with new concepts and develop new training paths to address this

²⁷² AEIDL (2021). Interview with the FIER project team representatives (complemented by Email exchanges).

challenge. The 2016 call objectives thus perfectly matched their needs. Partners explained that participating in the FIER project added resources and left time for innovation and further development of the concept or activity. Positive outcomes of regional pilot experimentation resulted in the continuation of FIER activities with national or regional funding for all partners and allowed for some mainstreaming at local and regional levels (Germany, Norway) which might otherwise not have happened.

EU added value

The transnational dimension was seen as FIER providing the opportunity for partners to exchange experiences across national borders, whether this would result or not in mutual learning and transfers, a rather 'loose cooperation process'. Many partners implemented their projects with little transfer of knowledge and experience from the others, despite notable cases mentioned before, and more importantly, this was not a prerequisite but rather a result of a European partnership. The bilateral study visits were the most useful element to boost transnational cooperation. FIER has created five thematic working groups at the beginning of the project to facilitate experience exchange and sharing of best practices, but they did not meet as regularly as planned (technical difficulties and lack of time) reducing the intensity of the cooperation. However, the EU network of like-minded partners provided opportunities to develop new partnerships and cooperation, including new European and international projects (see upscaling/transferability section).

Most projects within FIER would not have been implemented without EU funding, as there is no alternative funding at national or regional levels because this priority on migrant integration is not shared by all EU countries and regions. The EaSI funding gave the possibility to implement specific activities for refugees and their families, otherwise not possible when facing budget savings or policy changes at the national and regional levels. The project team spoke about 'the apparent reluctance by national governments and their authorities to engage in international development work', being an indirect lesson that could lead to the conclusion that only the EU level was legitimate or had the capacity and willingness to support projects with a supra-national dimension.²⁷³

The EU added value of EaSI was also the fact that it allowed for wider dissemination of results than at national or regional levels, which was the case for FIER with an intensive dissemination strategy led by EARLALL at the project level, and by partners at the regional level. Using various means (dedicated website²⁷⁴, newsletters, use of social media), it was estimated that 1500 participants were reached through ten events/conferences²⁷⁵, including the two multiplier events also organised: the FIER workshop in 2018 at the European Week of Regions and Cities (EWRC); and the FIER Conference in Brussels in 2019 jointly organised by EARLALL, GO! and the project coordinator. This might have led to further uptake of some of FIER results by other EU countries, regions and organisations, but little or no follow-up was possible once project funding stopped and no new clear demand/need to adopt the SI at scale was identified.

List of literature and references:

- AEIDL (2021). Interview with the FIER project team representatives (complemented by Email exchanges with several partners).
- FIER (2020). Final technical implementation report.

²⁷³ EC (2020). Final technical implementation report, p. 38.

²⁷⁴ FIER official website: <https://fierprojecteu28222090.wordpress.com/>.

²⁷⁵ EC (2020). Final technical implementation report, p.48.

- FIER (2020). Assessment of the final technical implementation report (approved on 04/05/2020).
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FAB

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: FAB - Fast track Action Boost project responded to the needs of the refugees and asylum seekers for better and faster integration in the labour market with a special focus on women. FAB also answered the needs of cities to improve and better deliver job inclusion services for refugees by overcoming the fragmentation of successful local initiatives and related expertise of stakeholders at the city level, each of them acting in isolation without mutually benefitting from the knowledge developed elsewhere.

Project team (implementers): Consortium composed of eleven partners from six City Administrations: Milan (City of Milan – Lead Partner; AFOL); Berlin (Metropolisnet, Söstra, Senate Department for Integration, Work and Social Issues, GoldNetz); Stockholm (City of Stockholm Labour Market Administration); Vienna (City School Council); Belgrade (Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs); and Madrid (Employment Agency). These cities are all crucial nodes in the network of migratory flows at the European level: Belgrade and Vienna on the Balkan route, Madrid and Milan on the Mediterranean route, and Berlin and Stockholm as the final destination cities.

Objectives: (a) improve the integration of the refugees, asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection populations in the target contexts, through adapting, testing and mainstreaming relevant and tested policies, measures and practices (local initiatives); (b) improve the capacities and knowledge of key players at the city-level to plan, implement and mainstream the measures, service delivery mechanisms and practices most relevant and effective as responses to the specific challenges emerging in the different contexts (capacity building); (c) develop innovative policy approaches, practices, methods and guidelines flowing from project results on fast-track mechanisms for refugees integration and on women's integration in the labour markets (European model of integration).

Method: This pilot took a city approach to experiment with innovative inclusion policies, as urban ecosystems have a high potential for economic integration, and thus privileged settings. The horizontal partnership created among six cities developed and used the 'Transfer & Adaptation Plan – TAP' methodology, initially developed by Metropolis, and further improved by the FAB partnership at the beginning of the project. TAP model was based on knowledge sharing and peer mentoring. Through research and study visits, partners reviewed and benchmarked city models in place, resulting in a set of successful practices previously in place by each city, proposed to the other partner cities. The 'receiving' city then selected the practice that best fits its local needs, capacities and context. The peer mentoring system was in-depth cooperation between the city of origin and the 'receiving' city that ensured both the adaptation and implementation of the practice in its new context. It encompassed the whole transfer process of measures and practices into partner city local pilots and was composed of integrated steps such as the Transfer and Adaptation Plan (TAP) and the mentoring per se that materialised through Local Empowerment Workshops (LEW), Mentoring Visits (MV) and the curriculum for the 'Train of Trainers' (ToT) and implementation framework.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured results and impacts)

FAB pilot successfully achieved the initial objectives set out in its proposal, finding ways to adjust to various internal and external challenges faced during implementation, such as the vast differences across partner cities (legal framework, labour market structure and

refugees' profiles, institutional settings), policy changes at national and local levels, and the COVID-19 pandemic effects.

A counterfactual evaluation approach was not judged appropriate because of the highly different contexts of the cities, implying to perform a counterfactual evaluation for each city, is overly complex and expensive, the partly poor statistics, for ethical reasons with regards to the characteristics of the target group. Instead, SÖSTRA has carried out monitoring and evaluation throughout the whole project activities, collecting qualitative feedback on activities, monitoring local pilots and carrying out case studies (pilot practices)²⁷⁶.

The main achievement was the successful transfer of five identified good practices between Berlin, Milan, Stockholm, Vienna and Belgrade partner cities. This was achieved thanks to the effective use of the TAP methodology, starting with knowledge sharing between partners who studied, benchmarked and identified 22 best practices in all partner cities, involving 89 participants from partner organisations. It eventually resulted in matching five cities with five good practices to be transferred. These good practices varied widely in terms of the target group, measures and objectives, more than anticipated, which required adjusting the method and activities. On that basis, five Transfer and Adaptation Plans (TAP) were finalised, having explored in-depth the necessary adaptations of practices and the limits. Through the peer mentoring system, the city of origin provided guidance and support with regard to the adaptation and implementation of the approach in the new context. In practice, peer mentoring was realised through mentoring visits (turned virtual to adapt to COVID-19 lockdowns), nine Local Empowerment Workshops (LEWs), and the development of five 'Train of Trainers' (ToT) programmes to prepare project staff for the pilot implementation. Some transfers consisted in moving a complete practice into a new context; others only drew on certain aspects of an existing practice.

FAB demonstrated that a direct and full transfer of practices was challenging due to the vast differences in settings and framework conditions between implementing contexts. However, under certain conditions, good practices could inspire or be transferred to others, but could also fail. FAB partnership model of integration provided practical guidance to further use FAB common approach and methodological tools rather than a prescriptive model. No impact, i.e. the use of FAB transfer and adaptation model beyond FAB partner cities and countries, had occurred at the time of writing.

As a result, each city managed to design and implement its specific pilot project, with positive outcomes for 250 direct beneficiaries with regard to job integration in the host country. This was below the 350 targeted, although a remarkable result (71% completion rate) taking into account that all pilots were severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The 50% target for women's participation was exceeded (169 women, 67.6%). The project team also stressed that beyond these direct beneficiaries, many more were reached in reality, thanks to the leverage effect of some pilots in Vienna (30 trained people informed and counselled 72 people on the Austrian education system), Serbia (Web app informing all migrants on the national territory), or Stockholm (5,000 people received counselling from the 30 women trained by the pilot in 2020). This approach resulted in an amount of 7,850 people reached²⁷⁷.

FAB cities were similar in socio-economic dimensions, but with various national and local migration policies as well as different legal, administrative and cultural settings. Hence, beyond the general 'migrant integration challenge' they all faced, their needs were different, and practices to be transferred were chosen accordingly.

Berlin implemented Job Boost, filling participants' language gaps to increase women's integration in the labour market with individual and group coaching sessions inspired by

²⁷⁶ Söstra (2021), Evaluation report.

²⁷⁷ EC (2021). FAB final implementation report, p.37.

Stockholm's good practice, improving labour market integration for almost all participants, with 39% of them entering the labour market²⁷⁸. Job Boost also assessed the EU Skills Profiling Tool, a good tool offering different languages, but with many shortcomings. Stockholm implemented Neighbourhood Mothers (NM) in city districts, inspired by Berlin's good practice. 34 women were employed as Neighbourhood Mothers by the municipality and reached out to nearly 7,000 newly arrived women in Stockholm, providing information about pre-/school, social services and the labour market. Milan implemented IFX (Italian for Professionals) providing profession-specific language skills to 65 migrants, inspired by Stockholm's good practice. Vienna implemented ComPare, tackling early school dropouts by providing families with counselling guidance, inspired by Milan's good practice. 37% of the participants were employed right after leaving the project; stunning results for a project primarily oriented towards information on the education system rather than job searching. Belgrade, inspired by Milan's CELAV good practice, created a web app for migrants (Asylum.rs) also inspired by MyGrants²⁷⁹, an Italian good practice, providing essential information to migrants (legal rights, rules, procedures and possibilities for education and employment, job integration and job search), now managed by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, coordinating all reception and asylum centres (KIRS). The leaflet promoting the web app is now mandatory in the information package for people obtaining asylum in Serbia. IT and language training, partially inspired by Stockholm, Berlin and Milan, were turned digital due to COVID-19, fitting the needs and possibilities of the participants.

Despite the pilots' activities all being different, the evaluation report confirmed the improvement of participants' language, professional and/or soft skills, assessed at the city experimentation level, indispensable to ease and accelerate their labour market integration, supported by the job integration of 36 participants right after the project, the recruitment of 30 Neighbourhood Mothers, and further professional training for 28 other participants. To shorten the labour market integration journey, two ways of accelerating this process were implemented: speeding up each step individually (Serbia, Stockholm, Vienna), or combining the steps so that two can be taken at once (Berlin, Milan). Even when the process is speeded up, integration often takes a lot of time because it is non-linear in particular for system and language acquisition. No measurement of the acceleration could nevertheless be produced at the project level, local pilots being too different. At the individual city level, no data was provided about the average labour market integration path duration either²⁸⁰.

At the partner organisations' level, they all increased their knowledge of each local context through robust research, study visits and peer reviews, resulting in changes compared to the initiatives proposed, in order to better fit local needs and capacities. The evaluation report stated that 139 officers and managers were actively involved in the project, and professionals from public institutions gained new knowledge and insights, from their participation in the Local Empowerment Workshops or the Mentoring Visits²⁸¹. Two types of effective outcomes were also mentioned: stimulus for innovative practices in organisations, resulting from the learning acquired, and a process of reflection inducing a re-evaluation of one's own practice and broadening of perspectives, like in Milan where jobcentres were shifting their minds concerning the way they deliver their services, questioning the 'universal service' principle to move towards a more 'user/client-centred approach'²⁸². The improvement in the quality of service delivery could not be observed or measured during the project duration, as reported by the evaluators. However, one indicator of improvement compared to alternative services lay in the integration of two practices into the local policies (Neighbourhood Mothers in Stockholm and ComPare in Vienna).

²⁷⁸ Case Study Berlin, January 2021, p. 14.

²⁷⁹ <https://mygrants.it/en/>.

²⁸⁰ Söstra (2021). Evaluation report, p. 19.

²⁸¹ Ibid, p. 18.

²⁸² AEIDL (2021). Interview with the FAB project team representatives (Milan City).

At the policy level, the Policy Practice Transnational Working Group (PPWG) activities (critical review of the research actions, reviewing needs, strengths and policies in each city and national contexts) and local policy and practice working groups discussions (pilot's effectiveness, sustainability and comparing them with local models in place) provided valuable information. Based on their work, recommendations²⁸³ on partnerships and interventions, with a focus on refugee women were released and shared during the final event²⁸⁴. The final publication summarised the main elements of a 'New EU Partnership model of integration' based on those final recommendations.

Efficiency (focusing on why the project's solution is better than the existing ones)

The project evaluation report did not provide any information or analysis of costs, and no counter evaluation was undertaken. The diversity of pilots in each country would require identifying similar practices in each local context (sometimes not existing, like in Belgrade), which would entail a huge administrative workload, and is not reported in any of the existing documentation. The novelty of the FAB model for transfer and adaptation of good practices for refugee job integration implied the absence of benchmarks and little possible comparison. According to the project coordinator, the model was theoretically cost-efficient, because transferring a good practice with the support from the city that has developed it, is normally faster and cheaper with the mentoring system, and the project might not have achieved the same results with a lower budget. He added that the investment would be better valorised if the learning gained by individuals involved in FAB could be spread and capitalised in their organisations and beyond, at the region and country level.

A result-based approach was not in the partners' working culture and would then be difficult to adopt. But more importantly, the indicators needed to demonstrate the quality of a social and inclusive practice of FAB's scale would be overly complex and costly to implement. This new way of funding could also create market alteration. To obtain good indicators and results, the organisation would tend to select people easier to integrate into the labour market, or to provide short-term and poor-quality employment contracts to participants. This would not solve the problem of work integration of the most vulnerable groups such as migrants and refugees. At the macro level, it would not be cost-efficient or fair.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

The project's social innovation dimension essentially lay in the TAP (Transfer & Adaptation Plan) method, a new way of cooperating between organisations at the city level, as well as a new way of transferring and adapting existing services to a new context, by using common methodological tools adapted to each local context (peer reviews, study visits, local employment workshops, ToT curriculum, mentoring visits). The method already used by Metropolisnet was formalised and transformed in a co-creation process by FAB cities partners at the beginning of the project, and successfully applied in five partner cities. The novelty essentially lay in the adaptation phase of the method. This was the main legacy of FAB²⁸⁵.

This approach resulted in new and/or improved service delivery for faster integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the labour market at the local pilots' level. The transfer of local individual practices to the new context required adaptations, which often produced innovative outcomes, in terms of service, process, target group or organisation because they were new to the new local contexts; there is no copy/paste regarding the transfer. Milan managed to broaden the support provided to newly arrived migrants by social services, from

²⁸³ Metropolisnet (2021), Recommendations – European Partnership and Intervention Model of Project FAB.

²⁸⁴ FAB (2021). Final conference documentation, pp. 23-26.

²⁸⁵ AEIDL (2021). Interview with the FAB project team representatives (Milan City).

basic care to employment, thanks to a new collaboration between services in Milan city, normally fragmented and not coordinated. In Serbia, the reception system has been systematised, comprising legal services, medical care and basic services offered to all asylum seekers by a newly created virtual platform. In Berlin, partners chose to combine aspects of three practices from Stockholm into one new measure, Job Boost, to support refugee women's labour market integration. In Vienna, the pilot project ComPare (Community Parents) differed substantially from the initial approach of the Esagono practice transferred from Milan (framework, stakeholders, target group and contents). What was transferred were the method and strategic approach of how to address issues and people. Stockholm pilot NM (Neighbourhood Mothers), inspired by Berlin, focused on a different target group (mothers rather than children), developed a different process (employment contracts for NM instead of voluntary activity) and had a less structured training.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

Driving forces for social experimentation are basically the existence of a community of practice/partnership, adequate funding and the openness to failure. Through the EaSi programme, FAB provided a safe space fulfilling the three conditions²⁸⁶.

Partnerships are also a strength when involving the right partners from the start, sharing a common high interest in the experimentation results. The FAB transnational partnership included an intentional mix of central and local Administrations, agencies and offices that would be positively affected by introducing new approaches, based on existing cooperation between several FAB partners within two major city networks (Eurocities and Metropolisnet), already used to transnational cooperation. The same applies to local pilots, and FAB implementation relied on existing local partnerships in each city or region, strengthening and connecting them at a transnational level:

- The funding mostly provided by the EC and the flexibility of EaSi with regards to adaptation was also reported as key factors; potential failures were therefore irrelevant to the national or local electorate.
- Consistency between policy priorities and social experimentation objectives and the EU priorities highlighted in the 2016 call were clearly aligned with partner projects.
- Pre-existence of a methodology already tested positively. This saved the time otherwise dedicated to designing a totally new model and to start quickly testing and adapt it.
- At the pilot level, building confidence and empowerment for the beneficiaries played a major role in the success of local pilots and the integration of migrants, providing the necessary strength and desire to go through each step of a long and often tiring and frustrating process of inclusion.

Several barriers were identified during the implementation, impacting the project and leading to adjustments. First, the main internal challenging problem related to the 'Functional plan of transfer and adaptation', is a practice working well in a given context that does not work the same in a different one. This led to adding a strong adaptation dimension to the model and developing individualised TAP based on a common approach rather than one single TAP. Another issue concerns the assessment and measurement of outcomes with meaningful indicators, with which the team struggled. The coordinator also stressed the inadequacy of skills assessment systems in the EU, pointing out the lack of educational skills instead of valorising migrants' existing capacities. Finally, an important obstacle to

²⁸⁶ EC (2021). FAB final implementation report, p. 9.

project further development and mainstreaming is the lack of institutionalised mechanisms to embed the knowledge gained by project staff in their own organisation.

External problems also impacted the project. In the lifetime of FAB Austria, Italy, Serbia and Spain had new governments, modifying national reception and migration policies several times. Germany also enforced national policies, but the City of Berlin implemented additional autonomous measures at the city-state level. This negatively impacted the legal frameworks, with cuts to public budgets, reducing migrant integration possibilities.

Changes in the migration situation also modified the plans. Milan, from being a transit city became a final destination in relatively few years, and like many countries of the first arrival faced increased arrivals of unaccompanied male minors, which could shift the policy focus from gender issues to age issues. The target group in many reception countries is often too far away from the labour market (vulnerable migrants, minors under 16), to achieve labour and social integration within such a short project duration. Fast-track integration focused on the need to find a solution to shorten the journey between 'non-inclusion' and 'inclusion' into work, taking into account the countries' situations and migrants' profiles²⁸⁷.

All projects under the 2016 EaSI call faced the same enormous challenge, in terms of size and impact: the COVID-19 pandemic, progressively interrupting all face-to-face activities. Training sessions had to be rescheduled and switched to virtual training, cities had to use digital resources where possible, adapted with creativity and flexibility to the COVID-19 containment measures²⁸⁸.

Scalability/Transferability:

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

Specifically designed for migration, FAB model could be used in other social inclusion fields and other target groups according to the project coordinator, with a potential for upscaling²⁸⁹. Transfer of the TAP model, at least partially, to other cities, regions or countries beyond FAB partners involved in the project has not happened yet to the coordinator's knowledge and rather relies on dissemination than on a specific transfer strategy. The transfer between different European cities was an explicit objective at the core of FAB during its implementation (testing transfer methodology), an 'internal transfer process'.

FAB was in itself resulting from the upscaling of the existing transfer methodology previously used by Metropolisnet, tested and adapted by a wider network of cities. Upscaling within FAB partner countries was effective in Sweden and Austria, where the practices transferred (Neighbourhood Mothers and ComPare) were integrated into local policies with dedicated local budgets, broadening their scopes and developing new policy approaches. By 2021, the City of Stockholm decided to implement the method of Neighbourhood Mothers, recruiting a coordinator to further carry out the work and even further develop the method for future needs, involving more city districts. In Austria, the Vienna Board of Education was also considering implementing the Neighbourhood Mothers, which would lead to an additional transfer between partners, after the project closure. In Serbia, the web app created for migrants was going to be sustained and also further developed by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration and the local partnership. Serbia also created a national website²⁹⁰ in order to deploy FAB content at the national level in coordination with the several institutions involved. At the reporting date Job Boost was under discussion in

²⁸⁷ AEIDL (2021). Interview with the FAB project team representatives (Milan City).

²⁸⁸ FAB (2021). Final conference documentation, p. 4.

²⁸⁹ AEIDL (2021). Interview with the FAB project team representatives (Milan City).

²⁹⁰ <https://www.brzaintegracija.rs>.

Berlin local Senate to mainstream the project in the frame of the Berlin Labour Market programme.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

The first driver was the fact that needs and challenges were shared by partner cities, of comparable territorial levels, allowing for a consistent urban approach. A second positive factor was the early identification of successful practices by each partner, providing a wide offer list of tested local practices. Another important driver was the capacity to adapt to the real context, needs and capacities of the receiving system. There is no one-fits-all policy to tackle such a complex and city-specific subject as migration. This approach required a deep understanding of both the good practice from the transferring partner and one's own challenges and restrictions, not only from research and documentation with in-depth exchanges and visits.

The strength of multistakeholder partnership at the local level was also a key feature, ensuring that the transferred practice was supported by all concerned actors, from operational, financial and legal perspectives. When existing, these local multistakeholder partnerships ensured wider dissemination and embedding of knowledge, a consistent approach between organisations/institutions traditionally working in silos, and a renewed common vision among partners, as demonstrated by Vienna and Stockholm's successful upscaling in local policies, and by the further development of the app planned in Serbia.

Last but not least, a supra-national budget seemed to be the best, if not the only way to support transnational cooperation, as building a project with several local, regional and national sources of funding from different countries would be too complex.

A potential driver for transferability beyond FAB partners could be the intensive dissemination strategy with numerous high-level events where FAB project and results were presented, including some EU funded projects conferences and final events such as the EaSI-funded RIAC sibling project, or See Me (Interreg Central Europe), MILE project (AMIF), ME4Change, MEGA and BITE projects (DG GROW), IOM Mainstreaming Migration into International Cooperation and Development (MMICD) project, or in the European Forum on Integration of Migrants and Refugees (Hamburg), and many others. FAB results were of course widely shared during the Final online conference on 14 April 2021 attended by 190 participants, as well as in partners EU networks, Eurocities and Metropolisnet.

FAB legacy, the policy recommendations to policymakers, was meant to be further exploited and scaled up by policymakers in charge of migrant integration in other cities, other countries and also at the EU level by promoting and funding the use of the TAP model²⁹¹. FAB official website²⁹² contained a library, which was the repository of all the project's contents including the official outcome and also methodological materials for anyone to use, with additional information on social media (FB, YouTube) and a final publication. Potentially, the model could also be exploited in other types of social inclusion policies as well, despite being specifically developed in relation to migrant integration.

Transferring and upscaling in other cities and regions within the same country, or across borders, roughly faced the same obstacles. The regulatory framework, the socio-economic conditions, the operational capacity, the city's budgets, and the migrants' profiles were so different between cities and between countries that it required a real adaptation capacity from the receiving actors, as well as the right competencies and consistency between various policies at different levels and alignment with the experimentation goal. For instance, the Passport Language from Vienna, despite being interesting for Milan, would have required a change of the labour market legal framework and administrative system,

²⁹¹ AEIDL (2021). Interview with the FAB project team representatives (Milan City).

²⁹² www.fabproject.eu.

for which the City of Milan had no competence, and could not be transferred to Milan. National migration policies changed in Austria and Italy during the implementation as mentioned before and limited the upscaling (local level only in Austria). In Berlin, the pandemic and the elections in September 2021 were also preventing any implementation at the time. Upscaling and transfer required aligned policies and related appropriate public budgets.

The lack of early identification of possible 'demand for transfer/upscaling' was another barrier. Often left for the end of the project, it is too heavy and demanding for the experimentation project team alone to identify and contact organisations potentially interested in the project results. In addition, most organisations do not have the internal capacity to transfer without financial support²⁹³. Despite the intensive dissemination strategy, FAB partners were not informed of any subsequent interest by other organisations, regions or countries. However, the lack of information did not mean it did not or would not happen; it only underlined the absence of any follow-up after the project was closed, and this could be done at the EU level.

Project's internal and external coherence

No real synergies were found between FAB pilot and other EaSI projects, despite the project results being presented during the RIAC final conference in November 2020. That said, with regard to external synergies, the project successfully established connections with many EU funded projects as indicated before, but synergy could only be really created with the project MILE, Milan being also an associated partner in this project funded by AMIF. Since the project offered its beneficiaries internship programmes in affiliated companies, the two teams FAB and MILE decided to match some beneficiaries who would then receive both the training from FAB and the internship from MILE. The synergies with MILE brought extra resources to the project and extra services for the beneficiaries.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

Overall, the programme's relevance could be assessed as very high for FAB. Social experimentation is not supported in all EU countries and regions, and if so, not to such a large scale. The call's objectives were also particularly relevant and timely for EU regions and cities impacted by the migration crisis. No other programme but EaSI allowed testing and developing innovative pilots and methodology in different EU contexts, based on the cooperation between successful local initiatives otherwise dispersed and isolated. The EaSI programme provided adequate funding and openness to failure.

EU added value

EaSI is the only programme that supports social experimentation and transnational cooperation.

Some funds existed at national or regional level to support social experimentation, but rarely opened to other EU countries and regions, which was a fundamental parameter of the FAB project. As mentioned before, migrant integration policies were facing public budget cuts in some of FAB partner countries (Italy, Austria), limiting the possibility to get any support for this type of project.

Transnational cooperation is a core element of the FAB project, transferring practices between cities from different EU countries. No national programme or fund supports this

²⁹³ Ibid.

transnational cooperation, leading the project team to draw the conclusion that with no access to European funding, such a European project would not be possible.

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ALMIT

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: The number of migrants in Bulgaria, Austria, Serbia and Turkey has highly increased from 2015 onwards, accentuating the previous needs. Many of the newcomers had low skills and very little or zero knowledge of the host country's language. Based on the labour market situation in those countries, employment opportunities for people with low or lack of education were scarce. This meant that refugees and migrants had to upgrade their qualifications in order to meet the requirements of the employers. Lack of awareness of their rights and obligations was another need observed for this target group. A challenge for Bulgaria, Serbia and Turkey was that they were perceived as transit countries, and thus, refugees were less motivated to invest efforts in learning the local language.

Project team (implementers): A consortium of eight partners from four countries, composed of public authorities, organisations from the third sector and high education and research institutions. It was led by the Sofia University 'St.Kliment Ohridski' and implemented together with Zgura-M Ltd. (Bulgaria); ÖJAB – Österreichische Jungarbeiterbewegung (Austria); Philanthropy Charitable Foundation of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Municipality of Sid, Belgrade Open Schools (Serbia); Düzce Governorship, and Düzce İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü (Turkey).

Objectives: Pilot quick access to the labour market programme for migrants and refugees who have legal status by guaranteeing (a) the language acquisition to become more autonomous; (b) the recognition of skills and qualifications to enter the labour market; (c) the connection with social partners and institutions to develop networks; raise awareness about the possibility this target group offered in terms of the labour market and fight wrong perceptions and stereotypes. Collaboration with employers, to know how to reach out, contact and communicate with them was another objective.

Method: Development, testing and post-evaluation adjustment of a fast-track integration process through a multistakeholder approach (refugees and migrants, employers, public authorities and other social partners and institutions) that included flexible training modules for language courses and skills, with civic and intercultural sessions as support in the integration process.

In this methodology, the preparation stage, normally missing in the traditional integration services offered, was a key feature. It consisted of the recruitment of attendees and facilitators. A specific handbook for trainers with detailed training content and a recommended methodology was developed too. Generating trust among attendees and trainers was one of the key performance indicators to be achieved, besides the technical knowledge and capacities. The project also capitalised on the previous EU-funded projects materials such as the skills matching profile tool of the RefuSkills project and included its results in the ALMIT e-learning. Introduction to the use of ICT skills was also part of the training with refugees to guarantee the sustainability of the project results and avoid the digital gap. Joint events to develop local networks and match employers with migrants were held throughout the project.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents, incl. final report.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The project developed and piloted ALMIT schemes and training delivery mechanisms enabling swift labour market integration. The main outputs were the different training resources and dissemination materials (leaflets, brochures, newsletters) available at the

project website and the learning portal; counselling services on settlement and job seeking; raising awareness events against discrimination; national dissemination events; final dissemination event; the 'matching the needs to the identified skills' online tool can be found in the e-learning section of the project website (it was used 572 times during the project²⁹⁴).

The project was structured in the first phase of language learning, ICT, civil and intercultural sessions followed by a second phase of labour market information, skills assessment and matching, and events with employers and stakeholders. During the first stage, 621 migrants and refugees participated in the language courses and 753 in the civic and intercultural sessions, facilitated by 59 trainers/facilitators. The partners organised these trainings into at least five groups in each of the four countries. The duration of these courses was at least 40 hours for language learning and 30 hours for the civic sessions within five days. At the end of each course, the partners adjusted and updated the training content, based on the suggestions of the trainers on how the trainees assimilated the materials. In parallel, partners introduced the elaborated ICT tools to the attendees, ensuring them the possibility for further use outside the lesson time. In Bulgaria and Serbia, most of the participants were men, while in Turkey they were mostly women. In Austria, there was a balance between men's and women's participation. Participants were adults (mostly aged 18 to 50) from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, African countries as well as the Russian Federation, China, Cuba and other countries. The educational and qualification level of participants in all partner countries was generally low. There were some cases of highly educated participants with a bachelor's degree, but a significant number of them did not have proper access to education in their country of origin or occupation. The participants in all partner countries declared a high level of satisfaction with trainers/facilitators and training materials. Civic and intercultural sessions were recognised as a significant opportunity to learn more about host countries. Longer language courses and more time to discuss topics related to their life experience and the current situation were demanded by participants. Trainers/facilitators noted that a more personalised approach was needed when it came to some topics within sessions. Besides, they found it challenging to adjust some topics to different cultural sensibilities. Project teams from Serbia and Turkey also identified disagreements between participants based on national and ethnic issues²⁹⁵.

In the second stage, 340 migrants and refugees participated in the 'Mapping and Profiling' sessions. A total of 16 individual cases were collected to document the project's best practices. After those sessions, further psychological consultation, settlement and employment issues workshops were organised, with a total of 201 beneficiaries, and 20 facilitators and psychologists. Finally, nine-panel discussions and meetings with target groups' representatives were hosted, involving 243 participants in total²⁹⁶.

Efficiency:

While there was no data on the cost-benefit ratio of applying this methodology against traditional ones, the project results showed that providing a holistic approach under a single programme rather than fragmented ones turned into a more efficient and motivational service for migrants and refugees. Partners had worked in other social integration projects with migrants and refugees and had observed the significant constraints of not having a more comprehensive approach that addressed also the employer's needs alongside the migrants' ones²⁹⁷. The project achieved with success the indicators in terms of participation set in the proposal, while the evaluation of the activities showed an overall high level of satisfaction of the participants with this pathway. Hence, partners were convinced that in the long term the ALMIT methodology would contribute to lowering the burden of taxpayers

²⁹⁴ ALMIT (2020). VS/2017/0448. Final activity report and WP4 Conclusions and recommendations on the matching process report.

²⁹⁵ ALMIT (2020). VS/2017/0448. WP3 Piloting of the integration courses report.

²⁹⁶ ALMIT (2020). VS/2017/0448. WP4 Conclusions and recommendations on the matching process report.

²⁹⁷ AEIDL (2021). Interview with the ALMIT project team representatives.

in general, and to the successful integration of third countries nationals. There are benefits in such investments – in particular when one looks at the demographic development in many European countries where young, skilled workers are urgently needed²⁹⁸.

The funding received to start the holistic process and test the methodology at the local level was enough and could be reduced in the long term since the core materials would be already available and the methodology had been duly tested and readjusted to make it work in four countries with very different migration realities. That said, the project team did not think they could have implemented the project with fewer resources. The project combined the work of researchers with a wide range of competencies, working in different fields as well as different types of organisations bringing the needed expertise.

Other funding programmes such as Erasmus+ would not have allowed the development of such a comprehensive project because of the limitations to cover the time effort of the team, such as researchers, experts in different fields, cultural mediators, negotiators, and other actors truly needed to make the project work. The proposed methodology was more resource-consuming but it was more effective because it covered at once all the different steps crucial in addressing the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

With regard to the payment by results concept, the project team argued against the approach, explaining that for public institutions social innovation and experimentation were not a priority. The internal budget needed to be allocated to the essential tasks and services (i.e. for a public university to deliver the official education programmes) and therefore they would not have been able to test and pilot a new programme. They would not have received the approval to apply to EaSI.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

The most innovative aspect of the project was the new way of delivering the same service, but with a unique combination of complementary services, previously provided separately. The proposed combination guaranteed quick and safe access to the open labour market for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

All the projects and services observed before focused on the language or the recognition and development of skills, but they were missing the creation of ties with the social partners, institutions and employers. Combining all that with the previous work was unique. Bridges were being built between the two sides, while both were receiving training to overcome their respective needs (cultural diversity awareness on the one side, and language and different skills to enter the labour market and navigate the system on the other side). It was important to address the needs of the stakeholders to communicate with the refugees, to know how to 'behave' to address cultural differences when refugees were starting at their workplaces as well as to provide information, capacity building and empowerment to refugees. Innovative solutions were created, including a multiday competence assessment process and an early intervention that seeks to profile refugees' language-training needs and job skills (so-called Skills-profiling). It should be highlighted that the ALMIT project introduced direct support and immediate action to the target groups, who faced a gap between the introduction of the legal framework and its fast implementation. What was also missing at the policy level was the important initial stage of encouragement and empowerment of the refugees.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

²⁹⁸ ALMIT (2020). VS/2017/0448. Final activity report.

The project team highlighted three main factors (drivers) that helped them with social experimentation. The first driver was that the project team had a long experience working in the field of migrants' integration and was aware of their needs and the shortcomings in the existing programmes. They were able to capitalise on the existing methods and tools and readjust them for a more efficient fast-track integration pathway. The second driver was the cross-border exchange of experiences. Different kinds of organisations participated in the project in all countries, and these different experiences helped them to develop and readjust the project, taking into account different cultural points of view that were transferred from one country to another. Together they were able to understand better how to be culturally sensitive when facing certain issues that appeared during the project. The international cooperation was very useful to get to know how other countries were already dealing with certain issues. Moreover, the EaSI budget and the project officers allowed the social experimentation to become a reality, to readjust when needed and to fund a large number of experts from different fields, which also meant that the internal partners' capabilities were strengthened. The project leader, the University of Sofia, stressed how interdepartmental cooperation started thanks to this project.

The main barriers were the particular cultural sensitiveness of the participants, the very low level of the host country's language and the need to stick to the timeframe of the project for a large number of activities planned, which became more challenging towards the end with the COVID-19 outbreak. First, trainers/facilitators had to face constant modifications of content so that most of the group could fully participate in the sessions. Similar modifications were needed in order to respect the participants' religious/cultural beliefs. Considering these circumstances, it was necessary to identify and involve flexible trainers/facilitators experienced in working with heterogeneous groups. For trainers/facilitators with a lack of experience, it could have been really challenging to handle all participants' requests and needs. They had to accommodate the specific needs and situations of participants, such as the participation of whole families in the sessions, including small children, requests for rescheduling so as to have time for religious practice, or requests for men and women to work in different groups. Furthermore, the focus in the courses had to be adjusted to the country and migrant context and practical knowledge. Participants expressed their desire to have longer language courses and more civic and intercultural workshops because they found it very useful for their daily life; but when an implementation schedule has to be met this is not always possible.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

Although the project was widely disseminated and attracted a lot of interest, it had not been transferred as a whole or upscaled at the reporting date. The transfer potential had not been realised mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there was evidence of progress that could lead to further upscaling. Since the main outputs were available in open access mode additional funding has not been received, but a large interest from stakeholders to reuse the materials developed could be observed. The results and learnings of the ALMIT project could be transferred to other EU countries dealing with similar challenges in the migration and integration sector. Small NGOs that work with refugees in the countries where ALMIT was implemented showed interest in receiving and adopting the materials of the project for their services. A significant moment for the transfer of knowledge was when partner Zgura-M delivered a training session in the summer school of Medellin, Colombia in August 2018 where the outcomes of the ALMIT project were actively presented. During a discussion with the local organiser and the representatives of regional authorities, a potential transfer of the project concepts, methodology and approaches was agreed upon. According to their feedback, the approach applied in ALMIT could be used to contribute to overcoming Venezuela's refugee crisis too.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

The main driver of the transferability of the project results was the proven effectiveness of delivering the service in a new more comprehensive way. Such effectiveness was validated by a monitoring and evaluation process carried out at each stage of the project. The project developed a number of steps that proved the acceleration of labour market integration of migrants through mapping of skills and training combined with civic and intercultural workshops, cultural events raising awareness and matchmaking with employers and stakeholders. This approach was not only more efficient for fast-track labour market integration but also helped to reduce cultural barriers that directly influenced the employability of migrants and refugees.

Moreover, the dissemination efforts mainly in the project territories already ensured the transfer of knowledge to other local NGOs and public authorities. The activities implemented within the project required consultations and exchange of experiences of several organisations at the national level in all countries. Concrete exchange of experiences, project promotion, proposals and suggestions took place through meetings of the National Advisory Board, a body formed through the ALMIT project, composed of representatives of several national organisations that are directly or indirectly involved in addressing migration issues. The project hosted meetings with local enterprises, linking job seekers and local enterprises in the four countries. A final conference with 128 participants was organised online.

The website remained available despite the project's conclusion. It provided access to the project deliverables, ICT tools and the e-learning platform. Such materials were a key driver to transfer the project not only to other EU countries but even to using a similar methodology for the labour market integration of other vulnerable groups in the partner countries.

On the other hand, project implementers were experiencing two challenges with regard to scaling/transfer. First, the methodology was tested and readjusted, based on the project evaluation in four different countries, nevertheless the particularities of each local context and the target groups always needed to be fully reconsidered when replicating the ALMIT method to guarantee its success. The needed human resources were going to be for sure less than those deployed to design ALMIT but still, a certain level of personal costs was needed, above all to count experienced cultural mediators. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted most of the dissemination activities and related discussions about the possibility of transferring the ALMIT results.

Project's internal and external coherence

No evidence of synergies between the project and other EaSI projects was found. The project team suggested this should be coordinated in the future by the EC project officers, who should in their opinion stimulate synergies between different projects, for instance by establishing a common platform or organising mid-term review meetings where all team members came together and shared the status of their projects, good practices and pitfalls to learn from each other and look for synergies.

The project experienced synergies with other projects, which were not funded by EaSI but Erasmus+, such as Refugee Class Assistance for Teachers and Towards Inclusive Education For Refugee Children. The consortium team continued to cooperate and make additional research in the field with both projects, contributing in fact to the sustainability of all three projects mentioned. Nonetheless, this was more related to the field of migrant integration research than to social innovation or experimentation.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The project team considered the EaSI priorities and its support for social innovation very relevant and intended to continue applying for similar opportunities in the future. The ALMIT project meant the development of an inter-institutional approach for several partners working on the project. The pilots could not have been implemented without the EaSI funds due to the lack of possibilities of using their own resources in social experimentation. Another advantage of the EaSI programme over other funding opportunities is that the intellectual results and deliverables reach quickly to the target groups, who had, in this case, the opportunity to benefit from face-to-face training led by professionals. For example, the Erasmus+ program, which is very popular for universities, does not provide funding for piloting and testing. This has negative consequences on the impact of real social inclusion.

EU added value:

The concept of the project was very extensive and it required different competencies and skills, as well as various administrative and organisational expertise, which could not have been mobilised with internal resources. For academicians, it is important to cooperate in an international environment and to collect and select practices for their work and research and introduce them into teaching practices. The EU added value was critical in the sharing of culturally sensitive practices to address several issues during the project. Partners were coming together to see how they could support each other, for instance, by transferring to others how they addressed those issues in their territories. Replicating good practices learned from other partners was essential to mitigate some risks likely to affect the project results. The project team were convinced that a joint effort of different European partners from the education and migration sectors might strengthen the social inclusion capacity of the EU in the long term.

Countries have different migration histories as receiving countries, and more or less experience with different migrant communities. Migrants are very heterogeneous groups with different skills and needs, and one size will not fit them all. To get to know how to address such a complex international phenomenon the transfer of good practices at the EU level is essential.

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RIAC

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: There is a significant gap period between the moment of arrival of an asylum seeker and the recognition of international protection and thus, subsequent access to labour market guidance. In order to reduce such a gap, partners in RIAC were already testing some potential solutions, such as setting up a joint office to see how they could support this target group before they got their status recognised. This was still problematic because there is no centralised service able to address all the needs at once. Refugees need to navigate through many different services to access language training, recognition of diplomas or skills, and job advice. The lack of a concrete support structure means refugees and asylum seekers can spend 2 or 3 years searching for a job, and very often people get lost and even 'disappear' from the system, defeated by the lack of understanding of the context, the language and the urgent need to support themselves and their families.

Project team (implementers): A public-private partnership in four countries with public authorities, Pro Arbeit Kreis Offenbach (AöR), Germany and City of Esbjerg, Denmark; KIZ innovation centre, Germany; Habitat NGO, Turkey; IGAM research centre, Turkey; Alisei social cooperative, Italy; the not-for-profit organisation CIDIS, Italy; and the Research Foundation RUB, Germany.

Objectives: To develop Regional Integration Accelerators (RIAC) as a model with the overarching objective of allowing refugees and asylum seekers faster access to the labour market. This logic aimed to result in the reduction from 48 to 12 months in some cases, saving costs and reducing the dropout significantly.

Method: RIACs are small, decentralised units, which are usually set up for specific industries or companies and can be characterised by specific activities based on each country's labour market trends and target group needs. The RIAC project modified the methodology and timing of the standard integration process by ensuring that the different pathways were implemented simultaneously rather than in sequence and by starting from the employers' needs and the availability of real job opportunities. This was done by: (1) searching for employers with vacancies and involving them in the recruitment of refugees; (2) developing parallel integration steps able to reduce the waiting time and uncertainty; (3) appointing a 'Speed Manager' per RIAC, to be the contact person overseeing the whole process; (4) strengthening the cooperation among volunteers and other actors; (5) promoting long-life learning to motivate refugees; (6) including a gender gap integration strategy; (7) offering self-employment as a labour market integration opportunity (about 30% of refugees were already self-employed in their home countries).

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents, incl. final report.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The project developed 21 RIAC units in 4 countries (Germany, Italy, Denmark and Turkey), attracting 756 participants and successfully integrating 224 into the labour market²⁹⁹. A counterfactual evaluation was not carried out. Nonetheless, the Ruhr-University Bochum conducted a process-based evaluation, which focused on a pre-post measurement of critical success factors (initial conditions for the target groups, success drivers, outcomes)

²⁹⁹ Information on the total number of women and men involved per labour market sector in each country and those that were employed or self-employed after their participation in RIAC is available at the Final Activity Report Annex 1 RIAC numbers and job segments are accessible at <https://cloud.proarbeit-kreis-of.de/nextcloud/index.php/s/R74cWRyXfp3BR59>, Password: RIAC_Documentation.

and that confirmed the efficiency of the piloted model compared to the traditional services they were offering by speeding up the process and better engaging the beneficiaries and employers. The evaluation was done through the collection of 283 questionnaires from employers, refugees and migrants and data were collected from two site visits³⁰⁰.

RIAC units also identified a number of stakeholders who played a major role in the integration of refugees, such as voluntary associations, employees in the job centre or advice centres, policymakers, and people from the community. In total, 5 employers, 4 Speed Managers from different sectors, and 200 mentors participated in RIAC.

The standardisation of the RIAC model was done in 4 cycles of optimisation: pilot, adjustment of concept, proof of adjusted concept, final concept. The project model has been increasingly refined and adapted to local situations in different countries in an often very dynamic scenario, with strong political and financial pressures in several countries and the COVID-19 Pandemic at the end of the implementation. Therefore, the consortium considered the proven potential of the transferability and scalability of the RIAC model as an outcome itself. To define and implement this model, the main outputs produced were: seven guidelines for the respective fields of activity; a manual and provision of templates and processes, which enabled informed third parties to implement RIACs in their countries; a handbook with the standardisation of practices implemented during the project with practical suggestions; a Blueprint brochure offering a generalised version of the model and proposing its methodologies to potential decision-makers and local stakeholders active in policies for the integration in the labour market of vulnerable groups; a sustainability plan to answer the question on the possible scenarios for a long-term effect of the RIAC experience; a large number of dissemination materials that were translated into different languages to reach out to the target groups and several online dissemination conferences at the national level, as well as a European conference.

Efficiency:

The project team did not do any estimation to assess the cost-benefit ratio, which they recognised as very useful to fully benchmark the success of the RIAC model. The project team did not think they could have implemented the project with fewer resources; they actually considered the resources available were not always enough to cover all the tasks. In the case of local authorities, their daily rates are normally higher than what they can claim in an EU project in order to adjust to the threshold. While they would apply for the call, if there was an interest at the institutional level in the topic, they would have difficulties in convincing their financial departments, if they had fewer resources.

With regard to the payment by results concept, the project team did not think it was the best approach. Besides the personnel costs rates issue above-mentioned, they considered this could diminish the quality and the sustainability of the project, with the team focusing strictly on delivery against deadlines and not reflecting enough on the methodologies and processes. Furthermore, they considered that allocating part of the payments after the end of the project implementation could be a good strategy for the European Commission to obtain a stronger commitment to the project in terms of sustainability.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

The main innovation of the project resided in the creation of a new service with a methodology that modified the standard integration process by identifying obstacles that slow down the process; designed specific interventions to tackle such obstacles, combining

³⁰⁰ Ruhr-University Bochum (2020). Comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan for refugees' labour market integration. Available at <http://www.apf.rub.de/aup/forschung/projekte/riac0118-0620.html.en>.

the different steps in parallel rather than subsequently; started the process for the real market opportunities existing in each territory by involving employers from the beginning of the action.

Another innovation consisted of its multi-actor approach. RIAC meant the possibility to bring all the different people supporting refugees and asylum seekers to the table to create a new service with a common vision and thanks to it, design a sustainable labour market integration process together. Each different actor may have a different focus. For job centres, the main focus is strictly the labour market integration, while NGO partners may focus more on intercultural, and social integration aspects. However, being part of RIAC meant that partners from different sectors had to respect the multi-actor point of view, including employers.

Lastly but equally important, RIAC had a user-centred approach that was not common among relevant public authorities. The needs of refugees and asylum seekers were also taken into account and integrated into the final single methodology. Refugees would have the time to really assess if that job they were offered was really for them; a choice they did not have with the previous system. The project showed that the freedom to choose the job opportunity rather than to force refugees or asylum seekers to take the application they receive to avoid a sanction was more useful. Public authorities are traditionally concerned about the fact that without making the acceptance of the job offer mandatory, refugees and asylum seekers may not be motivated to take it. RIAC managed to change this vision and internal approach, proving that involving the beneficiaries in the process, as well as listening and consulting them, was actually more efficient.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

The main barriers were: (1) the identification of suitable people for the large number of complementary roles needed for the model. The recruiting of project staff was difficult for some positions. While project coordinators and speed managers were found easily, the identification of suitable employers for RIACs focused on women was more challenging. This was not only due to some cultural barriers to understanding certain differences, which could be better addressed if the topic of migrant women received more attention but also to the fear that some employers and policymakers had in what related to making decisions that could have a bigger impact. A particular example was the apprehension to hire Muslim women who wore the 'hijab' and the fear that this could originate a political debate or public criticism for those who decided to hire them (i.e. to hire Muslim women to work as nursemaids and that the parents reacted negatively because they wore the 'hijab'). A lot of time to address this fear through cultural mediation was needed and it made it more challenging than for other RIACs. (2) the institutional instability in some partner countries like Turkey and Italy, where readjustment of the working methods was needed to tackle those internal challenges³⁰¹. In the case of Italy, the entry into force of the so-called 'Salvini Decree' created a lot of uncertainty and a blockage in the work of Italian organisations, like the partners of RIAC, who worked in refugee and asylum centres. In Turkey, the economic crisis happening at the same time as the project meant that partners were uncertain of the real 'value' of the funding they were receiving and how to best use it, due to the currency instability and inflation in the country. This generated confusion not only internally at the partner level, but also disorientation among the rest of the partners on the actual team involved in those organisations during the initial phases; (3) the missing legal framework for the integration of refugees in Turkey, which made the implementation more difficult than for partners in the other three countries.

The main driver was the collective commitment to tackle an urgent need that the different partners and stakeholders were already aware of and committed to addressing in a better way. Partners had already a long experience in working with the target group and thus a

³⁰¹ RIAC (2020c). VP/2016/015. Sustainability report.

good understanding of the existing services and needs. They were also aware that a multistakeholder approach was needed to find a more efficient solution and that such a process was not possible with the traditional methods but only if they had the possibility of testing a new way of delivering their services. The multidisciplinary consortium made it possible, for instance, to understand how each job centre was working in each of the four countries and how they were developing and implementing the figure of the speed manager. 'Dos and don'ts' advice among partners was very useful so as to take over some ideas. Moreover, in some of the partner organisations, there were staff members from different origins; some of them had refugee status, and getting to know their personal experience and knowledge in the field, as well as having them involved in the project, was very positive. The consortium kept collaborating, and for several partners, RIAC has meant the creation of a network, in which more consortia and new projects were taking part.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

At the time of writing, the project was not being upscale or transferred. In the case of partners in RIAC public authorities, results were shared internally; the RIAC model was validated by all partners as a more efficient approach, and it was embedded to some extent as part of their regular services. This was the main achievement in terms of sustainability: to really impact the regular services offered by the partners and to be implemented after the project, as a more efficient social innovation model. RIAC lead partner Pro Arbeit Offenbach had been in contact with the TSUNAMI EaSI project after the last EaSI conference since both projects had expressed interest in their respective methodologies. While they were working on an Erasmus+ proposal, which could replicate the TSUNAMI methodology, mainly tested in Italy, to other EU countries such as Germany (Pro Arbeit Offenbach), they were also waiting for a new EaSI call or similar that would allow them to transfer the RIAC model, tested and led by Pro Arbeit Offenbach, in other countries.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

The main driver was the solid model, tested in 21 different thematic RIACs in four countries and validated by the external monitoring and evaluation assessment of the project. Evidence of its potential scalability/transferability was the fact that employers, interviewed as part of the external monitoring and evaluation assessment above-mentioned, confirmed that this model managed to remove most of the main barriers to refugees' and asylum seekers' employability they had, such as the adoption of operational procedures, family obligations, the creation of work motivation and lack of information on competences and qualifications.

The main barrier was a large number of different expertise and thus resources that needed to be deployed at the beginning and ensuring the commitment and coordination among actors. While this was challenging but eventually successful during the project, after the end of the funding, partners were not able to keep the whole methodology as part of their internal services. In the case of the German public authority, they decided not to continue offering the 24/7 mentoring and coaching system that RIAC was offering because of a lack of internal resources for it. They would need to call for subcontractor NGOs to carry out that part and then, submitters would answer that call defining what they wanted to do. That would increase the needed efforts from the public authority side, plus the fact that subcontractors might propose, in their applications, approaches that were different from those already tested in the RIAC. Likewise, each partner was sustaining what they considered the most relevant part of the model, but not the total RIAC methodology.

Project's internal and external coherence

No specific evidence of synergies between the project and other EaSI projects was found. However, they did seek synergies with many other projects funded by other EU programmes, such as the COSME project EMEN-UP, in order to attend their events, learn from the activities other projects were carried out and above all, present the RIAC model to as many people as possible, to guarantee the exploitation and further sustainability of their results. The identification of all those external dissemination opportunities was possible thanks to some of the project partners' networks and involvement in other EU funded opportunities. The sharing of knowledge and experiences among the partners of the consortium was also very enriching. Communication among them was close and they helped each other to address some issues each of them was facing during the implementation.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The project team considered that the EaSI programme priorities set for this call matched their needs and that the timing was perfect due to the urgency of improving the services they were offering to the increasing number of refugees that were arriving after 2015. Testing a more efficient and faster approach was critical. In the case of the project leader, the EaSI programme and the RIAC project were the first opportunities to participate in social experimentation and in an EU funded project. It meant an enormous influx for them as a local authority job centre, developing a specific EU funded project department and having, at that moment, seven EU funded projects under implementation (2 AMIFs and 5 Erasmus+). It meant opening the door to more EU opportunities thanks to the experience gained with RIAC. It also helped to look at the labour market integration process through a new lens, looking at other elements such as cultural diversity, family, traditions, soft skills, communication, racism, etc. Such elements also had a huge impact on the labour market integration processes of refugees and asylum seekers but were not properly considered by the job centre or the local authority, which were analysing the issue strictly from the market point of view. That change of mentality was possible thanks to their participation in this social innovation project.

The project team considered that the EU should keep their support for social experimentation and keep allowing organisations and institutions to test and pilot, think out of the box and find the best way to tackle societal challenges. In the case of public authorities, they sometimes need to plan carefully their own resources many years in advance, allowing very little room for changes and innovation. Therefore, EaSI is an opportunity to experiment, to have more flexibility if they want to have more innovation within their institutions. For them, it was a great opportunity to innovate which could not have happened otherwise, and they wish to keep applying for this kind of projects opportunities.

EU added value:

The EU added value to the RIAC project was unquestionable. In the absence of such opportunities (sharing information and knowledge with several European partners, for example) a comparable experience could not have been gained and the development of such a model would not have been possible either. The different elements bringing together this efficient methodology came from the good practices and experiences of the different countries and partners involved, being the transnational collaboration the main EU added value for RIAC. The most visible added value of the European value was given by the free space of the project dimension: linking to the existing procedures but smoothly forcing them to act differently, the RIAC methodology invited organisations working for the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers to revisit critically the existing approaches to such integration by moving from a dogmatic idea of sequences of actions to a new holistic one, where parallel processes speed up the different actions and keep the motivation of the participants high. At the same time, evaluation of the actions/units, as an integral part of the

project, forced an objective assessment of the integration strategy – something that many institutions could not afford because of the time and money shortage and that would have not been possible without the EaSI funding. The transnational cooperation and the flexibility to ‘think out of the box’ and test a new model was something that the project team considered not to be possible through the national funding programmes they were aware of, always connected to the national context and budget, less flexible and which did not encourage a culture of revising what was working in other countries as an added value to enrich the national projects.

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FORWORK

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: As part of the European migrant crisis, Italy experienced a sharply growing influx of asylum seekers. Unlike other countries such as Germany, Italy only offers ad hoc integration initiatives organised in reception centres to asylum seekers, far from answering their needs for integration. As a result, 85% of asylum seekers are hosted in so-called CAS centres which offer extremely limited opportunities for labour market integration, fuelling internal tensions and increasing the risk of social exclusion for migrants. As the process from the first application to the possible appeal may take over two years, most of them have no access to social inclusion programmes during this period. At the time of the call, Italy was trying to develop and reform its integration system to face the overwhelming number of arrivals in reception centres. For this reason, the FORWORK project focused on this specific target, with the aim of testing an early integration programme for this fragile migrant population.

Project team (implementers): Consortium of eight partner institutions and four associate organisations (two Italian Ministries and two regional public bodies) from two countries, Italy and Albania, composed of public, private and third sector organisations. It was led by the National Agency for the Active Labour Market Policy (ANPAL), and involved the Regional Piedmont Employment Agency (APL), the International Training Centre of the ILO, the Forcoop Social Cooperative, Kairos Mestieri Social Enterprise and the Foundation R. Debenedetti (FRDB), in Italy; and Adriapol Smart and Creative Development (ADR) and the National Agency of Education, Vocational Training and Qualifications (AKAPF) in Albania.

Objectives: FORWORK aimed at developing, implementing and evaluating an innovative path to ensure a comprehensive response to the immediate needs of asylum seekers with the long-term goal of integration into the Italian labour market. The proposed action aimed at testing the new model based on mentoring in the Piedmont region, a large Italian region with 9,6% of foreigners among residents (8,3% at the national level), with a view to upscale it in other Italian regions once successfully tested. A similar but smaller intervention was targeted at asylum seekers and refugees in Albania. The project targeted 600 asylum seekers and refugees hosted in CAS centres in Italy and 240 in Albania. The pilot was evaluated using a counterfactual approach in Italy only and involved local Public Employment Services (PES) in the provision of services in cooperation with social private organisations.

Method: At the time of the call, pilot studies were desperately needed to identify examples of good practice and to inform policy at the national level, while bearing in mind financial feasibility. In this context, a counterfactual evaluation strategy was seen as an effective way to measure the eventual causal effects of innovative paths to effective integration in the labour market.

FORWORK programme offered a prior assessment of linguistic and professional skills of potential beneficiaries and elaboration of an 'Individualised Action Plan'; monitoring and mentoring activities carried out by a job mentor; support from cultural mediators; introduction to regional employment services; identification and development of formal and informal skills; language and professional training courses; individualised placement services. Gender components were included³⁰². The Piedmont region was chosen for the distinctive features of its integration system at the time of application. In 2017, Piedmont had an organisational model based on 'diffused reception', with a large number of reception centres of small-medium size (with an average size of 17 refugees compared to the national average of 25).

³⁰² <https://www.frdp.org/progetti/forwork-fostering-opportunities-of-refugee-workers/>.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured results and impacts)

The project managed to achieve its objectives in terms of immediate and short-term results and outcomes. Note that a counterfactual evaluation was foreseen but not completed at the time. Completion was expected for autumn 2021.

In 2019 in Italy, the selection of individuals for both groups (FORWORK and control group) was performed in the Piedmont region and met the targets (623 for the FORWORK group and 641 for the control group) hosted in 264 CAS reception centres)³⁰³. Interestingly, 28% of FORWORK beneficiaries were women, a higher rate than their proportion of the CAS population (23%), thanks to the efforts of FORWORK partners to involve them, but also due to worse labour market conditions faced by women, which made the FORWORK programme more attractive to them. In this context, a full social and labour integration may take years. The latest statistics from June 2021³⁰⁴ indicated that 735 individuals were contacted by job mentors, 535 joined the project, and there were 389 active beneficiaries; those figures may have changed as the project was still ongoing.

- Profiling and skill assessment of 358 beneficiaries, based on the use of the EU Skills Profile Tool, allowed job mentors to update 341 beneficiaries' CVs and elaborate 240 Individual Action Plans. Job coaching services were provided to 310 beneficiaries and 216 started training courses. Italian and vocational training workshops were completed by 66 participants, and civic education courses were completed by 120 people.
- The skills recognition activities, based on the 'Reconnaissance des Acquis de l'Experience' (RDA) methodology, were totally suspended during the pandemic and showed 24 registrations by the time the report was written.

In Albania, the number of participants was reduced to 30 and a new activity was added, a training course on the topic of asylum seekers for 30 policymakers from the Ministry of the Interior (amendment). In response to the emergency situation, especially for vulnerable groups, Adriapol focused on two important institutions to organise awareness and informative activities about COVID-19, about the FORWORK integration programme, and information about Albania opportunities, also donating Covid protection material to the centres. Fourteen asylum-seekers attended in Kolonja and 30 in the national reception centre.

Evidence-based results were unfortunately not available, and the project team considered that it would not be appropriate to disseminate preliminary results of a counterfactual evaluation of this scale, which was a key component of this project. The consortium was committed to delivering credible causal conclusions about the effects of FORWORK, using cutting edge research and the most reliable data sources. Some key indicators needed for assessing the effects of the intervention were not available at the time (an ongoing follow-up survey should have been completed by the end of August 2021). The effectiveness assessment in terms of final outcomes and policy impact was thus impossible at that stage.

In addition, there seemed to be potential for further policy change at the EU as well as national level. The EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals was tested. It is rather

³⁰³ FORWORK (2021). 2nd implementation report.

³⁰⁴ Information from the project team provided by Email, complementing the interview. FORWORK was not concluded by then. The Commission granted an extension of this project until the end of September 2021. Please take into account that the preliminary results were entirely based on incomplete data.

long, but as not all sections are mandatory, it was eventually applicable. This result could contribute to the testing and potential improvement of the tools produced at the EU level. Furthermore, other policymakers, from Italy and other Member States, would be involved once the results were produced, as it would be more effective to convince them from the team point of view, notably through the final event jointly organised by FORWORK and ITC ILO, also part of the consortium.

Efficiency

An estimate of 'per-refugee cost' was calculated at the beginning of the project, amounting to €2,527 per beneficiary, inclusive of all actions. Cost assessment was done against two of the few initiatives implemented in Italy in 2015-2016: pilot projects INSIDE and LIFT, also targeting asylum seekers and migrants but slightly differently. However, no comparison or results were available at the time. It can be noted, however, that the last financial report from 2021 showed a very low level of expenses (slightly above 25% of the initial budget).

From the coordinator's point of view, the project could not have been implemented with fewer resources. The cost of this type of individual support is normally higher than traditional training provided by PES and the use of external mentors and coaches from third sector organisations appears to be cheaper than the investment into the Italian PES that would have been needed to recruit and train its own staff and get a return on investment at a much later stage, which, as said before, depends on political decisions.

The project coordinator did not think that a result-based approach was relevant for that kind of complex target group, with results so difficult to achieve. There were many risks linked to external factors, which could undermine the project.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

Innovation was reflected in two main dimensions in FORWORK methodological and service provision (content and way to deliver it). The highest innovative dimension of the project was the fact that, to the project team's knowledge, it was the first time in Italy that a social experiment using counter evaluation was performed at such a scale to inform a future possible policy reform at the national level. Based on a clear need for coordination in this field, policymakers and the public sector wanted to make informed decisions based on cost and benefits before opting for a new national model of integration. Thanks to this approach, outcome differences (for example, differences in employment rates) in the two groups would allow us to estimate the causal effect of the FORWORK activities on occupation outcomes.

The second important innovation was the introduction of the mentoring individualised methodology for every migrant in the PES. Mentoring was not new as such, but its introduction in the Italian PES was innovative because PES often used a mainstream approach, delivering the same service to everyone thus not individualised. In addition, they did not target the migrant population. The development of mentoring by the own services of PES was not possible at that time, due to the reduced number of staff in PES facing the increased arrivals of migrants. Because mentoring was a very strong component of FORWORK, PES decided to collaborate with third sector organisations to implement it.

Another innovative trend of FORWORK linked to the use of the counterfactual evaluation was the unique comprehensive data collection effort in the region tested. Outcomes of interest have been measured by integrating quantitative data from administrative sources (namely from PES), and qualitative data from interviews with asylum seekers included in the sample (baseline and follow-up surveys at the beginning and at the end of the project activities). Among the final deliverables of the FORWORK project an employer/employee database should be included, with monthly monitoring of labour market outcomes of both

treated group and control group (1200 asylum seekers and refugees in total); a new tool that might be further used and developed by Italian prefectures.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

The key driver was the 'policy demand' at the origin of FORWORK: the initial and full involvement in the pilot of both national and regional levels reflected an urgent unmet policy need, the strongest driver for a project to be upscaled in the whole country. Their early involvement improved the project implementation, with the provision of additional financial support for traineeship by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy DG Immigration (not eligible under EaSI). The prefecture of Turin, with the support of the regional PES, APL and FRDB, managed to engage the other seven Piedmont prefectures, hence increasing the number of reception centres needed to reach the targeted number of participants, made more challenging after the introduction of the new immigration law.

The collaboration between national government institutions, local authorities and stakeholders operating in the local labour markets was another important driving force allowing to have all interested and competent actors on board. For example, mentorship was possible thanks to the cooperation between Agenzia Piemonte Lavoro (APL), coordinating PES in Piedmont, and local 'social enterprises', the latter offering mentoring services that the PES could not provide at that moment, enriching the public operators. The project coordinator added that the mentoring approach, providing services answering the extremely specific needs of disadvantaged people (disabled people, children at risk, early school leavers, etc.) worked well in general, with the rich literature on this topic. The assumption was thus positive for the asylum seekers too. The pandemic effects could not have been overcome without mentors and all other professional figures (cultural mediators, job coaching) who managed to keep the motivation of participants, disoriented by the situation. The project could have stopped without the mentoring.

The first barrier was related to the change of political context and associated policy orientations faced during the project implementation. Shortly after the beginning of the project, the so-called 'Decreti Sicurezza' (Security Decrees) changed the Italian immigration legislation in September 2018, introducing new rules to obtain refugee status. The reception system has undergone major organisational changes in reception capacities, with a reduction of activities, and important public budget cuts allocated to migrant integration policies and support measures. In Piedmont, this meant to suspend many experiences of 'diffused reception'. The evaluation had to be adapted to that change, the selection of beneficiaries at CAS level becoming impossible; instead, a detailed selection within each CAS centre had to be undertaken. That change, combined with the pandemic effects resulted in many dropouts and forced the project team to proceed with a second selection to keep up with the initial target of 600, causing some delays.

In addition, the data collection on asylum seekers in Piedmont, central to selecting the FORWORK target group, revealed more challenges than foreseen because of different data sources producing heterogeneous formats in each prefecture. This issue was however overcome and even resulted in the production of an innovative harmonised format between prefectures, which could be further used for research and evaluation purposes.

In Albania, the initial plan of implementing the same model on a smaller scale could not be achieved and was adapted to the national situation with regard to migration. The survey carried out at the beginning eventually revealed that Albania had become a transit-only country for asylum seekers, and their needs were not focused on Albania's labour market integration.

One 'call-related' challenge was linked to the target group and to the specific Italian migration situation. The aim of the so-called fast-track integration was challenging for Italy due to the very low skilled profile of migrants in this country: this being even more

challenging for women. Job integration takes years for the most vulnerable migrant population.

Lastly, as said before, the COVID-19 pandemic very strongly affected the project activities, both in Italy and Albania, requiring substantial modifications to reorganise and modify the way the projects would be implemented, impacting organisations, processes, implementers, intermediaries and beneficiaries, the project was thus amended and extended until September 2021. For example, many companies were closed, and job placements services became a real challenge. An expert figure in job placement had to be recruited to address this unforeseen issue. In Albania, ADR transformed the traditional face-to-face courses into an online course, using a dedicated online platform and other necessary equipment to implement the training.

Scalability/Transferability:

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

Potential upscaling is mainly based on the counterfactual evaluation results, not available at the time of writing, as the project was still ongoing until September 2021. However, upscaling FORWORK experimentation at the national level, as planned, might have meant facing real obstacles, as competencies were still at the regional level. The initial plan was to adopt a large-scale countrywide programme to support refugees' access to the labour market, with a minimum target of 12,000 vulnerable migrants, based on FORWORK evaluated results. It was planned to be funded by the ESF national operational programme and AMIF. Up to that point, no other region had shown an interest in the experimentation that could lead to a regional partial upscaling. FORWORK latest results were presented in several national and regional events, more in 2019 than in 2020, but did not lead to further cooperation. The Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals was used and positively assessed and could shed light on its applicability and effectiveness in the Italian context.

No transfer to other EU regions or countries had occurred by the time, which was not the primary aim of the project mainly implemented in Italy. No exchange with other countries took place during the project lifespan. In fact, the project focused on the dissemination of results, rather than on transfer as its specific objective. Nevertheless, the project website³⁰⁵ contained little and quite old information, a shared ICT ILO event planned for 8 September 2021 and the final event on 28 September 2021 presenting FORWORK evaluation results.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

First, the counterfactual evaluation would be a powerful driver to further upscaling if results were successful as they constituted the rationale to decide upon the possible upscaling or transfer of FORWORK, although they were neither available nor disseminated by then.

The biggest challenge was the shifting Italian political context becoming unfavourable towards projects targeting migrants such as FORWORK. Even if the pilot was successfully tested, with evidence supporting its results, upscaling and the transfer would only happen if policy priorities were aligned and supportive, whether in the same country or beyond national borders.

Another internal barrier to transfer outside Italy was the absence of other EU organisations involved during the project implementation, apart from Albania. The involvement of partners or third parties usually allows a comprehensive understanding and support in case of transfer. FORWORK was highly complex experimentation, with an ambitious upscaling plan, but not enough resources to also integrate the transfer dimension. From the coordinator's point of view, transfer to other Member States could be potentially interesting

³⁰⁵ <https://www.forworkproject.eu/>.

for countries having the same migrant population features, like Spain and Greece for instance, and it was expected that the final event could inspire other EU regions and countries.

Project's internal and external coherence

No evidence of synergy with other EaSI projects was found during the project implementation, but before the project kicked off, some support measures on job coaching and traineeship in FORWORK were inspired by another EaSI project, Tsunami, where APEL Piedmont was also involved. Contact with the Turin Municipality (FAB lead partner) was made but did not result in any cooperation.

FORWORK experienced external synergies with AMIF funded projects with the same migrant population target. The social and labour inclusion project Pensare prima al dopo developed in the Piedmont region also tested the profiling and emergence tool of the EU Skills Profile Tool on a permanently present migrant population, in complement to FORWORK, which was targeting only asylum seekers. The BuonaTerra project in the Piedmont region worked as the lead partner, providing interventions for the socio-labour integration of migrants, to prevent and combat illegal hiring and was based on the matching of agricultural labour supply and demand, which could represent a professional opportunity for FORWORK beneficiaries at the end of the project activities.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

The call was very relevant and timely for Italy, facing a 2017 and 2018 high influx of migrants uneasy to integrate into the national labour market with the existing reception system. The project could not have emerged without the EaSI support, as no national policies had developed that targeted approach by then. The experimentation could lead to a reform of PES, but would require important investment and policy reforms.

However, the specific focus of the call on 'Fast-track integration into the labour market' was challenging for Italy, as said before, and might be difficult too for other EU Mediterranean countries having similar migrant population profiles, said the coordinator. Fast-track integration is impossible for these people and the 'fast' concept is also relative. This adaptation to each country's migration characteristics should be taken into account in the calls or at the evaluation stage of proposals.

While social experimentation itself is important, the project team stressed that migrant integration projects can only truly succeed, if the political and legislative context is right. Depending on their alignment with the experimentation goal, policy and legal context can create more or less favourable conditions for experimentation to emerge, develop and change of scale, that may in turn increase or not the experimentation impact and sustainability. The legal framework was rather an obstacle since the adoption of the new 'Safety Decree' in 2019; but opposite changes in the national legislation provided adequate responses to the social needs of asylum seekers. In this case, social experimentation is extremely relevant and useful, when backed by a supportive ecosystem.

EU added value

Overall, there was little evidence to suggest that the project demonstrated significant EU added value, being mainly implemented in Italy by Italian stakeholders. If national funding had been available at the same scale and dedicated to social experimentation, FORWORK could have been funded nationally. The absence of EU partners also prevented real added value in terms of mutual exchanges, common development of methods, tools, results, or even pilot transfers. The other partner, Albania, was not really the smaller-scale

experimentation expected (see results section) and appeared to be quite disconnected from the major experimentation in Italy. The focus of FORWORK was on a national level, adapted to the Italian context and not really involving transnational cooperation. The EU added value only appeared at the stage of the dissemination of results, rather unclear in terms of potential recipients, nor on how the experimentation would be transferred outside of Italy.

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CASE STUDIES: 2018 CALL ON ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION AND NATIONAL REFORM SUPPORT

BELMOD

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: The microsimulation tool for social protection reforms (MIMOSIS), which is used by the Federal Public Service of Social Security of Belgium, allowed policymakers to assess whether planned social protection reforms could yield satisfactory results. However, its main disadvantages included a poorly designed interface as well as the lack of links to the broader European context. A different simulation model, however, existed at the European level – EUROMOD. This model allowed the impact of policy changes to be directly compared across all Member States and the UK. It also had an intuitive and user-friendly interface. The project team identified the need to improve the cooperation and knowledge exchange between the main actors of static microsimulation in Belgium and Europe; as well as the need to improve the effectiveness of the microsimulation tools. The tool would help to address the needs of policymakers and the social needs of the general populace (since it would contribute to the development of proposals aimed at combating the non-take-up of social benefits).

Project team (implementers): Federal Public Service of Social Security (FPSSS), Belgium; University of Antwerp, Belgium; and University of Essex, UK.

Objectives: The main objectives of this project were: (a) develop a national reform plan aimed at reducing the non-take-up of income support and other benefits for those in need; (b) develop the appropriate microsimulation and other research tools to assess the social and economic impact of the measures proposed in this reform plan.

Method: First, the project team developed a national reform plan with policy reform proposals that sought to improve access to means-tested benefits through a simplification and a harmonisation of means tests as well as through the automatic granting of these benefits or the automatic identification of potential beneficiaries (building on the expertise of the previous administrations). Second, the project integrated the prevailing microsimulation model of the FPSSS into the EUROMOD infrastructure so as to present evidence-based reform proposals once the project was finished. This means that the EUROMOD infrastructure would be further developed for the purpose of running microsimulation models based on large scale administrative datasets.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (evidence on measured impacts and results)

The project was still ongoing at the time of drafting this report, which is why the end results and impacts would be available only once the pilot results were engrained at the policy level. At that stage, the project team had already developed and documented the BELMOD input dataset (esp. for users familiar with SILC). It also produced standardised guidelines and data requests to instruct BELMOD users on how to develop an input dataset³⁰⁶. Furthermore, the project team were testing the new model in different Belgian contexts. By that time, it successfully produced two reports with policy reform recommendations. These included (1) a report that presented the possibilities for an improved automatic granting of income support for disabled people and heating allowance; (2) a report that presented the

³⁰⁶ DEFIS (2020). BELMOD Interim Report, p. 41; p. 59.

possibilities to harmonise and simplify means-tests in Belgium³⁰⁷. Furthermore, because Belgium has different types of income support, the project team were examining at that time whether Belgium could create harmonised conditions for those different types of support and how income distributions would be impacted.

One of the key expected effects was that BELMOD would create synergies between the existing models (MIMOSIS; EUROMOD) and combine the best features of those. The BELMOD model would thus combine the accuracy of MIMOSIS with the user-friendliness of EUROMOD. This new microsimulation tool would also be used to design an evidence-based national reform plan aimed at furthering the automation of social rights. The project team defined automation in this context not only as automatically granting social benefits (the most advanced form of automation) but it was also understood as automatically identifying potential beneficiaries³⁰⁸.

The FPS Social Security was also developing a platform through which partners in the project could consult and use the model and the underlying data via a secure connection. Although data would not be saved, aggregated results could be saved with permission. The microsimulation tool would, thus, become accessible to the wider research community.

Efficiency

Due to the fact that the project was still ongoing, the project team did not estimate the model's efficiency through a counterfactual impact evaluation. That said, the project team were certain that the BELMOD model would be more efficient because it was designed in a user-friendly fashion (unlike MIMOSIS), which was also confirmed in a policymaker interview. Since Belgium had to administer two databases at the same time – MIMOSIS and EUROMOD; combining them through BELMOD would help to save more human resources and time. Furthermore, unlike with MIMOSIS, the project team could then both maintain and upgrade the model and exploit it by conducting microsimulation models.

The project team detected two factors negatively impacting efficiency, both of which were external. First, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the project activities, which caused an implementation delay of six months (however, no objectives and outputs were significantly impacted). Furthermore, the project faced a problem of administrative data availability because collecting such data takes a lot of time in Belgium due to privacy regulations. If obtaining the data had been easier, they could have performed the pilot in much less time and with less money. The project team also noted that the Crossroads Bank for Social Security, which is responsible for the provision of such data, lacked the necessary financial and administrative support, especially in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, the project team expressed their support for introducing a results-based funding condition in the EaSI programme. In BELMOD's case, they would have applied for funding, even if the condition was in place because they were very confident about the positive results. Nevertheless, they admitted that there might also be social experimentation projects, which would suffer under such a condition because producing expected results might be inherently more complicated for them.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

The proposed project represented a process innovation, since the project team aimed to replace the simulation model they had at the time (MIMOSIS) with a new, fully automated one, which could combine the best features of both MIMOSIS and EUROMOD. They also

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ <https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/research/projects/belmod-adapting-euromod-for-the-use-of-administrative-data-in-belgium>.

tried to develop the BELMOD model from a policy-oriented perspective and not just a purely scientific or academic one. Another innovative aspect of the project implementation itself was that they were enlarging the scope of stakeholders involved in microsimulations (incl. representatives of the academia), which allowed them to significantly widen the pool of experts, who could work with such models in Belgium. This helped to also gather more data – much larger samples, which also allow simulations for much smaller target groups.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

The project team did not consider BELMOD to be a social experimentation project in its essence due to the absence of the experimentation element (which was also related to the specifics of the 2018 call). Nevertheless, two key drivers of the project implementation process were detected. The first one was the cooperation with the representatives of the academia, which allowed for the expansion of the aforementioned experts' pool on microsimulation in Belgium. Second, the project was initially designed with the idea of upscaling in the framework of the Belgian Recovery and Resilience Plan.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

While the project was not finished, it was already trying to progress to the stage of mainstreaming. Initially, the project was designed with the idea of future upscaling and the potential transfer of its findings into other national and European contexts. According to the project representatives, the BELMOD model was already facing very significant demand from a variety of organisations. The project team secured the interest of several other public and private organisations in Belgium (e.g., the National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance), but also established a cooperation network with the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC EC), which the team hoped to use for further upscaling and/or investment generation. At the time of writing, the project team were preparing a proactive dissemination strategy, which would target not only Belgian stakeholders but also representatives of all Member States.

Barriers and drivers of transferability/scalability

Since the project's mainstreaming efforts were still incipient, it was difficult to comprehensively identify the key drivers and barriers to scalability. As of June 2021, two main drivers were identified. First, already at the early stages of the implementation process, the project team were informally reaching out to a variety of stakeholders to ensure a broader exposure to the project outputs. It established stable communication and technical knowledge/expertise exchange channels with the JRC, which was responsible for conducting technically similar projects in four other EU Member States. At a conceptual level, the JRC representative confirmed their interest in conducting and upscaling such pilots, if the funding was made available by respective DGs. With regard to its future actions as a part of the dissemination plan, the project team intended to produce a special report and circulate it to both regional and federal governments in Belgium as well as the representatives of EU-27. Furthermore, because the project design implied the integration of the already existing European-level software together with the national level, it allowed for greater outreach and learning opportunities. For example, they were using the EUROMOD annual meeting platform to build partnership networks and disseminate information about their project³⁰⁹.

While the project team were not experiencing any major barriers to scaling/transfer, they pointed out that it would be better if the EC project managers could play a stronger role as

³⁰⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/event/other-event/euromod-annual-meeting-2019>.

coordinators in this field and provide them with more guidance (esp. with regard to external EU funding opportunities, see the next section).

Project's internal and external coherence

The project team did not experience any internal synergies with other EaSI projects or external synergies with other European programmes aimed at fostering social innovation as of June 2021. Nevertheless, since the project team aimed to develop the simulation model as a tool to continuously monitor the non-take-up of social rights, they created important connections with the TAKE Project³¹⁰. The TAKE project investigated the causes of non-take-up (NTU) or not applying for social benefits and allowances, serving as an important partner in providing the necessary inputs for the BELMOD project. The TAKE project, however, was a national initiative between the Herman Deleeck Center for Social Policy, the Federal Planning Bureau, the FPS Social Security and Liège University.

The project team expressed a view that there were not enough linkages between the external EU programmes aimed at fostering social innovation and their EaSI call. They also argued that the EC could play a more proactive guidance-oriented role by linking the EaSI projects to such external initiatives (or linking EaSI projects internally with each other). One of the key problems the project team faced in the area of coherence was that they were not always aware of what was going on with the external EU programmes and could not react in a timely fashion.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

The project team saw EaSI as relevant for their project for three different reasons. First, for national public institutions like the FPSSS, European funding was essential to prepare and update their toolboxes for ex-ante and ex-post policy evaluations while also referencing European best practices in this field. If they embarked upon important reforms, such as the modernisation of social security policies, the administration needed to support these in a scientific way. Projects like BELMOD usually help to do that and ensure more budgetary efficiency at the national level because they prevent policies with adverse effects from being implemented through the usage of accurate microsimulations. Second, the 2018 EaSI call and its objectives matched the team's priorities quite well. With regard to other programmes (EEA, ESF), the project often could not apply under those because of BELMOD's thematic specifics. There were also other disqualifying criteria (e.g. Belgium was not eligible for the EEA grants). Moreover, the expansion of the pool of microsimulation experts through the European dimension of the project became an important result attributed to EaSI. Specifically, this expansion would ensure the sustainability of the project impacts in Belgium and, potentially, in other MSs.

EU added value

The project was in the process of generating EU added value and most of its effects had not crystallised at that time. There were three main avenues, through which the EU added value could already be observed. First, the project team agreed that their participation in EaSI helped them with additional exposure to the BELMOD model. That said, they believed the EC could do more to coordinate communication efforts. For example, they had only one joint meeting with other EaSI projects in their call, but there could have been useful learning synergies if more meetings took place. Second, through the international workshops and cooperation, the project team were experiencing cross-border learning synergies. For example, the involvement of the Essex University and the JRC as international (European) experts helped them to create additional added value since they learned more about the

³¹⁰ <https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/nl/sociale-rechten-toekennen/take-project>.

application of EUROMOD in various contexts. This was particularly important as the project aimed to integrate that microsimulation model (MIMOSIS) into the EUROMOD infrastructure. Third, the project team did not see any alternatives to EaSI since national funding in Belgium was aimed at fundamental research rather than policy-oriented research. Both the data warehouse and the model, which were in use at the reporting date, had been developed with the support of the Belgian federal authorities more than 20 years before. However, the priorities of the national funding programmes changed at the federal level in the course of that period, which was why updating them was made possible only with EaSI's support.

On the other hand, the interviews with policymakers demonstrated that they believed the responsibility of upscaling and transferring of such models should lie in the domain of the Member States. While the policymaker agreed that the initial launch of such pilots through European funding was a good idea, he also stressed that maintenance of the models should not be funded by the EU, but rather by the Member States (in certain cases – in partial cooperation with the EC).

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DEMTOP

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: The Czech Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs' (MoLSA) microsimulation tool for pensions (NEMO) was lacking information on individual pension savings in supplementary pension schemes which hindered the analysis of the overall analysis of future pensioners' entitlements. In addition, that specific lack of information limited the tool's ability to make predictions about pension entitlements for workers in arduous and hazardous jobs, who had been identified as a priority target for future policy reform.

Project team (implementers): Cooperation between the Czech Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and the Czech NGO Erudicio Nadační Fond.

Objectives: DEMTOP sought to improve MoLSA's microsimulation tool in such a way that it included previously unused categories of data and that individual decision-making processes were better captured. In addition, the project was seeking to set the foundations for future improvements to be implemented after the end of DEMTOP.

Method: The project was developing the technical adjustments necessary to allow the microsimulation tool to address the needs and objectives in question. In addition, feasibility studies were being carried out to explore set areas for future improvements.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents.

Expected Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured results and impacts)

Quantifying the accuracy boost resulting from the improvements made to NEMO was difficult because as of the date no estimation of such effects had been made. With that in mind, the project team's tentative estimation was that, in aggregate, the microsimulation tool's macroeconomic quality would increase by approximately 10%, while the quality of microeconomic features would grow by 50%. The project team predicted improvements in the precision of predictions on self-employed workers who represented around 20% of the total workforce in the Czech Republic. They believed that before DEMTOP only 20% of the real-life state of the self-employed was captured, while after the project this figure would grow to 80%. Similar improvements would be achieved in the area of supplementary pensions.

As for progress, the code and documentation needed for implementing supplementary pensions to the model were delivered and were ready for use. In addition, all three feasibility studies³¹¹ were completed. The probability of these being used to inform future updates of the microsimulation tool is high. They covered 100% of the contents demanded at the start of the DEMTOP project.

The main policy outcome is related to the microsimulation tool's use. The tool was primarily used to make forecasts about the impact of proposed policy reforms affecting the pension system. Using the tool policymakers would be able to assess the macro-effects such as pension collection rates but, more importantly, micro effects on how a policy would affect particular demographics. In addition, the tool could be used to identify potential issues that might require a policy response. DEMTOP was expected to significantly enhance the microsimulation tool's ability to do so through the improvements made.

³¹¹ See 'Innovative Content' section.

Efficiency:

The microsimulation tool was expected to be more cost-efficient once the DENTOP project was concluded. Costs related to the tool's maintenance and usage were expected to remain unchanged as compared to before the project. However, because of DENTOP, the system might be able to make more precise forecasts and allow for better and more informed policy decisions.

The project team believed that it might have been possible to implement DENTOP with fewer resources and without EaSI contribution if the project had been performed by the internal staff of MoLSA instead of subcontracting large portions of the project. Subcontracted tasks included the implementation of supplementary pension schemes into NEMO, the creation of a database of person identifiers for the analysis of data on temporary incapacity to work and disability as well as three feasibility studies on a microsimulation tool on sickness insurance, the harmonisation of NEMO with external projections, and enabling public access for individual pension projections.³¹² However, a no-cost analysis on the possibility of implementing all tasks internally was carried out as such an approach was discarded for the following reason, according to the project team: 'Training existing staff and hiring new staff would have been a long process because bringing new staff into the ministry requires complicated bureaucratic processes and is dependent on the goodwill of the whole government'.

Finally, the project team would still have applied for results based EaSI funding. Their argument was that DENTOP aimed to improve the available tools for evidence-based policy decisions concerning the pension system. As such, the project team was confident that they would be able to produce better and more accurate results with the improvements to be made to the microsimulation tool.

Innovativeness of the project**Innovative content**

The project team stressed that they did not consider themselves and the project to be socially innovative. That was because the relevant EaSI PROGRESS call was divided into two lots ('access to social protection' and 'national reform support'). The lot under which DENTOP occurred was 'national reform support' and said lot did not strictly require submitted projects to be socially innovative, in the project teams' interpretation.³¹³ Consequently, this section will show how DENTOP was innovative from a technical point of view.

First, DENTOP was introducing new categories of data to NEMO. Those included personal savings in supplementary pension schemes and information on how to combine income replacement rates for pensioners. Furthermore, improvements to individual decision-making models were being made, such as introducing a representation of the causality between current sickness and future disability. Both aspects would improve the microsimulation tool's accuracy regarding predictions of individual behaviour and certain professions (especially arduous and hazardous ones). Finally, part of the DENTOP project was conducting three feasibility studies – one on the introduction of a new microsimulation tool for sickness insurance which was to be interconnected with the existing pension tool, a second on the alignment of NEMO with external projections, and a third on updating NEMO such that it could be used to project individuals' future pension entitlements. These were setting the foundations for the future development of new tools and upgrades that did not previously exist in the Czech Republic.

³¹² DEFIS (2020). VP/2018/003/0001. Technical Implementation Report 2019.

³¹³ DEFIS (2018). VP/2018/003. Call or proposals on social innovation and national reforms.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

The primary driver was the close relationship the project team had been able to build with its subcontractors. The project team stressed that some of the tasks required rather specific specialist knowledge. This was particularly true for insurance microsimulation modelling, especially in terms of software, where there are only two to three companies active in the Czech market. The project team was in contact with all of them through public procurement processes as a part of DENTOP. Through that contact, these companies were able to gain a deep understanding of the project's needs allowing them to submit more tailored solutions, according to the project team.

The first barrier was related to bureaucratic complications the project team encountered during implementation because of the share of EaSI funding that was allocated to paying the project implementers, who were also civil servants in the case of DENTOP. The Czech legal framework on how civil servants were contracted, however, prevented this money from being allocated to the relevant people. This meant that the project team were receiving normal pay for their regular full-time duties, but the extra work put into DENTOP went unpaid. The second barrier was data availability. The project team emphasised that microsimulation tools such as NEMO required large amounts of data, especially microdata at the individual level. The challenge then was to access that data and to prepare it in such a way that it was usable for the tool.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

In a sense, DENTOP itself was an upscaling effort because it continued the development of MoLSA's pension microsimulation tool which had begun in two previous EU-funded projects.³¹⁴ Those occurred under the PROGRESS programme during the 2007-2013 funding period.

At the reporting date, however, there were no concrete plans for upscaling the microsimulation tool further because it was already operating at scale. It was being used at the national level by the MoLSA to provide a solid evidence base for pension reforms and that work was to be continued, according to the project team. A likely future reform step would be addressing pension entitlements of workers in arduous and hazardous jobs. That said, as part of the project, work has begun on the preparation of a feasibility study exploring the option of making microsimulation data publicly available to inform individuals about their future pension entitlements.³¹⁵ Finally, there was no evidence of transfer efforts to other government departments or the Member States.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability

The first driver was that the project team was able to raise awareness across government departments on the microsimulation tool as DENTOP was the latest project in a series of three implemented by MoLSA, co-funded by the EU, and aimed at developing the one microsimulation tool. As the result of this increased inter-departmental awareness, the project team were approached by the Czech Social Security Administration, which collects and enforces payable social security premiums.³¹⁶ They offered to make potentially useful data on their clients available, in return for access to NEMO's individual pension forecasts. A second driver was that as part of one of the previous PROGRESS projects

³¹⁴ PROGRESS projects VP/2009/006 'Improvement of analytical tools for decision making process in pension policy' and VS/2013/0134 'Improvement of a pension microsimulation model and datasets'.

³¹⁵ DEFIS (2020). VP/2018/003/0001. Technical Implementation Report 2019.

³¹⁶ ČSSZ. 2021. About CSSA [Online].

(VS/2013/0134), a feasibility study on the implementation of decision-making processes into the microsimulation tool was conducted.³¹⁷ The study identified how behavioural patterns might be introduced to the tool and what factors of individualised decision-making processes are most important. The results were informing the actual implementation of individual decision-making processes into the tool, according to the project team.

The main barrier was securing access to continuous funding. As the 'EU added value' section will show, the chances of securing national funding were low. In addition, the project was struggling to attract EU funding following the 2013 PROGRESS project. The project team did, however, note that they were able to attract ESF funding for 2017/18.

Project's internal and external coherence

During the application process for the relevant EaSI PROGRESS call, the project team were in contact and exchanged ideas with their Slovak colleagues who were preparing an application for the same lot of the same call. However, there was no evidence of learning or financial synergies with any further EaSI projects.

No evidence was discovered of external synergies with other EU programmes promoting social innovation and experimentation or participating projects.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

Even though the project team did not consider themselves social innovators, EaSI's relevance in the case of DEMENTOP was reflected in three different ways. First, the project team believed that DEMENTOP did not quite fit the scope of other EU funding sources, especially the ESF. The relevant EaSI call, however, was a good fit, according to the project team's interpretation, because it targeted a niche of projects that struggled to attract funding elsewhere (nationally and at the EU level) and only required smaller amounts of funding – approximately €1million in the case of DEMENTOP.³¹⁸ Furthermore, MoLSA's microsimulation tool NEMO, which DEMENTOP enhanced, served as the basis for informed policy decision-making. While the project team stressed that NEMO itself did not solve any immediate issues, it was going to be used as an analytical tool to inform innovative policy reforms. These reforms might address the effect of demographic change on pensions in the Czech Republic. According to the project team, the most appropriate way to tackle these challenges was with truly innovative reforms. The priorities outlined in the relevant EaSI PROGRESS call were pertinent to the needs of the Czech Republic and MoLSA for the same reason. That was because DEMENTOP would support the modernisation of social protection systems by providing a better evidence basis for policies aimed at mitigating the impact of an ageing population. In addition, DEMENTOP was going to improve access to individualised information about pension entitlements by implementing a feasibility study on how to use NEMO to just that end.³¹⁹

EU added value

There were two factors reflecting the EU added value of the EaSI programme in the case of DEMENTOP. First, the project could not have been implemented without EU funding with the project team assessing the chances of receiving national funding as low. The main reasons were the high competitiveness of funding from national budgets and the lack of set procedures. In addition, the project team considered national resources as ill-suited for

³¹⁷ DELOITTE 2014. Feasibility Study: Implementation of Decision-Making Processes into the Dynamic Micro-Simulation Model of the Pension System. Prague.

³¹⁸ DEFIS (2019). VP/2018/003. Grants Awarded as a Result of the Call for Proposals VP/2018/003.

³¹⁹ DEFIS (2020). VP/2018/003/0001. Technical Implementation Report 2019.

projects lasting longer than one budgetary year as awarding decisions appear to be subject to the political will.

Moreover, there were opportunities for cross-border learning for the project team. Two study trips took place, one to local pension authorities in Croatia, and another to Slovakia.³²⁰ During these trips, the project team obtained information on how occupational pension schemes work in those countries and how they deal with certain groups such as arduous professions. The project team were also in informal discussions with the operators of microsimulation tools in other countries (e.g. in France and Belgium) to exchange thoughts on their respective tools. Finally, a workshop and a conference were being planned at the national level. The project team believed that those activities would be valuable in raising awareness about the project and its significance to political decision-makers and other stakeholders.

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³²⁰ Ibid.

ETS

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: The project targeted all EU mobile workers. Those included cross border workers, who lived in one country but worked in another, as well as those, who changed their country of residence for work purposes. The need, which the European Tracking System (ETS) addressed, was related to the lack of information on the old-age provision and other kinds of pension benefits for mobile workers. Oftentimes, when a mobile worker leaves one country for another, they struggle to understand the available information, assuming there is any, on how to exercise their rights and claim their entitlements.

Project team (implementers): A consortium coordinated by the Germany-based Versorgungsanstalt des Bundes und der Länder (VBL) and comprised of 8 pension stakeholders, including VBL: 2 statutory pension institutions (Federal Pension Service, Belgium and The Swedish Pensions Agency); 3 supplementary pension providers (APG and PGGM, Netherlands, and VBL); 2 national tracking facilities (Sigidis, Belgium and Minpension.se, Sweden), 1 European association (European Association of Paritarian Institutions).

Objectives: ETS sought to trial an online portal providing comprehensive general information on all aspects of pensions and allowing mobile workers to find their pension providers in at least five member states.

Method: The pilot gave proof of concept that a tracking service showing individual pension entitlements could work. For that reason, the infrastructure necessary to compile and present all necessary individual pension data from the Belgian national pension tracking system was developed during the pilot.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents.

Expected Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured results and impacts)

Expected key outcomes were related to the pilot's four deliverables. A website containing general information about pensions³²¹ and the proof of concept was going to be developed; a holding association responsible for operating the tracking system in the future is going to be established by the end of 2022, and, finally, there was a rollout plan for EU-wide implementation. There was no interim evaluation report available detailing the implementation progress, but the project team gave the following overview: the technical launch of the ETS [website](https://www.findyourpension.eu/) occurred in early July 2021. Detailed contents on pension systems and entitlements in different countries were going to be delivered on a rolling basis. The proof of concept was close to being finalised and was expected to be released on the website by late 2021. The holding organisation is going to be established as one of the last steps. At the time of writing, governance and business model were being elaborated by the project team and external partners. The project team did voice an expectation or estimation of medium- and long-term effects and financial needs for the rollout phase.

The project was also able to generate some policy impact. There is evidence from the interview conducted for this case study that the discussions around setting up an ETS, which have been ongoing since 2015, have led national governments to appreciate the importance of introducing such tools nationally. The German government, for example,

³²¹ <https://www.findyourpension.eu/>

realised through discussions about ETS that a national pension tracking system was missing and that such a tool might be useful. As the result, the government has committed to introducing a 'digital pension overview' for all citizens.³²² VBL, the coordinator of the ETS project, was involved in that process.

Efficiency

There was no estimation for the pilot's cost efficiency compared to existing solutions as there was no comparable pension tracking system operating at the European level. As for cost efficiency, once the pilot was reasonably upscaled, the project team expected two opposing effects. On the one hand, the fixed cost per participant was likely going to decrease as there would be more pension stakeholders from more Member States participating. On the other hand, costs for technical implementation and maintenance were likely going to increase as larger volumes of data and users would need to be processed.

The project team, furthermore, did not believe that the project could have been implemented with fewer resources. According to the team, the estimated budget for IT infrastructure had largely been spent by that time. In addition, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic led to increases in staff costs due to delays in cross-border communication among the project partners. As the result, the project was extended by one year until the end of 2022.³²³

Finally, the project could not have been implemented had the EaSI funding been provided in a results-based manner because the pilot depended on the voluntary participation of various public and private institutions, which were subject to external factors outside of the project team's control. Committing to certain results was thus rather risky, as the project team stressed. In fact, the project coordinating organisation (VBL) being a German public institution would not have been allowed to take such a risk without a European grant, unless there had been some legal requirement to do so. Similarly, the project team believed that most other project partners would not have been willing to participate under a 'guarantee for success' type condition.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

ETS was innovative because it constituted a new service since there was no comparable solution at the European level. In fact, only 10 EU Member States had national pension tracking systems, as the project team estimated. This new service would once fully upscaled, allow EU mobile workers to track their pension entitlements at any point in time. They would be able to see which pension providers they had been affiliated with and their accrued pension entitlements. Another aim was to show all types of pension entitlements (i.e. statutory entitlements, but also supplementary - occupational and private ones) – a service some of the existing national tracking systems seemed to lack, according to the project team. In addition, the system would be able to answer pertinent questions such as 'what happens to pension entitlements earned in another country' in the general information section.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

One driver was that the project coordinator VBL had worked on a similar project before. That previous project focused on mobile researchers in Europe only. The experience gained and some outputs, especially the website www.findyourpension.eu were being used as the basis for the European tracking system's Pilot project. Another driver was that a feasibility

³²² THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. 2020. What is the German government doing for senior citizens? [Online].

³²³ EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2021). Second EaSI Conference (2021): Supporting the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and synergies with other EU programmes [Online].

study on the ETS was funded by the EC as part of the TTYPE project and delivered as early as 2015 by some of the project partners.³²⁴ The results of that study were being used to inform the pilot, according to the project team.

The first barrier encountered was related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As mentioned before in the 'Efficiency' section, the pandemic's impact hindered cross-border communication and led to the project's end being delayed until the end of 2022. The second barrier was related to the technical implementation of the pilot's proof of concept. The project team planned to onboard users using so-called electronic IDentification, Authentication and Trust Services (eIDAS) and the eIDAS authentication framework was meant to be accessed through the Belgian eIDAS node. However, it was later found that using the Belgian node would have meant that Belgian users could not have been authenticated. For that reason, the implementation of eIDAS had been on hold as of December 2019.³²⁵

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

Planning the project upscaling was a part of the pilot through the rollout plan deliverable. However, at the reporting date, the plan itself was to be formalised and written up only at the end of the project and the financial resources needed to connect national pension systems and other databases to the ETS and to maintain the European portal, as well as geographic coverage and functionality, were also to be detailed. The upscaling depended on the cooperation of pension providers EU-wide and their willingness to contribute their data. The project team were gauging the interest of national pension tracking systems as well as 1st, 2nd and 3rd pillar pension providers to join. This effort of interest gauging was part of the project team's strategy to create the rollout plan. As for transference, the 'Expected Results' section shows that the German government is committed to introducing its own national pension tracking system.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability

The EaSI programme required the rollout plan to be drawn up during the pilot.³²⁶ This was the main driver of scalability according to the project team because developing the rollout plan during the pilot phase allowed them to apply for additional funding early on and allowed for a seamless transition between the piloting and mainstreaming phases. As for drivers of transferability, the project team noted that they gained various opportunities to generate exposure for their project and its most transferable aspects as part of their EU funded activities. They were approached by numerous German stakeholders and presented at a national conference on holistic pension information.³²⁷ In addition, the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) published on 2 December 2021 technical advice to the Commission on setting up national pension tracking systems which feature insights from ETS and also recommendations on how to interconnect existing and future national PTs in European ETS. Note that the project team believed the most transferable aspects of the ETS project to be factors and findings related to governance, the roles of different countries and providers, how to establish functioning cooperation and how to find a common data model.

The first barrier of scalability is related to the possible data sources used in the upscaled ETS. Those included national tracking systems as well as other pension providers. The problem was that organisational settings, IT architecture, applicable legal frameworks, and

³²⁴ TTYPE 2015. Establishing an ETS: Recommendations for creating a European pension tracking service.

³²⁵ DEFIS (2020). VP/2018/003/0007. Technical report on progress.

³²⁶ DEFIS (2018). VP/2018/003. Call or proposals on social innovation and national reforms.

³²⁷ GVG. 2019. Fachtagung zur Trägerübergreifenden Vorsorgeinformation [Online].

decision-making processes would differ. These would have to be reconciled in the mainstreaming phase.³²⁸ The second barrier related to convincing national stakeholders to join the ETS and national priorities. The project team considered the following a likely scenario: a national pension tracking system was to be connected to the ETS. However, the responsible national government upon being asked to join or to contribute funding might refuse citing that they have different priorities focused on domestic users rather than cross-border integration. This issue arose because pension policy remained largely within the competence of national governments.³²⁹ It shall be also noted that ETS cannot function without existing national PTS. Therefore, first only those Member States with existing PTS can consider interconnection into ETS and other Member States are encouraged to establish fully functional national PTS.³³⁰

Project's internal and external coherence

There was no evidence of synergies between the ETS pilot and other EaSI social innovation projects at the reporting date. The project team found the other EaSI presented at the Second EaSI conference in March 2021 interesting but also noted that this was their only point of contact with other EaSI projects. The project team did, however, appear open to establishing connections in the future.

The project team were exploring cooperation with the European Labour Authority's EURES initiative as well as the EESSI project which is an EU wide data exchange and cooperation system between national statutory pension and other social security branches national competent institutions. However, the project team stressed that none of the EaSI project partners was involved in social innovation in their day-to-day business. Hence, neither was well connected in the scene and there were no synergies with other EU programmes promoting social innovation.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

The relevance of the EaSI programme to the project can be assessed as high for three reasons. First, developing a socially innovative solution was the only viable policy option to establish a pension tracking system at the European level. That is because the European Union cannot establish some organisation with sole authority overseeing national pension systems and establishing a tracking system because pensions and old-age provision remain a competence of the Member States. The individual Member States, by contrast, cannot establish an EU-wide tracking system merely by changing the national law. Hence, an innovative action such as the ETS implemented at the EU level and in cooperation with different Member States through the participation of various pension stakeholders by a multinational consortium of pension stakeholders was the only viable alternative. After all, the system would have to be validated by participating Member States either way.

Furthermore, EaSI was the only relevant EU-level funding source, according to the project team. The project coordinator considered applying for funding through Horizon 2020 as they were previously involved in a different project that focused exclusively on mobile researchers. However, VBL refrained from doing so after learning that other pension funds projects had already won H2020 funding, which in VBL's perception significantly lowered their chances. Instead, VBL chose to build a network of pension stakeholders already working on mobile worker issues and refocus on EaSI.

³²⁸ DEFIS (2020). VP/2018/003/0007. Technical report on progress.

³²⁹ See 'Relevance' section.

³³⁰ Like it is the case in Germany just now, preparing its national PTS.

Moreover, the priorities of the relevant EaSI call were highly pertinent to the target group, according to the project team. The functioning ETS would facilitate the free movement of workers – a key EU principle – by providing individualised information on pension entitlements to mobile workers. Such a service had not existed before and introducing it would, therefore, enhance the labour mobility in the EU. ETS was also intended for the modernisation of national pension systems by digitalising access to individualised pension information. The project team noted that the process of making all statutory pension entitlements accrued by an EU mobile worker visible continued to be time-consuming and complicated due to the lack of digitalisation in the national pension system. ETS solved this problem by introducing an EU-wide digital platform and by motivating the implementation of a modern pension tracking system in Germany during the piloting phase.

EU added value

The EU added value of EaSI was reflected in two aspects. To start with, the project could not have been implemented without EU funding. The project team cited VBL's involvement in the previous fundyourpension.eu project³³¹ as a good illustration of this being the case. Said project was funded by the German Ministry of Education with the purpose of triggering an EU-wide initiative. However, the German ministry was unwilling to fund this project, in the long run, arguing, according to the project team, that such EU wide actions should be funded by the European Commission. This exemplified the limitations of relying only on national resources and competences and the importance of EaSI as the trigger for EU wide innovative actions in policy areas in which the EU is not competent.

Furthermore, the ETS project ensured international cooperation with consortium members from four different Member States. This provided opportunities for cross-border learning, despite the project team not being in contact with any other EaSI projects or otherwise socially innovative actions. All consortium members being pension providers offered the opportunity to compare the types of information and functionalities each consortium member had.

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³³¹ See 'Barriers and Drivers of Social Experimentation' section above.

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MOSPI

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: The context in which work is distributed, organised and performed has deeply changed in the past years. The future of work depends on different factors such as long-term competitiveness, globalisation, digitalisation and demographic development. In this context, many European countries including Italy have experienced growth in the so-called 'non-standard' contracts – including temporary, casual or platform work contracts. Such contracts bring more flexibility, but non-standard workers also face problems when exercising their fundamental rights at work or accessing social security benefits. The MOSPI project fitted into this context with the goal to support the modernisation of the Italian social protection system; adjust it to the needs of such workers as well as respond to the challenges of digitalisation, population ageing, and globalisation.

Project team (implementers): Istituto Nazionale Per L'Analisi Delle Politiche Pubbliche,; Italian Treasury Department; Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini.

Objectives: (a) study trends and challenges brought about to the labour market by digitalisation, especially for self-employed and non-standard workers; (b) assess the relevance of the risk of the inadequacy of public pension benefits; (c) evaluate the design of Italian private pension pillars; (d) update the existing social policy toolbox (incl. databases and simulation software).

Method: The project was based on the expertise developed during two previous European research projects (T-DYMM –Treasury DYnamic Microsimulation Model and IESS – Improving Effectiveness in Social Security). The MOSPI project intended to update the T-DYMM simulation model, starting with a significant review of the database and broadening its scope of analysis, with a particular focus on workers with discontinuous careers. The consequent results and reports resulted in targeted policy recommendations for Italy.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents, incl. final report.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (evidence on measured impacts and results)

While the project was still ongoing at the reporting date, it had already produced some interim results. As of June 2021, it successfully completed two out of seven scheduled activity phases and made scheduled progress in four out of seven phases, while one more (drafting of recommendations) was still to be launched³³². Specifically, the project successfully defined the future of work scenarios with a specific focus on the evolution of non-standard workers and self-employed careers in view of the challenges presented by the digitalisation of work³³³. Furthermore, it evaluated the design of the Italian private second and third pension pillars and analysed the influence of private pension schemes on pension benefits distribution. The analysis was conducted using a dynamic microsimulation model, which considers the different propensity of groups of workers to enrol on pension funds.

At the time of this report, the project was assessing the relevance of the inadequacy risks of public pension benefits by carrying out detailed analyses of the working careers of selected individuals and by simulating their future career prospects by means of a dynamic microsimulation model. At the end of the assessment process, the project team were

³³² MOSPI (2018). Second Interim Monitoring and Evaluation Report, pp. 4-11.

³³³ MOSPI (2019). Background Report on Future of Work Scenario: The Dynamics of Non-Standard Work in Italy, ed. by Irene Brunetti.

expected to provide specific policy recommendations to support the modernisation of the social protection system in Italy.

The project's end outputs were quite likely to be embedded at the policy level due to the direct participation of policymakers in the project implementation process³³⁴. Furthermore, the end results and outputs of the preceding projects like IESS and T-DYMM (on which MOSPI was based) were already being used by the Italian Department of Treasury. Nevertheless, at the time of drafting this report, it was early to say whether embedding would actually take place. Furthermore, the project also did not provide any concrete estimates of expected measured impacts or results.

Efficiency (focusing on why the project's solution is better than the existing ones)

The project team, so far, did not provide any unit-based estimation of potential savings. They, however, pointed to the fact that the T-DYMM model and the AD-SILC database, which were developed in preceding projects, combined the advantages of using both administrative and survey data and allowed for better decision-making (higher effectiveness – hence, higher efficiency). For instance, AD-SILC was already used in studies addressing the intergenerational fairness outcomes of some policies and reforms. It enabled the adoption of a 'cohort-based' rather than an 'age-based' assessment, allowing to understand how social policies impact individuals born in different years over their lifetime (rather than comparing only individuals of different ages at a given time). However, this evidence could not be cross-referenced.

With regard to internal project management, the second interim evaluation as of late 2020 showed an adequate usage of staff resources in line with the project's lifespan (69%) with the overall incurred costs showing a similar rate (65%)³³⁵. The project team expected additional savings throughout 2021 since the second international workshop was to be held online (a positive factor affecting travel and administration costs). The team admitted that project implementation with even fewer resources could have been feasible too. That, however, would have resulted in implementation with some limitations and on a smaller scale. Specifically, the core team would not have looked for cooperation with partners not involved in the previous projects (in order to access relevant data). Their representative argued that such searching is usually rather time-consuming and may lead to implementation delays as well as additional expenditures (and may not always work out).

Finally, they spoke out against introducing a results-based funding requirement for social experimentation projects. Their argument was that the changing social context often impacts the projects and their results and that the project teams have no influence on such factors. Hence, if a social experimentation project presents negative results, it might often be natural.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content

The project team classified MOSPI as a social experimentation project (in contrast to similar projects under the same call, like DENTOP). The project team argued that MOSPI's innovativeness lay in the use of sophisticated econometric techniques and dynamic simulation models for the purpose of identifying and recommending the most suitable social protection reforms, which could help to widen the access of non-standard workers and self-employed persons to social security. While usage of the dynamic simulation models for

³³⁴ <https://www.inapp.org/sites/default/files/progettocompetitivi/mospi/documenti/MOSPI%20description.pdf>.

³³⁵ MOSPI (2018). Second Interim Monitoring and Evaluation Report, p. 16.

designing policy recommendations is not innovative *per se*, the project used the concept to cover a very specific gap, non-standard workers³³⁶.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation

The key driver of this specific social experimentation project was that it had been building upon the experiences of the previous pilots in this area. Specifically, microsimulation tools and recommendations developed in the preceding Italian projects like IESS and T-DYMM helped the project accelerate the process of social experimentation and better engage local policymakers. Furthermore, the direct involvement of policymakers is likely to ensure the sustainability of the project's results and their embedment at the policy level as the experiences of those projects show³³⁷.

On the other hand, the project team experienced some delays and internal rearrangement related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The team management, however, reacted quickly and implemented follow-up measures. For example, the scheduled workshops and events were immediately transferred online. No evidence of other barriers was found.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans

The project team did not proceed to the mainstreaming phase and there was no evidence of active preparations. While the project team agreed that the experiences of the MOSPI pilot could be extended to other national contexts in the EU (both in terms of methodology and results) no evidence of any transfer efforts was found. Such efforts, however, could have been possible since certain parts of the project (e.g. the developed software and models) indeed had a rather sustainable and replicable nature. Due to the involvement of the Italian Treasury Department, it was quite likely, though, that the project outputs would be used at the national policy level.

Barriers and drivers of transferability/scalability

Since the project was still ongoing at the reporting date, there was mixed evidence on the key drivers and barriers to the pilot's transferability/scalability. The key drivers of the project's transfer potential were the replicable features of its key outputs such as, for example, the microsimulation model and software; or policy recommendations. That said, this potential was significantly hindered by the lack of a proactive communication and dissemination strategy. The project was not actively searching for new partners or potential investment opportunities. Significant cross-border cooperation was foreseen only at the latest stage of the project implementation (during the final conference).

Project's internal and external coherence

- No evidence of synergies between the project and other EaSI projects was found.
- No evidence of synergies with other EU Social Innovation actions was found either.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI

Overall, EaSI's relevance in the case of this project could be assessed as relatively high. Specifically, the programme satisfied the organisational needs of the project team by

³³⁶ <https://www.inapp.org/sites/default/files/progettocompetitivi/mospi/documenti/MOSPI%20description.pdf>.

³³⁷ See e.g. <http://www.fondazionebrodolini.it/news-ed-eventi/progetto-iess-i-risultati-della-ricerca>.

significantly accelerating the social experimentation process. The programme was lauded, particularly by the project team, for providing flexibility in experimentation topics and approaches it offered, which enabled them to generate knowledge on very specific aspects of their social policy research. Once implemented, the pilot project was also expected to satisfy the needs of the policymakers of acquiring a better social policy reform toolbox. In fact, policymakers remain the key driving force behind the project's implementation and long-term uptake of its results (see sections above).

That said, the project implementers showed no knowledge of alternative funding schemes at the EU level, which could have been applicable to their topic of developing microsimulation tools for social policy reforms at such a scale. This was further confirmed by desk research. Therefore, EaSI represented a unique funding opportunity for them to further develop the tool at the European level.

EU added value

There is mixed evidence on the EaSI's EU added value in the case of the project. On the one hand, the pilot was designed by the project team in accordance with the priorities outlined in the Green Paper on Ageing and the recently adopted Action Plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights, as well as ongoing work on the Pension Adequacy Report, which envisaged microsimulations for Italy, Belgium, Hungary and Portugal. Furthermore, it would have been very hard for the project team to implement the same project because they would not have been able to access the same amount of funds from the national government. The project team also argued that participation in EaSI helped them to get in touch with other stakeholders and become a part of a larger transnational network. On the other hand, the evaluation did not show any major cross-border effects of the project's participation in EaSI (e.g. cross-border learning or some financial complementarities). There was only limited involvement of experts from other EU MSs (e.g. Belgium) in the course of the international workshop implementation³³⁸. The project team, nevertheless, pointed out that they intended to use the final conference to ensure broader pan-European exposure of the project results.

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³³⁸ See e.g. a recording of the second workshop <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfqWY45D5RE&t=5875s>.

CASE STUDIES: 2018 CALL ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE

RAFFAEL

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: As of 2018 only 44.4% of female residents in the province of Viterbo (central Italy) were employed, as compared to 67.4% of male residents.³³⁹ One of the key reasons behind the low employment rate of women is the lack of care services for children (i.e. less than half of the 60 municipalities of the province provide children's care facilities) based on the gendered stereotype of women as a caregiver, which hinders women integration in the labour market. Such circumstances call for the fostering of women's participation in the labour market and the change of cultural stereotypes and gendered family roles.

Project team (implementers): A large partnership, consisting of public authorities, private enterprises, civil society organisations, employees' and employers' associations from Italy, Norway and Albania, namely: Viterbo Province, Studio COME, Consorzio Mipa, Institute for Systems Analysis and Informatics, Albanian IRSH Association, Department of Sociology of NTN University (Norway), Leganet, Italian Local Autonomies, The National Forum of the Third Sector Lazio, Nilde Iotti Foundation, Cooperative GEA.

Objectives: Conciliation of work and private life, and more specifically promotion of active participation of women in the labour market by developing an innovative model of services for the work-life balance based on collaboration between public and private organisations.

Method: (1) local co-planning and territorial negotiation, establishing a Permanent Provincial Table on work-life balance to act as a network of various public and private stakeholders and to govern reconciliation policies; (2) experimentation of a territorial model to connect territorial welfare with welfare of the company by experimentation of innovative services in the territory; (3) promotion of cultural change-oriented towards flexible work organisation and work-life balance (e.g. creation of a website, an information campaign, a toll-free number, awareness-raising events in the municipalities, a prize for responsible companies, a competition for local schools, trainings for social workers and workshops); (4) impact assessment of the project activities and of the conciliation model.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents, incl. final report.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The main outputs of the project were the seven new services related to work-life balance, namely³⁴⁰:

- (1) **territorial butler**, a time-saving service that facilitates the conduction of such activities as delivery of groceries, purchase of medicines, booking of visits and appointments and payment of bills, which gives workers more time to devote to work and private life.
- (2) **'more time for the elderly'** service refers to support activities for elderly people, including assistance and companionship.

³³⁹ European Commission (2018). Grant Agreement for an Action with Multiple Beneficiaries, VS/2018/0462, p. 19.

³⁴⁰ Raffael (2021). Official website. The experimental services of RAFFAEL <https://www.raffael-vt.it/il-progetto/>.

- (3) **'Raffael Family Line' Contact Center** offers services for accompanying or picking up children from school or sporting activities when parents or other family members are unable to do so for work reasons.
- (4) **Raffael Homework Space** activities provide children (aged 6 to 14) support in digital teaching by assigning an assistant to each child.
- (5) **'bridge services'**, i.e. recreational activities during school holidays. The service refers to providing school-age children with sports, creative, musical activities and educational support during school holidays and school closures.
- (6) **co-working spaces** is a shared work environment providing workers access to a workstation, a laptop and an internet connection.
- (7) **baby area**, adjacent to the co-working area, is a protected educational environment where those using co-working spaces can bring their kids aged from 4 months to 5 years.

Additional outputs involved the web portal and the web platform/app, the free informative hotline. These outputs seem to partly overlap with project outcomes, as the expected **outcomes** of the project activities were: exchange of knowledge and experience (report on successful practices, study visit), a model of integrated reconciliation services, 2 co-working spaces, 4 organisations experimenting smart working, 2 services of 'territorial butler', 2 services of children care, 2 services for the care of older people, 5 baby-friendly spaces, a website on work-life balance, a free hotline on work-life balance, a school contest involving at least 30 schools, 10 local awareness-raising events in Italy and Albania, two international events (a workshop and a conference).³⁴¹

The project team were expecting the involvement of different numbers of multiple stakeholders in different project activities (e.g. 80 local stakeholders in the Provincial Permanent Table activities, at least 20000 people reached by activities promoting cultural change, at least 60 organisations in awareness-raising activities, 10 young women included in the provision of reconciliation services, etc.)³⁴². A hundred households/families were involved in the project as explained by the project team in the interview. It is difficult to assess whether this number conforms to the initial project plan, considering that there was no provision on how many families were expected to participate and it remains unclear how many individuals a hundred households entail. However, the project plan anticipated '30 organisations and at least 150 beneficiaries in the co-planning and provision of reconciliation services in two areas of the province'.³⁴³ If judged based on this expectation, the planned number of beneficiaries of the project was most likely reached (considering that a household entails at least two people). However, the project team noted that a hundred households are a satisfactory result considering the scarcely populated province and the difficulties caused by the pandemic,³⁴⁴ implying that the expectation of the number of beneficiaries was higher.

The project envisaged conducting an impact counterfactual evaluation to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the project.³⁴⁵ The counterfactual evaluation aims to answer the question of whether the project's objectives were achieved, and analyse the impact the intervention had on the identified output indicators. The counterfactual evaluation entailed preparing a study analysing the work-life balance regulatory framework in Europe and Italy and the main

³⁴¹ European Commission (2018). Grant Agreement for an Action with Multiple Beneficiaries, VS/2018/0462, p. 21.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Visionary Analytics (2021). Interview with the R.A.F.F.A.E.L. project team representatives.

³⁴⁵ European Commission (2018). Grant Agreement for an Action with Multiple Beneficiaries, VS/2018/0462, p. 25.

experiences related to work-life balance. The results of the study were used for the development of the core method of the evaluation – the online survey asking service users to evaluate the services.³⁴⁶ The cost-effectiveness of the services was analysed by comparing the results of the counterfactual evaluation with the cost of existing and active experiences of work-life balance and ‘platforms for corporate welfare’.³⁴⁷ The project team were still in the process of carrying out the impact assessment and the survey was still ongoing at the time of the drafting, but according to them the level of satisfaction expressed by users in this survey was rather high.³⁴⁸

Efficiency:

The total cost of the project was €1,625,000, the biggest part of which (€950,265) were staff costs (dedicated to management, administration, secretariat, accounting, and other staff).³⁴⁹ In comparison, the budget for services was €529,778.40. It could be suggested that budget cuts could have been possible in staff costs (e.g. for 10 days of work, the project manager got paid €4,200, for 30 days of work coordinator got €10,500) and in travel, accommodation and subsistence allowances (e.g. workshops, study visits, final conference), which amounted to €24,819. As noted by the project team in the interview, the optimisation of costs is always possible, however in the context of implementing the project during the pandemic it remains difficult to assess whether it could have been achieved with fewer resources.

The project team indicated that the comparison of the activities of R.A.F.F.A.E.L. and existing solutions is impossible, considering that the services provided by the project were innovative and new.³⁵⁰

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

The project's innovative content consists of three parts. Firstly, the project intended to respond to the new needs of citizens by proposing solutions that were innovative to the target area, i.e. similar services as those created by the project were not accessible to residents of the province. The project team had drawn inspiration from the similar services implemented in Rome and best practices from the Lombardy region,³⁵¹ indicating that these social innovations are not as innovative on a larger scale, but rather innovative for the province. The second innovative aspect of the project was the collaboration between public and private actors, which was one of the project's strengths. The idea behind the project was to look for new innovative ways for cooperation, collaboration and synergy between the first and second welfare in terms of social innovation.³⁵² In addition, the project entailed mobilising human and financial resources that extended the traditional intervention boundaries. Finally, in order to ensure the sustainability of the action, the project entailed testing innovative forms of funding, namely crowdfunding in order to support the maintenance of services.³⁵³

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

³⁴⁶ <https://it.surveymonkey.com/r/GRZHRLR5>

³⁴⁷ European Commission (2018). Grant Agreement for an Action with Multiple Beneficiaries, VS/2018/0462, p. 25.

³⁴⁸ Visionary Analytics (2021). Interview with the R.A.F.F.A.E.L. project team representatives.

³⁴⁹ European Commission (2018). Grant Agreement for an Action with Multiple Beneficiaries, VS/2018/0462, p.69.

³⁵⁰ Visionary Analytics (2021). Interview with the R.A.F.F.A.E.L. project team representatives.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² European Commission (2018). Grant Agreement for an Action with Multiple Beneficiaries, VS/2018/0462, p.25.

³⁵³ Ibid, p.27.

The project team highlighted those synergies and cooperation between public and private sector stakeholders (i.e. local and regional administrations, entrepreneurs, schools and project partners) were a major success factor behind social experimentation.³⁵⁴ Another driver was the motivation behind the project which was responding to the real needs of the people of the province, taking into account the problems they faced and addressing them. In addition, as mentioned above, the project team had drawn inspiration from seeing similar practices applied in other contexts (e.g. Lombardy region, Rome).

The main challenge for their social experimentation was the COVID-19 pandemic, which slowed down all administrative processes. Due to this, the calls for tenders necessary to implement project activities were postponed, delaying the project's progress.³⁵⁵ Even more importantly, the project team highlighted that the greatest challenge was related to the differences in cultural mindsets of stakeholders involved in the project. The project team encountered difficulties in finding institutions, companies and people willing to participate in the project at first. While some partners and stakeholders were proactive already in the co-design phase, others were more difficult to reach.³⁵⁶

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

The project team explicitly noted that they were aiming to verify the services created by R.A.F.F.A.E.L., to improve them according to impact assessment results and to continue providing them, making the project sustainable and continuous.³⁵⁷ The best evidence of the continuity of the project is the fact that private actors who were involved in the project were ready to continue the provision of the services.³⁵⁸ In addition, the authority of the region Lazio (made up of the provinces of Viterbo, Rieti, Frosinone, Latina and the Metropolitan City of Rome) was inspired by how EaSI funds were invested in R.A.F.F.A.E.L. and expressed interest in implementing similar projects, possibly upscaling the project from one province to the whole region.³⁵⁹ Even before the start of the project a municipality in Albania had expressed its commitment to the project aiming to study and replicate the model in its own context, implying the possible transferability of the project to other countries.³⁶⁰ Moreover, the project team proposed developing the model and network of reconciliation services further after the implementation period by extending the services to tourists. For example, they foresee opening up baby-friendly spaces for people visiting the area (not only residents).³⁶¹

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

Four key drivers of scalability and transferability in the project can be distinguished.

- The context in which the project was implemented suggests it could be transferred to similar contexts in inner rural areas.
- Dissemination of the project objectives and results increases the probability of project scalability and transferability. This dissemination was ensured by a

³⁵⁴ Visionary Analytics (2021). Interview with the R.A.F.F.A.E.L. project team representatives.

³⁵⁵ *ibid.*

³⁵⁶ *ibid.*

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Alaimo, G. (2021). 'Progetto Raffael, i servizi di conciliazione vita-lavoro realizzati nella Provincia di Viterbo', *newtuscia.it*

³⁵⁸ Visionary Analytics (2021). Interview with the R.A.F.F.A.E.L. project team representatives.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁰ European Commission (2018). Grant Agreement for an Action with Multiple Beneficiaries, VS/2018/0462, p. 23.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

significant number of associate partners involved in the project (e.g. the Albanian youth organisation participating in the project in order to exchange experience and knowledge on the development of a work-life balance model and to disseminate experience and knowledge in their country). In addition, the dissemination of project-related activities was also facilitated by the publication of informational and promotional content, such as periodical newsletters, a website and awareness-raising events.

- The involvement of stakeholders from different countries and socio-economic contexts not only ensured the knowledge and experience sharing but also provided an opportunity for the project to be transferred to different countries and contexts. This is evident by the expressed willingness and interest of the municipality in Albania, local organisations in Apulia region, and the authority of the region Lazio to implement similar projects or replicate the model in their own contexts. Similarly, the project team foresaw stakeholders from archaeological and artistic sites of the territory, the thermal resources and the representative bodies of tour operators and the Chamber of Commerce as important actors which could drive the scalability of the project activities in extending new services to tourists and visitors.
- The involvement of the provincial authority in this project could be an example of the extent to which the provincial authority can act as a cohesion agent.

Nevertheless, three key barriers to scalability and transferability were also identified:

- The COVID-19 pandemic put a block on all administration activities and practices that were not a priority during the emergency, thus hindering the scalability of the project.
- The funding dedicated to the project was used to design, develop and maintain new services which were therefore provided for citizens free of charge. However, services might be paid in the future in order to ensure their maintenance (e.g. costs were necessary to maintain the co-working spaces or baby areas, as well as to pay service providers).³⁶² Therefore, it could be suggested that the maintenance costs necessary to maintain the created services would present a barrier to the transferability and scalability of project activities.
- Language barrier was another challenge to the scalability and transferability of R.A.F.F.A.E.L. All the publicly accessible information related to the project was provided in Italian and there was a lack of translations that would ensure the ease of understanding of the project objectives and implementation activities.

Project's internal and external coherence

- No evidence of synergies between the project and other EaSI projects was found.
- No evidence of synergies with other EU Social Innovation actions was found either.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

According to the project team, the EaSI programme was highly relevant to them. The initial idea of the project was further elaborated to be fully in line with the EaSI's call for tender.³⁶³ The project's objectives conformed to the call's priorities of promoting a multilevel and

³⁶² Visionary Analytics (2021). Interview with the R.A.F.F.A.E.L. project team representatives.

³⁶³ Ibid.

multistakeholder partnership and cooperation between private and public sectors. In addition, the call for tender was aligned with the needs of the residents of the province, more particularly the need for family-friendly policies, services for work-life balance at the workplace, support for women's labour market participation and awareness-raising on the shared care responsibilities between women and men.

EU added value:

First, according to the project team, the project could not have been implemented without the EU funding because of the difficulties to access national funds for such projects. The content of the project posed difficulties to access national funds as the government was reluctant to fund not tested experimental solutions, therefore, EaSI presented an alternative option to realise the project objectives. This posed challenges related to the continuation of the services created by the project since in order to ensure the sustainability of the project, the implementers need alternative sources of funding. To this end, as mentioned above, the project entailed testing crowdfunding. Furthermore, the project team also noted that the international side of the experience was quite enriching when referring to the experience of working with stakeholders from different European and non-European countries.³⁶⁴

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³⁶⁴ Ibid.

MASP

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Women face work-life balance conflicts and challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities. This poses obstacles to their full participation in the labour market. This challenge is especially acute in Italy. For instance, data indicates that women's employment rate is strongly negatively affected by the number of young children – the more children there are in a family, and the younger they are, the less likely a mother is to be employed.

Project team (implementers): The consortium led by the Municipality of Milan involved various types of organisations from the two target Italian regions (incl. private sector associations, research institutions, public employment services, and regional government institutions). Two organisations from Norway and Belgium were also involved as international partners.

Objectives: The main general goal of the project was to change the perspective of work-life balance, moving to the concept of 'work-life synergy', highlighting the synergy between 'personal' and 'working' dimensions of individuals and the importance of the different roles of a person. To achieve this ambitious goal, MASP focused on the following specific objectives: (a) develop and test an innovative work-life balance strategy focusing on two programmes: one dedicated to unemployed women, and the second one targeting enterprises and their employees. MASP aimed to create an opportunity for parents (esp. mothers) to develop soft skills useful for the professional career and to incentivise the family-related leave for fathers; (b) improve capacities and knowledge of the key actors involved in the process of reconciliation of work and private life (companies and employers, public and employment services staff, management consultants) in order to make them aware on work-life synergy perspective and give them tools to implement innovative measures created during the project; (c) develop a sustainable multilevel partnership model to create an integrated urban policy in the territories participating to the project (Municipality of Milan and Autonomous Province of Trento); (d) foster knowledge and experience-sharing between different countries (Norway) and companies already implementing successful work-life balance strategies, with a strong emphasis on the need to involve more men in care duties; (e) facilitate the access to information about social protection rights and entitlements through the realisation of 'parental kits', which included factsheets on social protection rights, services and incentives dedicated to parenting; MASP guide for users; credentials to access to MASP digital platform and digital programme. The project contributed to the promotion of gender equality in the labour market.

Method: The project was based on two positive Italian experiences: MAAM and Family Audit. MAAM (Maternity as a Master) was a learning method (becoming a digital learning programme) for mothers and fathers on parental leave. Twelve different soft skills were trained through maternal and parental practice. The Family Audit was an experimental model that aimed to improve the work-family balance of companies' employees. It involved two main phases: (1) the audit process monitoring employees' needs and work-family indicators; (2) the development and implementation of a specific work-life balance plan in a company. MASP aimed to improve, test, and complement practices of the MAAM and Family Audit by integrating them into a complex urban policy. First, these two practices were complemented with new elements and inputs coming from the research activity (WP2) and the exchange of experience and best practices with other countries (WP3). The new versions of these practices were tested in the Municipality of Milan and the Autonomous Province of Trento. Furthermore, a training programme aiming to raise stakeholders' awareness about gender issues was developed.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The evaluation of the project had two main components: evaluation of the process and evaluation of the impact. The process evaluation explores whether the programme was delivered as intended in the initial plans. A few different methods were used for the evaluation of the process: 'routine' monitoring of the project's activities; more than 50 interviews with the staff of the project's partner organisations and representatives of the PES organisations; process tracing to evaluate the experiences of the participants of MASP activities. It is praiseworthy, that based on the evaluation plan, the evaluation of the impact aimed to estimate the overall effects of the introduction of the actions in the territories, in particular the effects on the labour market indicators.³⁶⁵

The project has achieved the intended outputs.³⁶⁶ It has emerged that the specific focus on soft-skills assessment of unemployed women represented one of the strengths of the project. 'MASP public programme for women' was tested in the area of Milan and in the area of the Autonomous Province of Trento, reaching more than 400 participants. Public employment service's staff were trained in social innovation, work-life balance and gender perspective. The tool 'MASP private service for enterprises' was tested in 7 companies involving more than 300 employees.³⁶⁷

Even though the results of the final evaluation report had not been confirmed at the time of this report, project implementers had already noticed some positive results of the MASP activities on the participants. For instance, implementers claimed that the adoption of organisational well-being policies in the companies had already led to increased productivity, loyalty, potential and motivation of the employees. Moreover, according to the project's implementers, the number of stakeholders' organisations claiming that they were interested and willing to apply MASP tools, and the number of organisations participating in the project's events was the best indicators of the project's success and positive impact. It had positive effects on the empowerment of employment services staff in terms of the change in their knowledge and perspective about gender stereotypes and discrimination. This reveals that the positive intentions of the target organisations were already interpreted as a success of the project, and the number of organisations that actually materialised these intentions and applied MASP tools were perceived as an added value that might be seen only after some years. The expressed interest of companies in the MASP project significantly exceeded the initial expectations of the MASP team. The team of the MASP also claimed that they noticed the changes in the mindsets concerning the work-life balance of the people contributing to the implementation of the project, and changed mindsets in turn are expected to influence their decisions. Among other impacts that have emerged was the promotion of well-being and social inclusion as well as innovation and improved effectiveness in active labour market policies. Nevertheless, representatives of the project claimed that the real long-term impact of the project could be seen only after a few years, and, thus, would not be monitored under the scope of this project.

Efficiency:

The project team did not measure the efficiency of the project's activities because according to them it was impossible to measure and monetise the impact (e.g. changed mindsets). Nevertheless, some measures were taken aiming to ensure efficient use of the budget and to avoid overspending. First, sums allocated to different activities were planned based on the standard rates. For example, the budget for analysis and research activities or trainings was chosen based on the average market costs in Italy. Second, the project team applied a flexible approach and altered the initial allocation of the budget and some activities in

³⁶⁵ MASP (2018) Project's agreement.

³⁶⁶ This information will be reviewed and clarified after the release of the project's final evaluation report.

³⁶⁷ MASP (2018) final technical report.

order to ensure that funding creates the largest possible value. For example, during the first months €15,000 that was initially planned for the 'Financial Audit' was used to hire external scientific advisors for WP2 and WP8 because it was noticed that a higher level of specialisation on work-life balance and conciliation policies was necessary to create high-quality results.³⁶⁸ Moreover, during the project, it was also recognised that initially planned lecture-style training courses may not be the best way to engage with employers since they have a limited amount of time. For this reason, it was proposed to replace the trainings with dissemination events and consultancy services offered to employers. This change in the format facilitated the participation of more employers than originally foreseen.

According to the interview with the project team, theoretically, it might have been possible to implement some activities of the project with a lower budget. However, their effectiveness would have suffered significantly because intensive and wide scope activities were necessary to achieve the structural changes that MASP aimed to create. Furthermore, according to the project team, some additional budget might have improved the results of the project. More particularly, if companies piloting the MASP tools would have had some funding, more companies would have been willing to participate.

With regard to the payment by results concept, the project team claimed that they would have applied for the EaSI funding anyway, even if such a condition had been in place. The reason for that was because the consortium operates using a more business-like approach, which pays a lot of attention to effectiveness and always focuses a lot on following up the inception plans and checking for the results in a strict fashion. However, the project team perceived that the key results of MASP were created outputs (e.g. the number of training activities and reports).

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

While the project team did not perceive themselves as 'inventors' or social innovators, the main innovative strength of the project was an approach based on multi-stakeholder cooperation and benefiting from the expertise of various regional and local actors. The project has shown the will of the two public institutions to promote and experiment with a change in their practices and innovation in the delivery of their services. Second, the innovativeness of the project also includes its two main activities MAAM, a digital learning programme for parents, and Family Audit, an experimental model that promotes organisational change through the adoption of human resources policies, which improve the wellbeing of employees and their families. Third, the added value was that the two experiences were integrated into a complex urban policy of two Italian territories. The MASP paid a lot of attention aiming to ensure that activities were perfectly aligned to the context of the municipality of Milan and the autonomous province of Trento. Finally, the training programme has been developed aimed to make aware of the different key actors of gender equality perspective, work-life balance measures and the importance of parenthood for individual and professional growth. Most of the policies and measures aiming to improve the work-life balance of parents were targeted at women, while the MASP activities aimed to benefit both mothers and fathers.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

The project team highlighted three main factors (drivers) that helped them with social experimentation.

- Involvement of the institutional partner that had experience in the area of social innovations. Milan municipality was very experienced and doing a lot in the area of

³⁶⁸ MASP (2019). Financial implementation report.

social experimentation. As a public entity, they felt responsible for their citizens and invested in social innovations aiming to find the best possible solutions.

- Thematic experience of the project team. The project team had been working in the work-life balance area for a few years (e.g., projects called MIRE and Smart Lab).
- The pandemic created good opportunities for change. Significantly more people understood that it was possible to work from home, and that work-life balance was important.

On the other hand, some barriers had negative effects on the social experimentation:

- The project team claimed that earlier involvement of the key stakeholders during the development of the project's idea might have led to a more innovative and effective design of the measures.
- Additional policy measures (e.g. tax reliefs relevant to the work-life balance) introduced and implemented in parallel with the MASP might have increased the effectiveness of the activities.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

The project had not been upscaled or transferred at the reporting date. Nevertheless, the project team expected that the MASP could be easily scaled up from the experiment in Milano and Trento to all Italian regions. The project activities were designed to have a long-term impact and a multiplier effect on other territories. One of the pillars of the project was the training, aiming at empowering and capacity building entrepreneurs, public institutions, employment agencies and citizens. Many training and information contents have been made available to a wide audience to promote a change of perspective from the work-life balance to work-life synergy, even beyond the direct beneficiaries of the project. The Masp4skills digital platform, as well as the handbook for public employment services staff and the MASP programme guide for users, were designed to continue to support the empowerment programmes for unemployed women beyond the end of the project. The project team also organised two international events and produced a newsletter about MASP's activities.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

Some positive aspects increased the probability for the project to be scaled up or transferred:

- The key partners of the consortium planned to continue working together, and thus were likely to have some opportunities to invest their time into the transferring of the project after the EaSI funding ends.
- During the project, companies were able to introduce and test new tools, and the benefits of these tools were thus well-known to them.

Nevertheless, some challenges might have prevented the successful upscale of the MASP project:

- According to the MASP team, other Italian municipalities and governments of the EU countries needed to focus on solving the fundamental challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and thus, had relatively less time and resources to experiment and take over most of the social innovations (incl. the MASP).

- The maintenance of the tools required some additional budget and, consequently, not all interested companies were willing and able to continue using the same tools that they had tested under the scope of the project.
- The project team did not manage to attract additional funding.

Project's internal and external coherence

- The project team sought some synergies with other work-life balance projects. For example, the second international event explored synergies between various European initiatives including actions on the topics of work-life balance and (women) employment. Two projects – *Men in Care* and *Parents at Work* – had the opportunity to make presentations and discuss common solutions.
- The results and achievements have been widely disseminated at the national and European levels, creating synergies with other projects and actions in the area of employment, social inclusion and gender equality. In the past one of the key MASP's partners, A.P.I., had been working on the ESF funded projects and had gained experience in the context of the EaSI.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The project team had assessed the programme's relevance as very high, citing two factors. First, the relevant EaSI call objectives ideally matched the needs of the project team. Work-life balance questions were high on the political agenda in the partners' regions by then. Furthermore, the project team appreciated the EaSI programme because it created perfect conditions for social experimentation: teams could test their solutions step by step, and they also had time to reflect on and improve their solutions.

EU added value:

There are several aspects in which the EU-added value was reflected in the phase of project implementation.

- The project is relevant to addressing gender inequalities and the under-representation of women in the labour market in the EU. The activities and results correspond to the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular, principle 2 on gender equality and principle 9 on work-life balance. In the context of the Work-life balance directive, adopted in 2019, the project is aligned with an overall ambition to promote greater work-life balance and encourage the reconciliation of professional and care responsibilities of men and women. It has provided evidence that gender-balanced work-life balance policies in companies can benefit both workers and employees.
- The project included the analysis of good case examples from foreign countries (Norway and Belgium) that enriched the development of trainings. The project team analysed countries that had already achieved significant progress in the work-life balance area, in order to improve the situation in Italy.
- Furthermore, on the national (Italian) budget there were no funds targeted directly at social experimentation, and the regional budget that could be used for social experimentation was especially limited. Thus, the EaSI funding was especially relevant. National and regional institutions are not always willing to experiment. However, when participating in the EaSI programme they experience the benefits of

social experimentation and are more likely to continue experimentation in the future using their own budget.

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MiC

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Gender inequalities are partly determined by the unequal distribution of care burden between men and women. More women than men aged 25 to 44 participate in routine household activities and the time they spend on care activities on average is higher when compared to men in all eight countries included in the Men in Care (MiC) project. Unequal care distribution among the genders still exists even though the research indicates that men's attitudes towards care responsibilities have changed significantly over the last decade and they are willing to take on more care responsibilities. Nevertheless, the organisational culture concerning care responsibilities that exist in many companies works as a significant barrier to (more) equal distribution of care between women and men.

Project team (implementers): 12 national organisations (universities, social partners, and NGOs) from 8 countries: The coordinator of the project was the National Distance Education University (Spain).

Objectives: The overarching goal of the project was to increase the share of men involved in care activities. More particularly, the project sought to identify and suggest strategies and measures that could be applied in the workplace in order to include more men in care. This objective covered two interrelated questions:

- What can workplaces do to encourage more men to use their rights and entitlements concerning the care that already formally exists (e.g. to take paternity leave)?
- How can organisational culture concerning perceptions of men and care in the workplace be changed?

Method: Activities of the project can be grouped into three general steps:

- Step 1: Assessment of gender inequalities in current work-life balance practices through national benchmarking reports.
- Step 2: Training for representatives of organisations (incl. in-house seminars at workplaces for information exchange; training for managers, working men and workers' representatives; and international events to disseminate best practices).
- Step 3: Results that could be used after the end of the project (incl. development of a 'Men in Care Guide' for companies with recommendations to promote work-life-balance for men; a public campaign on how to promote Men in Care at the European level; creation of the national networks of stakeholders who would be responsible for the promotion of men in care after the project ends).

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents, incl. final report.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The MiC project was expected to be evaluated both internally and externally. Internal evaluation would be performed by the partners of the project. It focused mostly on the monitoring of inputs (and to some extent the outputs) and had two main dimensions: evaluation of the project partnership and evaluation of the project activities. Apprezia, the sub-contracted company, was responsible for the external evaluation of the project.³⁶⁹ The

³⁶⁹ Men in Care (2020) Evaluation & monitoring plan. WS1.

key methods to be used for the external evaluation included documentary analysis, interviews, questionnaires, and direct observations. There were no plans to base the evaluation on the counterfactual analysis.³⁷⁰

In what related to the effectiveness of the project, the implementers focused mostly on the inputs and outputs level. For instance, they felt the responsibility to ensure that the number of training participants was the same as in the initial plans, or that high quality national benchmarking reports were published. Therefore, there was a high probability that the project would create all planned outputs.³⁷¹ Nevertheless, according to the implementers, the overall expected results and impacts of the project were especially broad, long-term, and relatively vague. MiC is expected to facilitate the change of employees' and employers' mindsets concerning men's role in care, and encourage changes in organisational practices. More particularly, project implementers are expected to raise awareness about this topic and to provide research-based tools and arguments for stakeholders who were implementing activities focused on the creation of a better gender balance in care. Because of the vagueness and broadness of the expected impacts, the implementers did not perceive them as the direct responsibility of the project and claimed that it would not be possible to measure them or attribute the noticed changes to the project (e.g. mindsets, perceptions, and changes of organisational practices are affected by a number of external factors as well). Furthermore, the changes in mindsets and organisational practices are especially slow processes. Thus, the implementers of the project tried to be 'realistic' and did not expect to achieve the fundamental changes under the scope of this project only. For instance, four hours training of the employees and employers were expected only to raise some questions or ideas, instead of transforming the gender-related perceptions of the participants.

Despite the broadness and vagueness of the expected impacts, some features of the MiC increased the probability of positive and significant effects. First, the training activities designed for men were expected to be more effective in solving problems related to (the lack of) men in care than the more usual approach concerning work-life balance designed for and including only women. Second, the implementers applied a flexible approach to the design of the project, in order to reflect the most relevant needs at that time and create significant effects. The initial idea and proposal of the project were to make recommendations for the design of the EU directive on work-life balance. However, the directive was released and approved earlier than it was expected. Reacting to this situation, the implementers effectively switched the focus of the project's activities paying more attention to the training of the target groups.³⁷²

Efficiency:

As demonstrated by the available evaluative evidence, the project's efficiency would be assessed only regarding the efficiency of the implementation: whether all expenses were justified, and whether there were any opportunities for cost-saving. There were no plans to measure the cost-benefits ratio of the project's results or to compare the efficiency of MiC and other (more traditional) activities targeted at similar results.³⁷³ Estimates of the costs and (monetised) results per participant did not exist as well. Implementers of the project claimed that cost-benefits analysis or evaluation of the project's external efficiency (comparing it to different activities) was impossible for several reasons. First, the monetisation of the expected impact – changes in the mindsets – would be too complicated because of its 'vagueness and abstractness'. Second, implementers could not identify what other projects or activities could be used as a benchmark.

³⁷⁰ APPREZIA (2020) MiC External Evaluation: Intervention logical framework and external evaluation methodological design.

³⁷¹ European Commission and Man in Care (2020) TECHNICAL REPORT ON PROGRESS.

³⁷² European Commission and UNED (2018) Grant agreement VS/2018/0417.

³⁷³ APPREZIA (2020) MiC External Evaluation: Intervention logical framework and external evaluation methodological design.

The project could not have been implemented with fewer resources. On the contrary, there was some evidence indicating that a larger budget could have had a positive impact on the efficiency of the project. Project implementers claimed that during the proposal stage they aimed to plan the budget including only the most necessary and the lowest possible costs. However, when the project started the implementers noticed that they had probably been even 'too strict' or frugal concerning the design of the budget because there was a lack of budget for the activities that were usual in other projects. For instance, there was no budget for the coffee breaks during the conferences or meetings or budget for even minor additional activities that were not included in the initial plan of the project. Therefore, during the first year, the budget planned for the beginning of the project was exceeded. Nevertheless, the risk of the overall overspending of the project's budget was mitigated because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The situation created by the global pandemic helped implementers of the MiC save some budget and compensate for the overspending at the beginning of the project because online trainings were cheaper than the onsite ones, the project included much fewer travelling activities than initially planned.

Another argument indicating that a larger budget could have increased the efficiency of the project was related to the length and scope of the training. The longest training activities that could be afforded for the planned number of participants within the framework of the planned budget were only four hours. The MiC team admitted that four-hour training sessions could not be expected to create some fundamental changes in the mindsets of participants or to increase their knowledge significantly. Rules concerning the regulation of project team daily rates were another factor that created additional risks for the efficiency of the project. Based on the EaSI requirements, daily rates should reflect the general level of rates and salaries in the country. Partners from Eastern or Southern European countries were at a disadvantage in this situation because they could only receive significantly lower budgets for the same amount of work when compared to partners from Northern or Western European countries.

MiC's team were not sure whether they would have applied for the funding if a results-based approach was applied. There were some arguments supporting the results-based funding based on the MiC's implementers' opinion. First, they already perceived the EaSI programme as partly results-based funding. For instance, the funding would not be provided or would be decreased if the planned number of training participants or published research papers would not be achieved. Second, implementers claimed to consider requesting the results-based funding if the funding for the key activities (i.e. human resources of the project team) was covered from the very beginning and regardless of the results achieved. The key argument against the results-based approach applied in the EaSI was that it would not leave the space for experimentation and failure, which is crucial during the process of social experimentation.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

There were three key aspects that made the MiC unique if compared to other available methods. First, according to the implementers, the most innovative aspect of the project was the overall idea promoted by 'men can, want and should take responsibilities in similar ways as women'. This challenged the ingrained and widespread perceptions of both employers and employees, and, thus, could be interpreted as innovative content. Nevertheless, the main activities of the project that included training, research, or events for stakeholders³⁷⁴ were rather traditional and usual. Second, the key target group of MiC's activities could be perceived as another innovative aspect. Usually training concerning work-life balance and care was designed and delivered for women, while the key participants of the MiC's training were men. Finally, the main partners of the project claimed

³⁷⁴ Men in Care (2021) Official website, <https://www.men-in-care.eu/>.

that in other projects they would work mostly with other educational institutions. Thus, the structure of the MiC's consortium, involving different types of stakeholders (incl. trade unions and political institutions), could also be interpreted as an innovation.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

The project team highlighted two main factors (drivers) that helped them with social experimentation:

- Favourable political contexts in some of the partners' countries helped the project team to build a strong consortium and get the support of relevant political institutions. For instance, the implementation of the project coincided with the development of political reforms concerning the paternal leave rules in Spain. Topics about men in care were high on the political agenda, and, thus, the content of the MiC seemed relevant at that time.
- Equal Opportunities Ombudspersons acting in partner countries helped with the design and implementation of the project because its content had the potential to help them achieve their goals (e.g. research papers presenting evidence about the advantages of equal care distribution among men and women).

On the other hand, some challenges complicated the process of social experimentation:

- It was difficult to find companies willing to participate in the project and provide training to their employees. Companies that agreed to do so were interested in this topic, and, thus, were doing relatively well in terms of organisational culture concerning men in care. Companies with the most significant challenges, by contrast, were the least willing to participate.
- The project's purpose to change the longstanding perceptions of society was quite broad.
- The consortium faced some communication-related challenges. For instance, the monitoring report revealed that partners who were not included in the core team would like to get more information about the project. However, this challenge was (at least partially) addressed.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

At the time of writing, the project was not being upscaled and it was still in the mainstreaming phase. There were intentions and potential to upscale and transfer it. Upscaling of the project would probably start with the extension of the project to the different regions of the same Member States that were involved in the project. For instance, the institution responsible for the implementation of gender equality in the Basque region of Spain or the protestant church of Germany had already expressed an interest to implement activities created within the MiC in their regions. MiC's team also have intentions to transfer the project to the EU level. However, the specific plans were still in development, and implementers admitted that they had some doubts about how to upscale and transfer the project effectively. The initial general ideas related to the upscaling, transferring and sustainability of the project included the following:

- Implementers aimed to create stakeholders' networks that would take over the transferring and upscaling of the MiC's activities after the official end of the project. It was planned that all these networks would involve at least some institutional stakeholders in order to affect the policy level.

- There were some ideas and plans in order to ensure that stakeholders' networks could continue MiC's activities and deliver the training activities after the project ended. It could take different forms. For example, in Spain partners of the MiC were planning to create online training tools that would have open access and continue to exist while there is a demand.
- The MiC also aimed to create universal guidelines about men in care.³⁷⁵ This deliverable could be used by companies, trade unions, or policymakers after the project ended.
- The team of the MiC intended to organise a conference or seminar concerning men in care once a year even after the funding period ended.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

Some drivers increased the probability for MiC to be upscaled and transferred successfully. First, the involvement of the trade unions and political institutions was one of the key strengths of the project. One of the associated partners of the project was the ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation). Leads of the project expected that the involvement of the ETUC might be helpful to upscale the project at the EU level. Second, the content of the MiC's training activities was relatively universal and could be easily adapted and relevant in different contexts. The training was delivered online and could be used by both employers and employees irrespective of their company. This approach towards training was more favourable for transfer/upscaling than the initial idea (described in the proposal), in order to design training as adjusted as possible to the needs of specific companies.

Nevertheless, some significant barriers might prevent the effective transferring and scaling-up of the MiC. First, the target group was too diverse: each country and each company were different. Thus, the content of the project might not always fit their needs. Moreover, some political institutions, whose involvement was necessary to embed MiC at the policy level (e.g. national or regional governments), were relatively passive and not interested in men's work-life balance topics, even though during the proposal writing stage they expressed the interest and promised to support the project. Institutional changes (e.g. changes in governments) were also named as a barrier to successfully embedding the project. For instance, some employees of regional government institutions who were in strong support of the MiC were replaced, and the new employees were paying relatively less attention to the project. Finally, external stakeholders who were likely to contribute to the transferring and upscaling of the project, such as gender experts, lacked real political power and were not at the core of decision-making processes (e.g. creation of organisational rules or development of national laws).

Project's internal and external coherence

Externally, MiC successfully invoked some synergies with other projects. The possibilities for collaboration stemmed from personal connections (e.g. partners of the MiC were involved in similar projects previously). For example, the leading institution had worked on the Implica project which was focused on the men in care topic before MiC. That project covered only the research part. However, the research helped implementers to develop the idea of the MiC. Moreover, the MiC had some synergies with another project called Programa Adelante, which was implemented by NGOs and funded by the ESF in Spain. The Programa Adelante team gave some ideas for the training sessions or on how to reach a MiC target group. Representatives of the MiC were also planning to use videos about men in care developed by the Programa Adelante, because their content was relevant for both projects.

³⁷⁵ Men in Care (2021) Official website, <https://www.men-in-care.eu/>.

The synergies between the MiC and other projects funded by the EaSI could be used more actively. The only example of internal coherence was the participation of the MiC team in the conference organised by the MASP (Master Parenting in Work and Life) project. However, the MiC team claimed that the targets of these types of projects were too different and closer or more frequent collaboration would not be useful or possible.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The project team had assessed the programme's relevance as very high, citing three different factors. First, the objectives of the call perfectly reflected the current political context. The reforms concerning men in care (esp. rules for the paternity leave) were being developed and implemented at both the EU and the project's partner countries level (e.g. Spain). Second, the MiC and EaSI funding helped to continue activities started by the aforementioned Implica project. Third, the programme requirements encouraged the core team to form a wide consortium. For instance, project implementers described their collaboration with trade as especially successful and had plans to continue it in the future. Representatives of the MiC noticed that trade unions and policy institutions were more eager to participate and contribute to the project because it was an EU funded project, which is often interpreted as a prestigious or a promising opportunity.

The key challenge that might have a negative effect on the relevance of the EaSI programme was the vagueness (or broadness) of the definition for social innovations used in the call and description of the programme. Representatives of the call claimed that it was not absolutely clear what activities could be interpreted as social innovations and that it seemed that almost everything could be perceived as such.

EU added value:

Implementers of the project admitted that similar training as that from the MiC project could be implemented using the national budget. Nevertheless, their scope would have been much lower mostly because of the limited national budget. Moreover, without the EU level programme, the activities would not have covered the international exchange of experience. The MiC team claimed that the European network and consortium were one of the key strengths and advantages of their project. For instance, organisations from Iceland and Norway – countries that have made huge progress in gender equality in the workplace area – were included in the consortium and other partners could learn from their experience.

List of literature and references:

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EQW&L

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Labour market statistics show that in 2015, the EU28 employment rate for men (aged 20-64) was 75%, while it reached only 63.5% for women. Italy is among the most affected countries in the EU when it comes to the gender employment gap: in January 2019, the male employment rate stood at 67% while the female rate at 49.3%, registering a gender employment gap rate of 17.7% (while at European level the gap is 11.5%).³⁷⁶ The most common reason for the relatively low involvement of women in the labour market is associated with the difficulties in combining personal life (care-related) duties and work responsibilities.

Project team (implementers): Even though the pilot was developed and tested in different Italian regions, the consortium included not only Italian partners but also partners from other EU Member States as well as EU-level partners. The consortium consisted of a number of partners: (ANPAL) National Agency for Active Labour Market Policies (lead partner); Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini (FGB); Gruppo Cooperativo Gino Mattarelli (CGM); Resource Center for Men (REFORM); Spanish Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities (IWE); UIL; Work-Life HUB; as well as associated partners.

Objectives: To elaborate and test a set of strategies, a new model of intervention, and a toolkit to facilitate access to the labour market for unemployed people who are hindered from accessing or staying in the labour market by their work-life balance needs. In addition, EQW&L aimed to support SMEs in the social economy by embracing reconciliation friendly working environments.

Method: Creation and implementation of the toolkit, which provided private and public employment services (PES) staff with a checklist to assess the work-life balance needs of job-seekers and therefore provide them with better job matching. The key activities of the project included the creation of a paper-based and online tool on work-life balance to be used as a practical and informative guide, online meetings, podcasts, seminars and webinars on the topic of reconciliation and the toolkit, training for PES staff on the toolkit contents and assistance in tailoring work-life balance plans for PES users.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents, incl. final report.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

It was praiseworthy that the EQW&L aimed to apply some elements of the counterfactual analysis in the evaluation of their project. In general, the evaluation of the project was foreseen to address the following: merits and implementation of the study, cost-effectiveness, transferability and upscaling, and feasibility.³⁷⁷ The evaluation would combine the analysis of the data collected throughout the study, the information collected through the monitoring system, and the data gathered through the original research by the evaluator.

The merits and implementation of the action would be assessed through the counterfactual analysis. The main participants of the EQW&L activities were employees of PES institutions. Nevertheless, the actual target group were unemployed people. They were approached by the PES employees, who had participated in training, and their career perspectives were evaluated by the tool created under the scope of the project. Unemployed people

³⁷⁶ Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini (2020). EQW&L - Equality for work and life VP/2018/005. Interim evaluation report, p.3.

³⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 12.

(participants) were allocated into the treatment and control groups. Six short survey questionnaires (three questionnaires for the treatment group and three questionnaires for the control group) were designed to be submitted to project participants: Qs I: to be distributed *ex-ante*, along with the work-life balance needs assessment checklist; Qs II: to be distributed *in itinere*; Qs III: to be distributed after the project.³⁷⁸

The key expected impact of the project was that more individuals would be able to balance their personal and work life. Thus, the evaluation questionnaires were going to help assess how many hours the participants spend on care activities, training or at job; whether they think that solving time issues related to the performance of their daily activities could affect their and their family's well-being; and whether they had ever thought that an employment centre could provide them with tools to organise their time in a more efficient way. Comparison of the surveys' results over time, as well as the comparison between the treatment and control group results, were going to form the main logic for the evaluation.

The main output of the project was the EQW&L toolkit made of four parts: (1) context of the project; (2) overview of work-life balance and related workers' rights; (3) tools for workers and employment seekers, and SMEs; (4) attachments, including a checklist for PES to use in order to pinpoint the work-life balance needs, and an assessment tool for enterprises to evaluate different levels of work-life balance needs.³⁷⁹ Due to the pandemic, the project team added an additional element to the toolkit, which entailed relevant emergency work-life balance practices implemented and promoted by the Italian government during the lockdown. The results of testing the toolkit proved that EQW&L was a valid tool for assisting users in their reconciliation needs to find employment.

The key outcomes of the project were: (1) increased knowledge and awareness among stakeholders (ranging from unemployed men and women to PES' staff and SMEs) in terms of rules, regulations and local services available to support a better work-life reconciliation, and increased sensitivity to the issue of work-private life balance and the sharing of family care responsibilities between men and women; (2) increased jobseeker awareness of rights related to the reconciliation between work and care responsibilities; (3) strengthened competencies of PES operators concerning work-life balance; the project has provided PES staff with the ability to investigate the more personal aspects of the job-seekers and therefore select more suitable solutions. The toolkit improved the problem-solving process, in terms of broadening and diversifying the viable solutions, which meant being able to reach several different reconciliation situations; (4) Furthermore, the creation of the toolkit catalysed the creation of new reconciliation services locally. One example of that was the list of additional documents edited by the employment centres and accessible for PES operators to use in interviews with clients.

As proof of all the impact created by the project, European Public Employment Services (PES) Network has selected the EQW&L project as best practice in the promotion of gender equality and work-life conciliation.³⁸⁰

Efficiency:

The project team considered that the same results could not have been achieved with fewer resources because a lack of adequate resources could have negatively impacted the project efficiency. Since the project changed its approach due to the pandemic, fewer resources would have made it even more difficult to implement the changes. Similarly, the project team believed that results-based funding would have had a negative impact on the

³⁷⁸ This information should be complemented and clarified after the release of the project's final evaluation report.

³⁷⁹ European Commission (2021). Final technical implementation report VP/2018/005/0114. p.4.

³⁸⁰ European Commission. PES Practices <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1206&langId=en>.

implementation of the project, especially because due to the pandemic some of the activities foreseen in the initial project plan could not be carried out.

The most usual solution to the problem of reconciling care responsibilities with work was non-voluntary part-time. Furthermore, the work and life balance problem was managed not by PES but by the welfare system. The cost-effectiveness analysis of the new approach was going to be based on a comparison of positive outcomes (measured by relevant metrics of employability and individual wellbeing) and costs (computed in monetary terms, in this case in Euro).³⁸¹ The results of this analysis were expected to be presented in the final evaluation report.³⁸² The interim evaluation report did not include any information about the cost-effectiveness of the project.

According to the project team, any costs necessary for the project activities to continue after the implementation period appeared to be sustainable.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

The innovative content of the project consisted of three key elements. First, one of the target groups of the project, unemployed individuals, is often overlooked in other initiatives related to work-life balance. This project focused on individuals in their active working life cycle, including those unemployed or trying to re-enter or enter the job market, rather than employed workers. The innovation was developing a new integrated approach to understand the needs of this group and respond to them effectively. Furthermore, the tools created by the project were innovative. Usually, only the skills and experience of unemployed people were taken into account by PES. This project enabled PES to find more suitable employment for the person by giving unemployed people questionnaires about their personal work-life balance needs, which helped staff to offer the jobseekers a more suitable and tailored solution. Finally, EQW&L adopted a non-stereotypical, not only women-centred approach to work-life balance as it focused on encouraging men's participation in care duties as well as on aspects of personal life not necessarily related to caring for dependent persons.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

Two key drivers of social experimentation under this project were identified. The first driver was the three elements that the project focused on simultaneously: PES, individuals with care responsibilities (both women and men) in the active working life cycle, unemployed or re-entering the job market; young people trying to enter the job market and companies (namely SMEs and social enterprises, which offered relevant employment opportunities for women but faced more difficulties than bigger companies in implementing work-life balance policies). Focusing on the different types of stakeholders and activities at the same time ensured the comprehensive approach toward the problem solving (i.e. it increased the probability for the key challenges to be addressed from different 'angles' and perspectives at the same time). Another driver of social experimentation was the involvement of international partners who shared their useful experiences that could be applied to the Italian case.

³⁸¹ The costs included cost of defining the toolkit, costs of training PES's staff (i.e. costs of staff time measured by their salary, costs of retaining instructors, costs of renting facilities to deliver the training or the opportunity cost of using own space), the additional costs of adopting project approach (in terms of the costs of staff time, redefining procedures, adding steps to consultancy, using additional spaces) in the process of supporting unemployed people, costs of developing and reproducing training materials, administering tests to all participants, costs for study participants, costs for awareness raising activities among SMEs.

³⁸² This information should be complemented and clarified after the release of the project's final evaluation report.

In terms of barriers to social experimentation, the initial idea of the project was to target users of PES for testing the developed toolkit. However, PES centres encountered a challenge in reaching potential users for the testing phase, e.g. there was a lack or extremely low percentage of male users involved.³⁸³ These challenges were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which made reaching users of PES centres extremely difficult considering the lockdown situation. Due to such barriers, the project team extended their testing activities on PESs operators rather than only focusing on users.³⁸⁴ Moreover, most of the planned project activities, especially in the testing phase, but also all the project coordination meetings and the final conference had to be conducted online. These challenges created delays in the project implementation and difficulties in achieving the expected results.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

The project team highlighted the high scalability of the results which might lead to the adoption of the EQW&L strategies and toolkit by the national network of PES.³⁸⁵ At the time of writing, PES institutions that were involved in the project continued using the tool on a daily basis.³⁸⁶ The toolkit was going to be made available to the various PES through the local Employment Agencies, according to the project team. Representatives of other regions in Italy expressed their interest to apply the tool, after becoming familiar with it at the final conference of the project. Some other countries, for example, Norway, also expressed their interest in transferring the tool to their own context.

The project had an upscaling strategy, called the 'Communication and Awareness-Raising Strategy' which relied on disseminating the action to immediate stakeholders and a wider audience.³⁸⁷

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

The flexibility and universality of the toolkit were among the drivers behind scaling up and transferring the project. The toolkit could be applied in different local contexts (not region-specific) and adapted to the contexts and needs of different territories. For instance, the Tuscany region applied the tool at both the regional and the local levels. The toolkit's accurate theoretical and methodological foundation needed only to be updated with new context-specific information (such as examples of good practices) to be adopted in other contexts.³⁸⁸ Also, the contents of the toolkit were easily integrated with the local services that existed before the project, demonstrating the toolkit's good self-maintenance practice. In addition, the development and application of the toolkit during the pandemic demonstrated its further flexibility and the ability to adapt to unforeseen circumstances. The second driver was the availability of the tool in both Italian and English on paper and online, which made it accessible and easy to understand for stakeholders across Europe. For example, the Norwegian PES already expressed an interest to apply the toolkit. The toolkit included sections that could be read as stand-alone chapters in order to quickly find key information. Related to that, the project had adopted a consistent European dissemination strategy, which ensured that the results of the project were reached by a wider audience through the European partnership. The dissemination strategy relied on the provision of information on the project website. Additionally, the involvement of the PES from the very

³⁸³ European Commission (2021). Final technical implementation report VP/2018/005/0114, p.6.

³⁸⁴ Ibid, pp. 6-8.

³⁸⁵ Visionary Analytics (2021). Interview with the EQW&L project team representatives.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ European Commission (2021). Final technical implementation report VP/2018/005/0114, p. 9.

³⁸⁸ Ibid. p., 14.

beginning of the project (e.g. as partners of the project, in developing additional tools) meant that it was relatively easy for them to disseminate the project-related information on the regional level as well. Lastly, apart from the initial investment to develop the toolkit, the tool was for free.

On the other hand, due to the PES reform, which was taking place in Italy, the project was highly relevant for the Italian context but less so for other countries. Another barrier was structural. Italy had both the PES and private employment system, and multilevel governance of the policies at the local, regional and national levels, which meant that the context for the implementation of the experiment was relatively complicated. Finally, due to the pandemic, the project team had to simplify their dissemination strategy and local and national dissemination events were replaced by virtual meetings and webinars, which had less audience than initially planned.

Project's internal and external coherence

- The project team explained that there were efforts to work together with other three EaSI-funded work-life balance-related projects in Italy, but they fell short because of the pandemic.³⁸⁹ The project team expressed their hopes to collaborate with other Italian EaSI projects on work-life balance, complementary to EQW&L.
- EQW&L used ESF for upscaling. The project team were organising the same activities and used the toolkit and methodology of the project to help all the PES in Italy with the support of ESF.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The project team assessed the EaSI programme's relevance as very high. The project conformed to the EaSI's call by responding to two priorities, namely: testing, developing and/or implementing innovative work-life balance strategies, conducive to higher participation of women in the labour market and the development of sustainable multilevel partnerships models.

EaSI's call was highly relevant for the project team because of the PES network reform in Italy, which sought to improve women's employability rates and activate unemployed people in general, as well as achieve better work-life balance. To this end, social innovation was necessary to support this national policy reform in order to reach significant results. Therefore, PES was a cornerstone of the project, as EQW&L aimed to develop PES operators' skills and new services for unemployed people, especially the most vulnerable groups. In addition, EaSI programme helped the project to develop a methodology for a multistakeholder partnership, involving all the stakeholders in implementing project activities.

When evaluating the possibility of implementing EQW&L by using different European funding programmes, the project team explained that other programmes in their experience would bring more difficulties and bureaucracy and less multilevel integrated partnership.³⁹⁰

EU added value:

EU-added value was reflected in the phase of project implementation. First, due to the unwillingness of national and regional governments to fund social experiments, because of the unsure results of such projects, EQW&L could not have been implemented without EU

³⁸⁹ Visionary Analytics (2021). Interview with the EQW&L project team representatives.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

funding. Second, the EU-added value was reflected in the multilevel (i.e. involving different types of stakeholders) and international partners in the project. The transnational dimension of the Consortium entailed the exchange of practices and knowledge on work-life balance and reconciliation approaches (i.e. partners from Norway, Spain and Belgium significantly contributed to the project activities). Such transnational dialogues were of utmost importance to the development of the toolkit and training material, which drew from different national contexts and experiences and produced a set of best practices. Third, the EU made it easier to upscale and transfer the project activities to other Member States' levels. For instance, stakeholders from different countries and Italian regions participated in the final conference, where they were informed about the project activities and could draw inspiration on how they could be applied in their specific contexts.

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CASE STUDIES: 2019 CALL

SielBleu

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: According to the OECD, in the EU-27 the percentage of people aged 80 or over was expected to double between 2019 and 2100, from 5.8% to 14.6%. Physical inactivity was responsible for 1 in 10 deaths around the world. According to the World Health Organisation, 2 out of 3 people reaching retirement age would have at least two chronic conditions. Thus, there was a growing need of investing in prevention to avoid dependency and better support for its consequences. For more than 20 years in France, Siel Bleu has been using adapted physical activity (APA) for people with less autonomy, chronic diseases or suffering from cancer, as well as people above 60/70 years old who want to stay active. APA is not a sport but a way of moving and doing exercises that are adapted to the needs and the objectives of each person, it is a non-medicine prevention tool. Siel Bleu had expanded its activities in Belgium, Spain and Ireland; however, the Siel Bleu associations worked in isolation in each country. There was a need to create a network / an international federation of Siel Bleu associations in these four countries, to support the dissemination of the method in other countries, too.

Project team (implementers): Siel Bleu was the only partner in the project. Five public bodies were associate organisations: Technical Agency for the Information on Hospitalisation; High Commissioner for Social and Solidarity Economy and Innovation; National Insurance Fund Old Age; Ministry of Solidarities and Health; and Ministry of Sports.

Objectives: (a) improve autonomy and ensure a better quality of life for 1200 people in long-term care (LTC) or with less autonomy by testing and adapting APA in three new countries: Germany, Portugal and Romania; (b) build local partnerships and design sustainable models adapted to local environments, focusing on legislation, education on APA, health system organisation, communities, etc.; (c) create sustainable jobs; (d) build a network among the Siel Bleu entities in the four countries where it was established, to work in a more efficient and structured way, promoting APA in other countries, too.

Method: Three steps were foreseen. First of all, Siel Bleu entities in Ireland, Belgium, France and Spain would develop case studies about their best practices; in parallel, market studies would be carried out in the three countries chosen for the pilots: Romania, Portugal and Germany. The second step will start in February/March 2022 and will regard the pilots which will be carried out in two countries for 18 months. The third and final stage will be dedicated to writing a white paper about the experimentation for the European Commission and policymakers in Europe about the benefits of APA.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The project started in November 2020. The first step was concluded in September 2021 and regarded the conduction of market studies in Germany, Portugal and Romania. The piloting of APA will be carried out in two countries that will be chosen among Germany, Portugal and Romania, on the basis of the findings of the market studies. APA has already been tested in Germany, just a little bit in Portugal, while it is brand new in Romania. The project team are aware that the APA French approach will have to be adapted to the specific contexts of the two countries which will be chosen for the piloting. Pilots will reach around 600 people each. Users will be people in need of long-term care, namely people with less

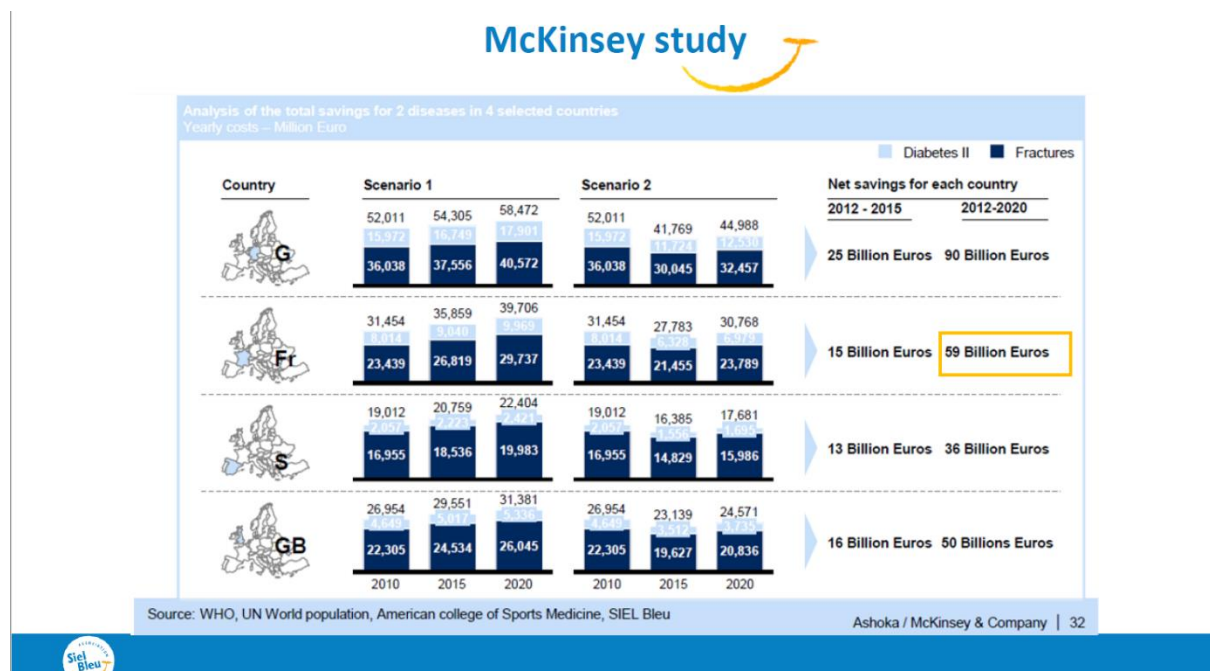
autonomy, chronic diseases or suffering from cancer, as well as people above 60/70 years old who want to stay active.

From a previous project, there is evidence that one APA session per week for two years reduces the risk of falling for elderly people by 19%. These are the findings of the OSSEBO study, which observed the impact of an adapted APA programme focused on maintaining balance and increasing strength, on 706 women between 75 and 85 years old living at home and diagnosed as being frail.³⁹¹

The project team expect that similar results will be reached in the pilots, although they deem it is not possible to guarantee positive results in 18 months because results depend on the frequency of APA and on the physical status of the users. Another expected result is to create jobs for APA coaches in the pilot countries. APA candidate coaches will be trained on the basis of the French approach and perhaps on experience from Ireland, Belgium and Spain.

Efficiency:

As the pilots had not started at the time of writing, it was too early to mention any information about efficiency and cost-saving. However, according to a study carried out by McKinsey, the net savings of APA for two diseases were €59 billion in France, in the period 2012-2020³⁹².



Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

The innovative aspect of the project lies in the testing and adaptation of APA, which is a well-known and tested approach in France, in other countries such as Germany, Portugal, and Romania, where it has been little or never tested. APA is now well developed in France

³⁹¹ OSSEBO study, conducted by Patricia Dargent-Molina (Inserm CRESS, Villejuif) and Prof. Bernard Cassou (Centre de g r ntologie Hospital Ste P rine), published in the British Medical Journal, 2015.

³⁹² See https://www.ashoka.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/etude-ashoka-impact-entrepreneuriat_social-mckinsey-2011.pdf.

since Siel Bleu started developing the model 24 years ago. Siel Bleu now works with 700 coaches and collaborates with Municipalities and nursing homes across the whole country.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

Market and feasibility studies were carried out in Germany, Portugal, and Romania, as APA will be tested in two countries among these three. These studies would identify barriers and drivers for social experimentation. They were also meant to identify the key players with which they would have to develop local partnerships.

A strong point is that Siel Bleu has been tested and conducted in France for 24 years. They expanded their activities in Ireland, Belgium and Spain. The above-mentioned McKinsey study investigated the impact of APA in the four countries and came to positive conclusions.

A key driver for the experimentation is that there is a great interest in APA from other countries. In fact, several organisations from Italy, Portugal, Greece, Germany and Poland have contacted Siel Bleu, as they are interested in testing the approach.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

The plan is to test APA in two countries, which will be chosen among Germany, Portugal and Romania, on 1200 people in total. The testing process will last for 18 months. The project does not have plans to transfer or scale further the pilots, at least at this stage.

As previously mentioned, one of the objectives of the project is to create a network, federation, or more stable institutional relationships among the Siel Bleu entities that exist in France, Belgium, Ireland and Spain, as they are all independent and work on their own. This will allow them to work in a more efficient and structured way together and should facilitate to transfer APA to new countries.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

The project team have involved policymakers in France from the very beginning as they signed letters of engagement for the grant application. They will reach out to them again when the white paper is published. They plan not only to demonstrate the benefits of APA, but also to identify the best actors/governance levels to work with and to facilitate the implementation of APA in other countries. If pilots are successful, they aim to reach out to new countries after the pilots.

In the pilot countries, they will mainly work with private and public nursing homes, Ministries, and then, regions and all the institutional levels having the competencies in LTC. As the situation is very different from country to country, partnerships will depend on the level of engagement and the weight in the political landscape. Siel Bleu is also aware that the social economy is a very important actor that offered them support in the countries where they developed APA. Therefore, they will involve the social economy in the pilots, too.

In France, there is a university degree in APA. Siel Bleu has been working with universities for a long time to achieve this aim. In Belgium and Spain, it is not a recognised professional profile. The project team want to develop this in other countries. In Romania, in the long term, they plan to work with universities to co-design a new degree for people to be trained and hired to work on APA.

Project's internal and external coherence

For the moment, the project team do not have any plans to develop synergies with other EaSI projects. They focused on getting started with the project, setting up the team,

finalising the planning and carrying out the market studies in the countries where the pilots might take place. Nonetheless, they are interested in looking at the other EaSI projects and seeing if there is any possible synergy. As one of their pilots is likely to be in Germany, they are interested in exploring the projects that are carried out in Austria, as the context might be similar.

They are considering applying for other funds, too. They submitted an application in the framework of Erasmus+. They are also looking at the possibilities that ERDF, ESF, and Interreg offer, but they are at the beginning of the process.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

EaSI's priorities are completely in line with the values and goals of Siel Bleu because they promote a user-centred approach in LTC. Siel Bleu has always been focusing on the well-being of the people first. It has always been the goal of the association to adapt to the needs of people and then design an approach for them. They also focus on the affordability and sustainability of LTC, as there is a continuous effort to try to make APA lessons the most affordable for the users. This is the reason why they have been partnering with private insurance and social security systems to ensure that APA lessons are partly financed by these actors. Siel bleu also works on the sustainability of the workforce by developing permanent jobs and specific training on APA.

Regarding policy planning and monitoring, Siel Bleu always tries to show that APA has a huge positive impact on people and produces cost savings for the LTC and health systems. For this reason, they regularly conduct evaluations to identify the best practices to disseminate. The development of the white book foreseen by the project goes in the same direction.

EU added value:

In France, there are no funding opportunities for social experimentation/innovation with a transnational component. Therefore, this EaSI grant is a big step for the association in that direction. It has contributed to the capacities of the organisation to develop and pilot social innovation in other countries. EaSI also allowed them to set up a team with the entities that promote APA in other countries, to structure a project the founders of the association wanted to develop for years but lacked time and resources.

The project coordinator does not see any alternative to EaSI for Siel Bleu. The programme should be maintained because it allows national actors to think about the EU or the international level. Furthermore, EaSI gives them an important label that provides more credibility to their services. Specifically, having support from the European Commission facilitates the contact with the key players to be involved in the pilots (incl. policymakers).

List of literature and references:

- AEIDL (2021). Interview with the SielBleu project coordinator.
- Siel Bleu (2019). Grant application.
- OSSEBO study (2015), conducted by Patricia Dargent-Molina (Inserm CRESS, Villejuif) and Prof. Bernard Cassou (Centre de gérontologie, Hospital Sainte Périne), published in the British Medical Journal.
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I-CCC

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Austria, Montenegro and Serbia are confronted with an ageing population and a growing number of elderly people with dementia in need of care, which is why long-term care (LTC) is on the political agenda of all three countries. There is a national LTC policy reform going on in Austria, an upcoming strategy for the development of the social care system for older people in Serbia and a reflection on a funding scheme for NGOs on dementia in Montenegro. By contributing to the ongoing policy reforms in LTC, the project intends to address the growing LTC needs of older people, especially those with dementia, as well as to support informal carers, who traditionally play an important role in providing care, complementing the provision of formal LTC services. In all three countries, especially Serbia and Montenegro, there is a need to overcome the excessive fragmentation of health and social care services. In Serbia and Montenegro, it is also necessary to develop services to take care of older people with dementia.

Project team (implementers): A public-private partnership led by the Austrian Red Cross and including Red Cross of Serbia; Red Cross of Montenegro; Austrian Public Health Institute; Republic Institute of Social Protection in Serbia; Ministry of Health of Montenegro; Vienna University of Economics and Business; Ministry of Social Affairs of Austria; Association of Caring Relatives; Health, Care and Science Department of the Federal Government of Styria; District Commission Hartberg-Fürstenfeld; Red Cross EU Office; Italian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross; Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Montenegro, Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia.

Objectives: (a) address the fragmentation of health and social services, by developing, testing and advocating for socially innovative Community Care Centres (CCC) for people in need of care and informal carers, and voluntary-based services for people with cognitive impairment and dementia; (b) influence national reforms by using the concept of CCCs and voluntary services for people with cognitive impairment and dementia in LTC policy planning and monitoring.

Method: Two types of social innovations will be developed, piloted and evaluated. The first type regards Community Care Centres (CCC) which will be developed in six communities to support older people to live longer at home by preventing functional loss and promoting healthy ageing. The second type addresses volunteer-based services that can complement informal care and support informal carers by relieving their burden. Volunteers will offer visiting services and quality time to people with cognitive impairment and suffering from dementia, as well as tablet-based training. Evidence-based advocacy will help to bring the voices of people in need of LTC to policy processes at the national level.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The project started in November 2020 and it is still in its preparatory phase. Social experimentation has not started yet.

Community care centres (CCCs) will be developed in six communities of Austria, Serbia and Montenegro for people in need of care and informal carers³⁹³. In addition, two volunteer-based services will be available for people with cognitive impairment and dementia using

³⁹³ <https://communitycarecenter.eu/>.

new technologies including tablet-based training. The goal is to promote independent living and healthy ageing of older people and people with dementia, as well as to support informal carers. The two types of community-based services will be tested for a period of two years and serve as evidence to influence national policy reforms in LTC to address its challenges of accessibility, affordability, quality and sustainability.

22 staff members will be selected, partly from employment offices, and trained to work in the six CCCs. Counselling sessions will be offered to 1200 people in need of LTC and informal carers, while group activities and self-help groups will be offered to 2000 people³⁹⁴. In three of the CCCs 80 preventive home visits will be planned and 200 people will benefit from home care, visiting services and respite services in four of the CCCs. Furthermore, 170 volunteers who will work with people with cognitive impairment and dementia will be trained according to a training programme for home care volunteers developed by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which will be adapted to include dementia. Also, 170 people with cognitive impairments and dementia will benefit from innovative visiting services. One hundred twenty people – 60 persons in Austria and 30 persons each in Serbia and Montenegro – will test tablet-based training developed by a research institute in Austria, which will also be adapted and translated.

The community-based services will be developed according to the community needs assessment which will be carried out under a user-centred approach³⁹⁵. On one side, focus group discussions will be organised with community members. On the other side, stakeholder meetings will be conducted both at the local level with service providers, local authorities, NGOs and general practitioners, and at the national level with the respective Ministries of Health and Social Affairs, and NGOs active in the social and health sectors. The needs assessment will use a similar methodology in each community to ensure the comparability of the results. The CCCs and the volunteer-based services will be evaluated using an impact model and a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods. Empirical data will be collected to assess the impacts through questionnaires and interviews. Beneficiaries of the pilot will be asked before and after the project their perceptions of the services to evaluate their effects. The evidence gathered will be used by the project coordinators in each country to develop an advocacy plan with their policy partner to influence policy reforms.

Efficiency:

Analysis during the evaluation process will consider the capacities of similar services³⁹⁶. The project team assume that the new user-centred approach is more efficient as the capacity of traditional services to provide support to a higher number of users is scarce and care users most likely would have to depend on informal carers. The project approach to home care and healthy ageing, as well as the inclusion of volunteers, are also expected to reduce costs for the State.

The project gives priority to ensuring simultaneously the financial sustainability, high quality and affordability of LTC services. An assessment of financial sustainability options will be carried out at an early stage of the project implementation with the aim to ensure continuity of CCCs after the end of the project. Informal carers and volunteers play a crucial role in the sustainability of LTC services, bearing in mind that it is important to consider volunteers' skills and interests and to provide them with adequate training and support structures.

The main budget line of the project is the staff cost. The project team do not believe it would be possible to conduct the pilot with fewer resources. Furthermore, social experimentation

³⁹⁴ CCC (2019). Grant application form VP/2019/003/0080.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

cannot predict results. Therefore, adopting a results-based approach could prevent organisations from trying to reach difficult target groups to ensure positive results, according to the project team, which would be a major risk of its own.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

I-CCC will implement innovative support measures for people in need of LTC and informal carers in an integrated approach. The first social innovation is the concept of CCCs which will be piloted for the first time in Montenegro and Serbia and for the first time in this format in Austria³⁹⁷. CCCs will allow for new forms of collaboration between different members of the community in all countries both in the health and care sectors and help address their fragmentation. The second social innovation is linked to volunteer-based services and tablet-based training for people with dementia. These two services will offer interesting employment opportunities and will enable new types of engagement for volunteers, while also addressing the needs of care users and informal carers with innovative types of peer support and innovative technologies. The project will pay specific attention to informal carers by recognising the value of their work and identifying ways to systematically support them. Lastly, the collaboration between the Red Cross and policy partners is also a new approach.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

Several drivers of social experimentation have been identified under this project. First, the project partners will benefit from an exchange of knowledge and mutual learning. In particular, the partners in Serbia and Montenegro will learn from the Austrian partners, who have a lot of experience in LTC, namely with people suffering from dementia. Second, Social innovation is an integrated part of the Red Cross strategy which has already conducted various projects to innovate the care sector, such as emergency button services. I-CCC relies on previous projects and benefits from their results to go further. Third, there is long-standing cooperation between the Red Cross in Austria, Serbia and Montenegro, which will avoid common issues of understanding and lack of collaboration in partnerships. The Red Cross network in the partner countries and elsewhere in Europe will facilitate project coordination and communication. Their resources, experience, visibility and good reputation allow for easy access to people in need of LTC, informal carers, LTC stakeholders, local communities, decision-makers and opinion leaders at all levels. Finally, the project also benefits from a momentum, as Austria, Serbia and Montenegro are all undergoing a process of national care policy reforms. In recent years, there have been positive trends in increasing the funding for care services and in acknowledging the need to provide more resources to the sector. The results of I-CCC will provide useful information on the population needs in LTC and on possible solutions to trigger policy changes. Policy makers are eager to participate in the project as the topic of LTC is on their agenda.

Barriers to social experimentation could not be identified since the pilot has not started yet. So far, the main barrier has been the COVID-19 pandemic, which has impacted the pilot and delayed the community needs assessment.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

As the project only started at the end of 2020, upscaling efforts are not in effect yet. I-CCC's plans for the sustainability of the project rely on the link between the pilot and the national care reforms. I-CCC will evaluate the piloting of CCCs and volunteer-based services. If they

³⁹⁷ <https://communitycarecenter.eu/>.

are successful, the project team will work on developing the model for other communities in Austria, Montenegro and Serbia and encourage the development in other EU countries. At this stage, scaling up is, therefore, only potential and additional communities eligible for developing the pilot have not been identified yet.

Few activities are planned for a larger transferability outside of the three countries implementing the project. Dissemination will include a final international conference to present the results of the project, including best practices and innovative examples. It will aim at encouraging the use of CCCs, volunteer-based services and tablet-based training in other European countries.

The project team will mostly rely on the Red Cross network, especially the Italian, Spanish and EU offices, to encourage the dissemination and upscaling of the project at the EU level. This will be done through exchanges with representatives of the associated partners. The project has a good transnational component with the cooperation and exchanges between Austria, Serbia and Montenegro. Even if I-CCC is still in its pilot phase, it is most likely that the project will succeed in the project regions

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

On the positive side, the presence of national public organisations in charge of health in the project partners will facilitate the dialogue and the reform of national LTC policies by including powerful stakeholders from the start of the project. The public-private partnership will allow to include visions and knowledge both from the care users' side thanks to the Red Cross and from the policymakers' side thanks to the Ministries and Institutes for Health, Social Protection and Social Affairs. This multistakeholder approach will facilitate the upscaling of the project at the national level in the three countries.

Furthermore, as the project is implemented in three countries, the pilot is directly working on transferability and is based on Austria's experience in dealing with dementia and supporting informal carers. The Red Cross network will provide valuable information about the situation in other countries and facilitate transnational cooperation and dissemination.

On the other hand, the network of the Red Cross could also be a barrier to transferability, as the project team might rely excessively on its associated partners in other countries to enable the introduction of CCCs and volunteer-based services.

Project's internal and external coherence

- I-CCC is in contact with another EaSI project funded in the 2019 call on LTC, InCARE, which is implemented in the same Austrian region but in different communities. The two project teams foresee intensifying exchanges when going deeper into the piloting.
- The project team have not planned yet any synergies with other EU programmes. However, this might happen in the future as the Red Cross has departments devoted to European projects and receives funding from the European Social Fund and Horizon 2020.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The project team had been waiting for an EU call on care and LTC for a long time and the call fitted perfectly with their plans. EaSI provides I-CCC with good opportunities to pilot ideas, exchange experiences and facilitate mutual learning between the three partner countries in a sustainable framework of long-term actions and with adequate resources.

EaSI contributes to and strengthens the activities performed by the Red Cross. The size, the scope and the composition of the partnership allowed by EaSI was the best match for I-CCC. A project representative believes that EU funding should continue to finance social innovation whereas the State should be in charge of ensuring long-term funding for scaling.

EU added value:

The project team's participation in the EaSI programme has the potential of high EU added value. Despite previous collaborations between the project partners, the resources provided by EaSI were necessary to take advantage of the potential for synergies in the Red Cross network in the three countries. Other sources of funding do not support transnational cooperation and social experimentation. The cooperation among project partners will specifically bring an added value to the Western Balkans region but also to partners in Austria in relation to the transferability of the Austrian models.

List of literature and references:

- AEIDL (2021). Interview with the ICCC project team representatives.
- I-CCC (2019). Grant application form VP/2019/003/0080.
- I-CCC (2021). Official website, <https://communitycarecenter.eu/>.

CSSCs in Slovakia

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Banská Bystrica, a self-governing region in Slovakia, was facing important demographic challenges with an ageing population and the young generations leaving rural areas for big cities or abroad. In Slovakia, there was no specific legislation on long-term care (LTC) and the subject was fragmented between social care and health, which are under the responsibility of two different Ministries. Banská Bystrica self-governing region is composed of multiple small villages and care services are located far away from users living in rural and remote areas. The project intended to bring long-term care services closer to them.

Project team (implementers): Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region (BBSGR) coordinated the project with two universities, Matej Bel University (MBU) and VID Specialized University Sandnes, as well as with policymakers and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (MLSAF).

Objectives: (a) create a functioning pilot model of community-based social service centres for seniors. The centres would serve as a platform for integrating social and health services of various providers both geographically and structurally; (b) provide input to the Ministries to develop national legislation on long-term care.

Method: Community-based social service centres for older people were established in several municipalities of various sizes to ensure the accessibility of long-term care services to all. Roundtables with stakeholders in the region and from the Ministries allowed for discussion and cooperation on the improvement of LTC services in Slovakia and provided input for national legislation on long-term care.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The project started in October 2020 and it was still in its preparatory phase at the time of the reporting. Social experimentation would start in September 2021.

Around a hundred older people would benefit from the pilot of a model of community-based social service centres (CSSCs) in three small areas of BBSGR region. The goal was to organise the provision of social services to older people in need of care in a way that is more flexible and sustainable compared to the current system. The new approach would also encourage home care provision whenever possible. Another aim was to ensure affordable, accessible and high-quality services, as well as to enable informal carers to return to the labour market.

The project team analysed the whole territory of BBSGR to identify three micro-regions to develop the CSSCs. On the one hand, several local municipalities were going to associate themselves with three centres, which would ensure a better provision of social care thanks to synergies. On the other hand, CSSCs would serve as platforms enabling collaboration between organisations and institutions at local, regional and national levels, dealing with social and health services for older people in Slovakia. CSSCs would provide different types of support in the same location including preventive measures, outpatient, and residential social services and long-term care services. The centres would also support informal caregivers.

The project intended to pilot three CSSCs in three areas of BBSGR. To select the municipalities for the construction of a centre, the project team developed an aggregated indicator, which took into account the economic and the demographic situations, and the level of need for assistance in the social domain. The second stage of the selection of municipalities was a qualitative assessment of the possibilities of municipal participation in the experimentation. This stage was based on information regarding the possibilities, conditions and especially the willingness of the local government to involve the municipality in the pilot and thus participate in the effective functioning of the CSSCs.

The implementation process and the impacts of CSSCS should be analysed and evaluated in the framework of working groups with the participation of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of Slovakia. The evaluation aimed to determine how to use further EU funds, extend the CSSCS model to other regions and provide recommendations that could pave the way to LTC reform and the establishment of a legislative framework on LTC that was missing by then.

Efficiency:

A project partner, Matej Bel University, conducted some preliminary analysis about the financing and sustainability of the centres in the long term. No exact figures were available at the time of writing, but the project team considered that the piloted solutions based on community-based services and homecare would be more effective and less expensive than existing solutions, which mainly relied on institutionalised care. Furthermore, CSSCs would offer different forms of support in one single facility, offering services that did not exist in the region or were not sufficient to meet the demands and needs of an ageing population.

The project team planned to obtain precise data on the effectiveness and the efficiency of the project the year after the launch and the experimentation of the pilot centres. Indicators would be developed to assess the quality of life of older people dependent on social services, such as the number of staff available in the centres and the number of days from the request of support to its provision. The impact of social services centres would be assessed too, for instance taking into account the number of field interventions and outpatient services, users' satisfaction and family and informal carers' quality of life and satisfaction.

The project team stated that they would have applied for EaSI support, even if the grant had been conditioned to fixed results (results-based approaches) as they believed their model to be sustainable and effective.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

CSSCs were a new type of service aimed at ensuring increased availability of care services and support for older people. By connecting municipalities and social and health service providers, the project team planned to achieve a more coordinated and targeted service provision, covering preventive measures, home care, outpatient and residential LTC services, coupled with other types of social services, including transport services to facilitate accessibility. The centres would make use of new technologies and ensure the availability of more care professionals to monitor the health of older people. The centres would also trigger new forms of cooperation between regional and national institutions, which would inspire reforms and possibly a new legislative framework on LTC.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

In the past, the project team received support from the European Commission and the World Bank to develop innovative solutions for social and healthcare for older people in one area

of BBSGR. The project was less ambitious than the current one and mainly focused on consultation. However, it provided BBSGR with experience in the care sector and in collaborating with the European Commission, which would become an important driver of social experimentation. Furthermore, the pilots were developed in locations where the project team identified strong support from the mayors as political will can be an important factor to ensure the success of the centres.

On the other hand, engagement from the local municipalities was the biggest challenge for the project. Mayors have multiple responsibilities and the project team had to convince them of the importance of focusing on LTC.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

The pilots of the three centres were only the first part of the plans of BBSGR. Once they were effective and evidence would be available, the project team intended to develop 20 to 25 centres in other parts of BBSGR to ensure LTC services in the whole region. After the implementation of the national legislation on LTC, the project team would like to extend them to other regions of Slovakia. They estimated that from 100 to 150 centres would be necessary to cover the territory of the whole country and expected 5 to 10 years to be necessary for this development. The project team had high ambitions of upscaling.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

On the positive side, the project team worked on the involvement of the stakeholders from the beginning of the project. They involved experts from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Families of Slovakia in working groups. With the help of experts, the project team intended to communicate with other regions and advocate for the development of national legislation on LTC. They wanted to ensure that this would be on their political agenda. To do so, they intended to organise roundtables and raise awareness of the need to reform LTC, in collaboration with NGOs and church organisations at local and regional levels.

Furthermore, the project team were creating a knowledge database gathering a wide range of methodological material, guidelines and good practices from other countries. The database would be available to other regions of Slovakia to help them develop CSSCs and also to promote the LTC reform at the national level.

In Slovakia, the provision of LTC was very fragmented, with competences divided between the Ministry for Health and the Ministry for Social Affairs. The legislation in force was not focused on LTC. The project team hoped that legislation would be amended. If this did not happen, it would account for an additional barrier to scalability/transferability.

Project's internal and external coherence

The project team had not initially planned any synergies with other EaSI projects. However, the kick-off meeting organised by the European Commission made the project team aware of the Polish project on professional home care. As Poland had similar legislation to Slovakia and stemming from their post-communist experiences, the project team was going to use the opportunity of a study trip to Poland as part of their project activities to visit the Polish project and see if synergies were possible.

As for external synergies, there were no plans of developing synergies with other EU programmes, but they would be interested in exploring ESF+ opportunities for scaling up.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The priorities set out in the EaSI call matched the objectives of the project. The project team wanted to develop an innovative model of LTC provision, overcoming the existing fragmentation between social and health services. Regarding the sustainability of the project, one of the priorities of the project team was to translate the results of the project into a legislative model. Lastly, the third priority to use policy planning was in line with the final aim of the project to develop a legal act on LTC.

The project team emphasised the importance of maintaining mechanisms such as EaSI in the future to support innovation in the social field where new solutions were needed and their development heavily depended on financial support from the public money.

EU added value:

Participation in the EaSI programmes already demonstrated some EU added value for the project team. First, being labelled as an EU project gave visibility and credibility to the project team to dialogue with the relevant Ministries, which would have been more difficult if the project was only supported by BBSGR. Partnering with the European Commission made it more relevant for the State to collaborate and communicate with BBSGR, especially when it came to legislative changes.

Second, EaSI also helped the project team to partner with two universities, Matej Bel University in Slovakia and Oslo University in Norway. Without EU funding support, it would be complicated for a region to set up a partnership with universities because of the lack of resources. The participation in the project of the two universities made it possible to develop accurate data analysis for the Ministries, which would have been impossible without them.

Third, EaSI also meant an opportunity for the project team to communicate with other projects in Europe and benefit from their good practices to improve the situation regarding LTC in Slovakia.

List of literature and references:

- AEIDL (2021). Interview with the Community-based social services as a tool of multilevel partnership for providing long-term care in Slovakia project team representatives.
- Community-based social services as a tool of multilevel partnership for providing long-term care in Slovakia (2019). Grant application VP/2019/003/0152.
- Community-based social services as a tool of multilevel partnership for providing long-term care in Slovakia (2021). Website of the project, <https://www.bbsk.sk/Občan/Sociálneslužby/Centráintegrovanejsociálnozdravotnejstarostlivosti.aspx>.
- Community-based social services as a tool of multilevel partnership for providing long-term care in Slovakia (2020). Criteria for the selection of districts in which Community-based Social Services Centres (CSSCs) were to be established.
- Community-based social services as a tool of multilevel partnership for providing long-term care in Slovakia (2020). Evidence for a broader selection of target regions for the project.
- Community-based social services as a tool of multilevel partnership for providing long-term care in Slovakia (2020). Methodology for selecting the groups of municipalities.

InCARE

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: The population is ageing in Europe, resulting in an increase in demand for long-term care (LTC) support, especially for older people who are facing disabilities or functional limitations. This work is traditionally carried out by families, but care systems have developed with care services delivered by professionals. However, in most EU Member States, the supply of LTC is significantly insufficient. The project team identified gaps in long term care services to be filled in terms of supply, quality and innovation.

Project team (implementers): A consortium of 11 partners specialised in LTC, led by the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (ECV). Partners are Fundación Instituto Gerontológico Matia (INGEMA); Stichting Vilans; Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of North Macedonia; Red Cross of North Macedonia; Instituto de Mayores y Servicios Sociales (IMSERSO); Chance B Holding GmbH; Eurocarers; London School of Economics and Political Science; Ministry of Health of the Republic of Macedonia; Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumers of Austria.

Objectives: (a) empower local communities, care users and their caregivers to co-design the development of LTC services that address their support needs; (b) test innovative LTC services that are co-designed by using inclusive and participatory decision-making processes and are delivered in partnerships among different service providers and stakeholders; (c) facilitate the development and adoption of comprehensive national LTC strategies and reforms, including a pathway for the upscale and sustainability of social innovation; (d) strengthen the capacity of local service providers and stakeholders to inform policy and LTC service design including by using a strong evidence base.

Method: User-centred, integrated and innovative LTC services will be tested to reflect the needs of local communities in three areas. In Spain, support services will be developed for informal caregivers of people with dementia. In North Macedonia, older people will have access to an emergency button service within a home care service package. In Austria, integration between different service providers will be fostered, and cooperation with non-traditional actors such as the police and ambulances will be encouraged. The Theory of Change approaches will be applied to LTC policy and service design. Social experimentations will be coupled with research activities to create a shared knowledge base for all partners and to develop a detailed situational analysis of the LTC landscape in the 3 countries. Multistakeholder workshops will also be carried out.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The project only started in October 2020. Pilots will begin at the end of 2021 or at the beginning of 2022. At this stage, it is not possible to provide any assessment of the effects of the pilots. The project is expected to:

- Develop participatory decision-making processes by organising three national multistakeholder Theory of Change workshops, and facilitating joint work between policymakers and service providers
- Develop a strong evidence-base for policymaking in the three countries by producing an in-depth situational analysis of the LTC landscape and of social innovation in LTC in Europe.

- Develop tools in support of policymaking and system reform, including detailed SWOT analysis at the national and regional level, projections of demand, needed supply and costs of care provision and recommendations for policy reform.

The project team have built a solid infrastructure that seems to be vital for the successful implementation of the pilots. The partnership is composed of organisations of three types with complementary expertise and skills: technical partners, policy partners and local implementation partners. Pilots are being designed and will be implemented and evaluated by local actors, which are supported by technical partners with international experience in the field of LTC. In the first months of the project, the partners have developed a Theory of Change process, based on multistakeholder cooperation, which has led to the development of a cohesive vision for LTC provision, a common set of goals, a shared understanding of the pathways towards achieving them and a blueprint for tracking progress. All this should pave the way toward the establishment of innovative social infrastructure for LTC policy planning and monitoring.

Efficiency:

The project team argued that most of the pilots that the project intends to implement, address complete gaps in the LTC provision at the local level. There are no reference services to compare with. Pilots' target groups are also very specific, therefore comparing services is not necessarily informative. The project team will be tracking the cost of the services because the issue of scaling up will be linked with the ability to finance those services after the project.

The project has invested in preliminary research activities to create an evidence base to inform care and policy design. At the end of the project, they might be able to say which preliminary activities are more useful, and if it is needed to prioritise cost-efficiency, then recommend some. They will do a series of projections, a forecasting exercise based on the data collected to assess the budget needs in the five to ten years to come and how to improve the quality of services to a certain level. Once a detailed situational analysis will have been carried out in the project countries, it would not need to be replicated but only be updated. For instance, future projects will not need to assess the population's expectations on LTC again or to do another forecasting exercise.

With regard to the payment by results concept, the project team argued against this approach, because it would create equity issues and because LTC provision and research are already underfunded. Several local implementers are NGOs, and some do not have the capacity to provide 20% of co-financing. If the project was results-based, maybe it would still be possible to implement it in Austria but not in North Macedonia or Spain. For equity reasons, the project team are of the opinion that the European Commission should consider further financial support, especially for certain types of organisations and applicants from some countries such as Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans which are chronically lacking funds and resources.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

The three pilots are context-specific and have been chosen in response to the main challenges and policy recommendations identified in each context by the ESPN country reports on challenges to LTC. Each service is innovative and new in the local context. For instance, the emergency call system is the first service of this type to be implemented in North Macedonia, while it has been a standard service in other Member States for many years.

Another innovative aspect that is common to all pilots is the process of innovation. The project team have been implementing a participatory approach to decision-making in LTC, according to which care users, their families, informal carers, care service providers and policymakers at different levels are all involved since the beginning in co-designing innovative services aimed at responding to the challenges identified locally. The innovation stems from the attempt of the project team to structure the process and systemise it at all levels, from the bottom of the pyramid (the care users and their families), all the way to the policymakers (the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs in the project countries). The reason for the Ministries to be involved in the project is not directly linked to pilot implementation but to ensure scaling up and sustainability.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

On the basis of previous experience and in the context of the research and policy activities that have been carried out in the first months of the project, the project team highlighted three main factors (drivers) that they consider could help social experimentation. First of all, the development of a shared knowledge base by the means of scoping review, national surveys on attitudes towards social innovation in LTC, joint mutual learning sessions and a common methodology to carry out a situational analysis of the LTC landscape in the three countries. Furthermore, the active engagement of all the relevant actors (users, their families, informal carers, service providers, associations and voluntary groups, local and regional authorities, and policy makers) in the design and implementation of the pilots, since the beginning of the process. Moreover, the involvement of policymakers from all levels from the start of the project, to pave the way for scaling up, mainstreaming and embedding in policy reforms.

Possible barriers to the social experimentations have been identified as follows:

- COVID-19 severely affects the implementation of the project, for example by limiting the capacity of care users and their families to use the piloted care services and participate in their design, or that national and local stakeholders have a long-term vision for LTC that spans beyond the response to the health crisis.
- Funding and support are not provided at the local level to ensure pilot sustainability.
- Lack of trust from care users and their families in the project team and its activities.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

LTC service provision varies a lot across European countries, but overall, it can be stated that there is a large fragmentation of responsibilities between the national, regional and local governments. By large, services are being provided and organised at the local level, while the legislative and financing frameworks are set at the national level.

Since its onset, the project has carried out a series of consultation procedures and exchange workshops where actors from the local to the national level, including policymakers, have been involved. In the first two years, the project will mainly focus on local level implementation, but it will also keep national stakeholders informed about the state of play of the project in view of scaling up.

The project team plan to target service providers, care users and their families, carer organisations, older people organisations, NGOs, and policymakers, but also to reach out to research organisations, especially applied research. The project has triggered interest in stakeholders outside of the pilot regions or countries. For instance, they are in touch with two other regions in Spain interested in developing the same approach. They also had

contacts with researchers and stakeholders in Greece working on the national ageing strategy and in Germany. At present, these are just informal exchanges, there is no concrete plan for scaling/transfer yet.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

The project team are well aware of the need of working towards ensuring the sustainability of the pilots after the end of the EaSI funding, provided they are evaluated in a positive way. This will be one of the most important activities on which the project team will focus once the project is more advanced.

The project team have developed an evaluation plan and a dissemination plan. Evaluation and dissemination are very important steps that are preliminary to scaling up and transferring. The evaluation plan is based on five steps: the development of a common Theory of Change, the development of indicators, data collection, analysis of the evidence, and reporting and dissemination. The project evaluation plan will be accompanied by national evaluation plans.

The project dissemination plan has identified key messages, targets and tools. Policy and local implementation partners are tasked to develop national dissemination plans, adapted to the specificities of each country, but in line with the project dissemination plan. The project dissemination plan also foresees a shared registry to be developed in the second year, in which partners are asked to keep track of any evidence of external stakeholders showing interest in the project's activities and results.³⁹⁸

The fact that the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (North Macedonia), the Ministry of Health (North Macedonia), IMSERSO (Spain) and the Ministry of Social Affairs (Austria) are partners or associated partners in the project is another driver of scalability/transferability. They are key stakeholders in the national long-term care landscape with the ability to shape relevant policies and the strategic direction of the system. They will work to create a coherent approach to service delivery and LTC policymaking and to facilitate social innovation adoption, adaptation and upscale.

Another factor that is likely to facilitate scaling/transfer is the presence of the EU-level platform Eurocarers among the partners. Eurocarers are also in touch with other European organisations such as the European Social Network and AGE Platform Europe, which could help in the project's dissemination campaign.

Project's internal and external coherence

The project has only been planned for networking and communication activities and not for synergies with other EaSI projects. They had contact with the Red Cross of North Macedonia with which they had worked in the past and which is a partner of the I-CCC project, to inform them about their project and how they could be involved. They are also interested in the RuralCare project which focuses on rural care as well. At a later stage of implementation, they might explore a deeper form of collaboration.

At present, there are no plans for developing synergies with other EU programmes. The technical partners have had a lot of experience with Horizon 2020, which focuses on the state of the art, innovation and knowledge creation. EaSI allows focusing on experimentation and implementation. The research activities they have been carrying out are just to support the implementation of the pilots. If EU funding was more flexible and supported research/implementation partnerships or research/implementation/policy

³⁹⁸ InCare (2021), Dissemination plan of the InCare project, p. 19.

partnerships, it would act as a good channel to transfer know-how and build capacity in non-research environments.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The project team assessed the programme's relevance as very high for three main reasons. First, EaSI is the only source of funding for social experimentation in many European countries. Funding for social experimentation / social innovation at the national level is very rare, and very small when existing, not allowing for transnational cooperation or exchanges. EaSI is filling this funding gap. The project team hope that EaSI will continue because there is no alternative in most places. Furthermore, EaSI is more flexible than other EU programmes. It allows funding for research, experimentation, implementation and activities to influence policymaking. Finally, the priorities identified in the 2019 call for proposals would be relevant for every Member State in the EU. In their project, each pilot focuses on an issue identified by local partners as an important gap in LTC provision. This is the first call under EaSI that targeted LTC. It is recommended that the scope of future calls for LTC is more targeted and specific than the present call.

EU added value:

The EU added value is very clear in this project. First, without EaSI this project could have not been possible, especially in a transnational dimension. According to the interviewed project representatives, in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans there is very little knowledge on how to access EU funds and funding for social experimentation and innovation at the national level does not exist at all. With this project, it was possible for them to support their partners in North Macedonia, where frameworks and financing for LTC are underdeveloped. Without EaSI partners, they would have never had access to the technical partners' experience and LTC know-how, nor would they have been able to interact and exchange ideas and do peer-learning. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the complex situation of older people in every EU country more visible, highlighting the need for policy reforms, changes in legislation and funding. In the view of the project coordinator, the European Commission, through EaSI, plays an important role in the promotion of innovation. On the contrary, the promotion of policy reforms is mainly a national process.

List of literature and references:

- AEIDL (2021). Interview with the InCare project team representatives.
- InCare (2019). VP/2019/003/0033. Grant application form.
- InCare (2021). Official website, <https://incare.euro.centre.org/>.
- InCare (2021). Social innovation in LTC in Europe: towards a common narrative for change – InCare short report no. 1.
- InCare (2021). InCare Policy Brief no. 1. Promoting social innovation in long-term care: A common narrative for change across Europe.
- InCare (2021). Evaluation plan of the InCare project.
- InCare (2021). Dissemination plan of the InCare project.
- Stefania I. & Adelina C.H. (2021). InCare Situational Analysis: Top Guide.

'To give what is really needed'

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Eastern Poland experiences societal and demographic issues typical of rural areas. The population is ageing and decreasing, and is suffering from poverty, isolation and loneliness. Access to medical and social care is difficult for people with chronic diseases other than cancer, which is the priority of the health system. Long-term care (LTC) lacks financing and is not efficient, as it is not flexible enough to address the real care issues, in particular in rural areas. Many chronically ill and terminally ill people living in Eastern Poland do not receive any type of care. The project team identified the need to reform the care system in Poland to better respond to the needs of the population in rural areas.

Project team (implementers): A public-private partnership lead by Fundacja Hospicjum Proroka Eliasza and including Województwo podlaskie; Instytut Rozwoju Wsi i Rolnictwa Polska Akademia Nauk; Ośrodek Wspierania Organizacji Pozarządowych w Białymstoku; NZOZ Nowe Życie.

Objectives: (a) create and test a universal and replicable model of LTC and a network that enables a home-based individualised approach to care for people in need and their families and caregivers. (b) improve the quality of life of care users and their families living in rural areas. (c) better allocate medical and care support including specialists available at the local level to extend the lives of the patients and ensure cost-efficient services.

Method: A multilevel model of the durable partnership will be created between state institutions and local NGOs. A pilot care system network will be developed in five rural communities in two counties. The pilot will integrate a new professional profile of a local care coordinator for dependent individuals, who will diagnose the users' needs and find solutions to meet them with the help of professionals. A control group will allow to evaluate the efficiency of the new care system network in comparison with the existing health and social care system. After the pilot is conducted, recommendations will be developed for policymakers at the national level to influence the reform of the LTC system in Poland.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The project was supposed to start in October 2020, but it was suspended due to COVID-19. It started again in May 2021. This case study is, therefore, largely based on the project implementers' plans for implementation.

The objective of the project is to test an innovative model of provision of LTC to older, chronically ill and terminally ill people living in the rural areas of Eastern Poland. The project will be implemented in five municipalities, covering an area of 2500 square kilometres. The largest municipality is Powiat, which covers 2000 square kilometres and has a population density of 17-20 people per square kilometre. These regions are characterised by a growing ageing population, depopulation, isolation, poverty and social exclusion, and lack of public services, including health and LTC services.

The current health system provides home hospice care to people who are fulfilling very specific conditions, such as people with cancer. It does not cover other types of ailments. In addition, although people who are not eligible for home hospice can rely on the so-called long-term nursing assistance, in these areas there is a significant lack of financial and human resources, especially of specialists. According to the interviewed project representatives, it is estimated that in Poland in rural areas, access to LTC, both palliative

and hospice care, is 2.5 times worse than in urban areas. Poland has one of the highest percentages of people who cannot receive care due to high costs, inability to travel and lack of support from a third party.

The project intends to fill the gaps in the provision of LTC in rural areas, namely in terms of availability, accessibility and quality of services. The project aims at developing a new way of delivering LTC in rural areas, which will imply and require a new way in which the different stakeholders collaborate.

The expected results of the project are:

- Creation of a multilevel partnership among different actors in the five municipalities where the project is implemented.
- Development of a structured care model that will increase the availability and quality of care services and support by dependent people.
- Increase in life expectancy and quality of life of dependent people.
- Increase local employment by the creation of professional carers properly trained during the project.

Efficiency:

There are some preliminary assessments of efficiency already available. In 2019, the lead partner carried out a similar project aiming at designing a new model of hospice in rural areas to address the lack of availability of care by providing tailor-made care. The project was based on care visits for older people and an activity consisting of neighbour assistance. Although the research carried out in 2019 was relatively small in comparison to this project, the results showed that this type of care was 1/3 cheaper than the assistance offered by the State under the current health system. Thus, the project team are confident that the innovation that will be experimented with and validated in the current project will be more efficient than the current system.

The project team will calculate the cost-efficiency of the pilot, in comparison with the current system. According to the system in place, doctors or nurses visit patients at home twice a week. The coordinator of care for dependent people, the new professional profile that will be created with the project, will instead assess if it is more appropriate that a carer visits the patients instead of medical personnel. In this way, the provision of care will be more adapted to the needs of users and will generate savings. Professional carers will also support and give respite to family carers, who tend to be of very old age.

The project team consider that it would not have been possible to carry out the same project with fewer resources. It is the first time that a project as such is being carried out. They would have not applied if the funding was results-based since the project does not have major experience at the EU level and cannot benchmark its solution against others.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

The most innovative aspect of the pilot is the flexible tailor-made care that the project team intend to offer to people in need. The kind of support they intend to provide goes beyond the medical or physical level, by also focusing on social and spiritual assistance. It will also include offering help in the last days of patients' lives. Finally, they are going to target patients suffering from diseases that are not eligible under the national health fund and for whom there is no care support.

The innovation is twofold. First of all, the project will develop from scratch a model of multilevel, sustainable partnerships between different types of local actors (hereinafter, the 'network'), composed of public institutions and not-for-profit organisations providing professional medical care, care and social support. This also involves the creation of teams of medical professionals, nurses, professional carers, dieticians, psychologists and social workers. Second, the project will create a new professional profile; the coordinator of care for dependent people. This person will be in charge of analysing the needs, planning care, and structuring and strengthening the network of care.

The project team are also working on the creation of a broader network. They have approached priests from the catholic and orthodox churches, centres for social help, voluntary groups, and other local organisations.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

The project team identified three main barriers to social experimentation. First, a possible new wave of COVID-19 has severely impacted the implementation of the project in the first year. Second, is the impossibility to involve enough specialists in the project, as they tend to live in bigger towns and cities. Third, is the reluctance of other professionals and organisations to engage with the project team in this experimentation and to work in a network. What the project team intend to put in place is very new for Poland and involves risks. For the experimentation to become sustainable and mainstreamed, it will be necessary to amend the current legislation of the health system to make it more flexible and tailored to the care needs of individuals, less medicalised, and based on multidisciplinary teams, and not just doctors and nurses.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

The project team are confident that the pilot will be implemented on a larger scale. They have already included scaling up in their plans for this purpose. Meetings with the directors of Regional Centres for Social Help and with Health departments from the whole country are planned to take place in the last months of the project, to present their recommendations based on the project's experiences. One of the main tasks of the Regional Centre for Social Policy will be to have meetings with municipalities and provinces.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

The project team consider that the positive effects that their approach will have will trigger bottom-up initiatives, driven by field workers, which will generate a collective awareness. If this awareness is to also reach the higher levels of governance such as Regions and Ministries, this will become a major scaling driver. Their conviction that this could be possible is based on previous experiences, carried out in Eastern Poland for a decade.

A major barrier to scalability/transferability is that other professionals and institutions might be afraid of taking part in these new approaches, as they are very innovative and not in line with the mainstream health system. Thus, some people might doubt that it is worth engaging with these new approaches and taking the risks of doing something different from the system in place.

Project's internal and external coherence

As the project started in May 2021, their focus is now on planning and implementing their project. However, as the project develops, the project team might be interested in exchanging ideas and experiences with the French, Slovakian and Spanish projects, as they address similar challenges including in rural areas.

At present, there is no reflection on developing synergies with other EU Social Innovation actions.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

Without EaSI, the project team would have not been able to carry out this project. It is true that they had received funding from a local foundation supporting social innovation in 2019 to carry out a similar project but on a much smaller scale. EaSI allows to experiment on a bigger scale, build partnerships and scale-up. No alternative funding exists to implement this.

EU added value:

The project does not have a transnational dimension. However, the concept has been developed by drawing inspiration from other EU countries. The project team regularly follow research carried out by other institutions in Poland and in the EU. No plans for cross-border cooperation are envisaged.

List of literature and references:

- AEIDL (2021). Interview with the 'To give what is really needed' project team representatives.
- 'To give what is really needed' (2019). Grant application form, VP/2019/003/0068.

RuralCare

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: The region of Castilla y León in Spain has an ageing population living mainly in rural areas with an over-representation of women. The low population density, its high dispersion in the territory, rapid ageing and high life expectancy, hinder the access to long-term care services, which are also of poor quality and expensive. In addition, users have the desire to receive care at home. At present, care services are mainly performed in residential and daily care centres, which will be unsustainable in the future. The project team identified the need to develop accessible and flexible care services responding to the needs of the population.

Project team (implementers): A public-private partnership, including Gerencia de Servicios de Castilla y León; Fundación Personas; Diputación provincial de Valladolid; Universidad de Valladolid; European Social Network.

Objectives: (a) test a model of integrated long-term care adapted to rural areas, which is affordable, of higher quality, and based on users' needs and aspirations, including receiving care support at home, and enhanced cooperation between health and social services; (b) gather evidence about the benefits, including in terms of economic efficiency, of this new model in view of its possible scaling up to the whole region of Castilla y León; (c) provide other benefits to rural areas in terms of social and economic activation.

Method: A new model of person-centred care will be developed, based on home care and integration between healthcare and social services, both public and non-profit. The model will be preventive and proactive, by adapting to the needs of care users at every stage of life according to their own life plans. A pool of volunteers and the use of ICT tools will help to provide services and support in a flexible way.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The project started in October 2020 and the piloting was in June 2021. A group of 150 people will test a new model of person-centred care, in 74 municipalities in the province of Valladolid in Castilla y León. Care services will be based on individual life plans agreed between care users and care professionals, according to users' needs. The goal is to address long-term care challenges in rural areas while acknowledging the desire for people to live in their homes³⁹⁹. The model should prove that flexible and adapted person-centred care services in rural areas are feasible and sustainable.

The design of a new model of LTC provision has been preceded by a comparative study including the analysis of some case studies, and a benchmarking study. Person-centred care will rely on a set of services and resources available in the local communities: trained informal carers, services provided by volunteers, community services and coordination mechanisms to ensure integration between healthcare, social and care services. Staff involved in the project will be trained in person-centred care. The effectiveness and efficiency of the project will be evaluated with an experimental methodology based on a counterfactual analysis, including against a control group of 200 people. Evaluation criteria will include users' quality of life, changes in the system and cost savings for the State.

³⁹⁹ ESN RuralCare (2021). Benchmarking report.

On the basis of the project's results, the project team intend to influence national institutions and policymakers to adopt the approach experimented with and reform long term care policies in Spain.

Efficiency:

So far, the estimations of the solutions' efficiency have remained preliminary. A comparative study and case study analysis⁴⁰⁰ of similar projects that have been implemented in other regions at the international level was conducted by experts before the pilot. This study aimed at checking the affordability, accessibility, feasibility, sustainability and quality of the new type of person-centred care. The results convinced the regional administration of Castilla y León and led to the development of the pilot. Furthermore, once the pilot is completed, the project team will carry out a cost-benefit analysis to evaluate and compare the budgets of the current care system and of the new model. The budget per person will depend on the level of dependency as some users will need to receive medical care at home.

Project preparation included calculations of the costs of care in residential centres. The project team estimated that a place in a residential centre for a highly dependent person ranges from €1,550/month to €1,812/month if the person, addition, has cognitive impairment. Furthermore, the investment for the construction of a residential centre for 80-100 people amounts from €3.5 to €4 million. The new model would cost instead, on average €1,560/month, which is similar to the cost for a dependent person without cognitive impairment. The RuralCare approach also implied saving the costs for the construction, maintenance and depreciation of residential centres. Beneficiaries will also receive the Benefit from Dependency financed by the Social Services Management within the National System for Dependency.⁴⁰¹

The project team considered it would not be feasible to carry out the same project with fewer resources. The estimation of the budget needed to implement person-centred care will only be known at the end of the project in 2023.

Finally, the project team do not think social innovation in long-term care can be financed by applying results-based approaches, as the projects carry out research and development. Funds are necessary to develop models, pilot experience, and draw conclusions. After the results of the experimentations are available, similar projects could be financed on the basis of the results agreed, but not during the experimentation phase.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

The innovativeness of the project stems from a new way of organising and delivering LTC in rural areas, which is preventive and flexible enough to respond to individual care needs and desires. This new model was founded on:

- the integration between social and health services
- the creation of a multilevel partnership bringing together regional and local authorities, as well as public and non-profit service providers
- the development of users' individual life plans, the availability of different and well-trained care professional profiles working together in a coordinated manner
- the involvement of local communities

⁴⁰⁰ Rural Care (2021). Estudio comparativo y análisis de casos.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid. p. 82.

- the integration of technological tools such as smart walkers or lifts to help persons with mobility issues
- the adaptation and renovation of users' houses to ensure they can receive care at home in a safe manner

According to the benchmarking exercise performed by the project team, no other project has the same level of ambition and combines such flexible and integrated social and healthcare services⁴⁰².

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

One of the key drivers is that the small pilots conducted prior to the project provided some evidence of the effectiveness, affordability and sustainability of the model. Their findings will be developed and tested on a bigger scale during the project. The agreement of the administration brought the needed support, visibility and resources to develop the project.

On the negative side, the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the project for nearly a year and restrained it from a high level of engagement with the community. The support plan was fed by personal interviews with local people. Sanitary restrictions only allowed to conduct interviews house by house with the presence of one project team member instead of joint presentations. The situation created a lot of additional work to find creative solutions to still engage with the community.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

The upscaling process has been planned from the start of the project into various steps. The pilots will cover a territory of 74 local councils in the province of Valladolid. If the pilots prove to be successful, as the project team expect, a feasibility study will be conducted for the extension of RuralCare to the whole Castilla y León as well as a roadmap for its implementation. Then, the model and the results from the project will be presented to other autonomous regions. The last step of the upscaling process will be to influence a national policy reform of long-term care. This goal requires ensuring that adequate public budgets are available.

To ensure scaling up, the project has developed a multilevel partnership in which local and regional administrations, and private and public care organisations are all involved in the pilot. A working group has been organised at the national level with IMSERSO, the National Institute for Older People, to include the policymakers from the beginning of the project. Another working group gathers the Spanish autonomous regions and IMSERSO.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

Upscaling is one of the major goals of the RuralCare project as long-term care is a wide societal issue that has to be addressed in a systematic way. The following factors can positively influence the scalability/transferability of the project: the involvement of national and regional policymakers with working groups organised from the beginning of the project; the preliminary studies and small pilots carried out before the start of the project; the involvement of a control group and the cost-benefit analysis that will be available after the pilots are concluded.

As the pilot is currently ongoing, effective upscaling of the project has not yet been developed and barriers have not been identified. However, the project team already acknowledge that EaSI will help them upscale and transfer the pilots in comparison to

⁴⁰² ESN RuralCare (2021). Benchmarking report.

previous projects. The programme allows testing, assessing and making evidence of the experiment. The project team are well aware of upscaling challenges. They put the emphasis on creating evidence as, without it, there would not be any political investment to upscale the project. The rural area was also chosen purposely to try first the pilot in the most difficult environment, as it will then be easier and cheaper to introduce the model in urban areas.

Project's internal and external coherence

Internally, RuralCare has established exchanges with IMSERSO, which is one of the partners of the InCARE project, funded in the context of the same EaSI call on long-term care. The two project teams identified potential synergies and are working on opportunities for collaboration.

Externally, Castilla y León region is an intermediate body of ESF which coordinates the operational programme on social inclusion in the region. Thus, the autonomous region is well-positioned to develop synergies with the operations financed by ESF in relation to home care and support for people with severe disabilities. Plans are also foreseen for cross border cooperation through the members of the European Social Network which is a partner of the project.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The call for proposal addressed the issues the project team wanted to target. First, the call on long-term care matches with an important challenge in Castilla y León. Furthermore, the project team developed a multilevel partnership to ensure coordination with health services (see above). The project team believe that EaSI is the programme that best suits social experimentation and the project team considers, therefore, that it should be maintained.

EU added value:

In Spain, there are no funds for social experimentation, as the national administration gives priority to funding the delivery of services. Long-term care is also underfunded at the national level despite being a global demographic and health challenge. Therefore, EaSI was chosen for the resources made available for social experimentation and because it was a good incentive to look for transnational cooperation and partnership opportunities instead of having just a focus on the local level. Furthermore, EaSI allows project implementers to gain experience as a research team and to give visibility to the results of the project by facilitating dissemination.

The project team believe that DG EMPL should publish specific calls on LTC.

List of literature and references:

- AEIDL (2021). Interview with the RuralCare project team representatives.
- Rural Care (2019). Grant application VP/2019/003/0103.
- Rural Care (2019). Description of the Action.
- Rural Care (2020). Integrated social and health care in the home on a rural scale.
- Rural Care (2020). Estudio comparativo y análisis de casos.
- Rural Care (2021). Official website, <https://ruralcare.eu>.
- ESN RuralCare (2021). Benchmarking report.

UNIC

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Different pilots on personal budgets are being carried out in Europe, but there is little transnational cooperation or peer learning to encourage the exchange of experiences and expertise on the topic. This lack of collaboration negatively impacts the efficiency and effectiveness of the systems of personal budgets in Europe. The project team identified that the development of a common framework could help to design personal budget models better responding to societal needs such as long-term care (LTC).

Project team (implementers): A public-private partnership, including the European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities; European Ageing Network; The Centre for Welfare Reform; Disability Federation of Ireland; Flemish Agency for Persons with a Disability; Association of Social Care Providers of the Czech Republic; SUPPORT Girona Guardianship Foundation; Service Foundation for Persons with an Intellectual Disability; Lebenshilfe Salzburg gGmbH.

Objectives: (a) map existing LTC funding models across the EU and identify drivers and barriers to the use of personal budgets in LTC; (b) develop guidelines for the design, implementation and evaluation of a user-centred funding model for LTC focused on personal budgets; (c) develop, test and validate a toolbox to help and develop the capacity of public authorities and key stakeholders to implement personal budgets; (d) develop a transferability model to encourage the development of personal budget systems in Europe.

Method: A toolbox will be piloted in Flanders for one year. Knowledge transfer workshops will be organised in several countries developing pilots on personal budgets to assess the toolbox and adapt it to be flexible enough for different countries and contexts. The toolbox, together with a set of policy recommendations and capacity building activities, will provide a framework to support public authorities in the deployment of a user-centred funding model (based on the concept of personal budgets) for LTC.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The project started in October 2020; therefore, it is at its first stages of implementation at the time of writing. It is too early to assess the effects produced by the project.

The project team will develop online tools addressed to three types of stakeholders, to make them understand the personal budget (PB) system: users and their families, service providers and public authorities. Once the tools, approaches, and pilots are validated, the project has the ambition that the tools and approaches tested by persons with disabilities and older people can also be used by any target group in need of care (e.g. children, persons with mental health problems, etc.)

The project team are of the view that whereas each PB system should match national needs, the lack of cooperation across the EU on PB hinders the exchange of experiences and expertise. This has a negative impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of each system developed or being considered. It also requires each public authority to start from scratch in the development of guidelines, capacity building and quality assurance mechanisms, crucial to the success of PB. Piloting of PB systems is happening in Belgium, Finland, Austria, Spain, Czech Republic, Italy, Ireland, Scotland, Israel, New Zealand and Australia. These experiences are all scattered and so far, there has not been any exchange among them.

This fragmentation happens not only at the transnational level but also at the cross-sectorial level, where better integration of services addressed to different groups in need of LTC (e.g. older people, persons with disabilities, children) could contribute to improving the sustainability of LTC. Therefore, the project is expected to respond to the main four challenges of LTC:

- **Accessibility:** through PB systems, service users will be empowered to make their own choices about the type of care/support they want to receive.
- **Sustainability:** by exchanging experiences and testing the toolkit and the policy guidelines in five Member States, if the model proves to be successful, there will be economies of scale.
- **Employment:** the project will identify the specific training needs the care workforce has to implement PB, thus contributing to workforce professionalisation and skills development.
- **Quality:** the project will contribute to the development of high-quality care that is founded on and adapted to the desires and needs of people in need of LTC care/support, in line with principle 18 of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Efficiency:

The project team do not intend to conduct an economic cost-benefit analysis because it does not see this as one of the project objectives. The project team stressed that the project approach is to ensure that adequate funding is available and that it responds to the real needs of individuals. Today, service providers deliver services depending on indicators agreed with the authorities which might not respond to the real user needs.

The lack of a cost-benefit analysis is a weakness in the current project, as they could have considered comparing the average costs of LTC provision in the traditional way with the costs of PB systems. Doing so would help assess if they are (or are not) more efficient, perhaps because they allow for more home care provision or independent living of users, or because they promote empowerment of users thus increasing the quality of their health status and life or they allow for economies of scale.

The project team do not consider it would be possible to carry out the same project with fewer resources, otherwise, they would have to cut some project activities. They are looking for additional resources to see if the budget for the partners can be increased. The Flemish authority is already investing more of its own resources than 20% of co-financing. They would have not applied if the funding were results-based, as in social care it is very difficult to predict the results of experimentation.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

The type of innovation the project intends to test is not a new way of delivering LTC care and support, it is rather a new way of funding care provision and support, which significantly changes the relationships between the service provider and the user, as well as between the public authorities and the user. The way different stakeholders interact with each other changes because of the new funding model, thus triggering a new way of cooperating among them. With PB, service users are no longer recipients of care and support, on the contrary, they will have to decide the type of services or support they want to receive, and the other stakeholders will have to adapt. Users can set their own goals, enjoy the right to legal capacity and live their own lives more independently. This will have an impact on the

way services are provided, the way staff is trained, and the way services will attract the 'personal budgets holders' to their services.⁴⁰³

Another aspect of novelty is that currently there is very little exchange and cooperation at the transnational level about user-centred funding models in LTC. For this reason, the project has carried out a mapping exercise of existing practices in the EU and beyond.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

The development of a user-centred funding model is a radical transformation of the traditional funding streams. As it is a fairly new model, and it requires a transformation process, there are many challenges that may not be as clear as the benefits of developing a model as such.

First, during the mapping exercise of existing PB systems/pilots, the project team identified that existing user-centred funding models were often not easy to use and/or their use might not be easily understood by persons with care and support needs and sometimes even by the social workers responsible for supporting their clients in accessing these models. For example, with this model, users are empowered to make decisions and lead their lives, but at the same time they might require support to meet their needs and this can be challenging or not easy to implement. For this reason, in some countries, intermediaries facilitate access and use of PB both for the holders and the services.⁴⁰⁴

Second, getting a budget means more administrative and managerial responsibilities from the holders of the budget. This may be a determinant for many persons with care and support needs on whether or not they shall benefit from a model as such. A way to overcome this is supported decision-making, which is key in fostering self-determination, autonomy, control over one's life and further promoting independence.

Drivers of the social experimentation can be found in the composition of the project partnership, which includes service providers; organisations representing persons with disabilities; the Flemish Agency for Persons with a Disability – the public authority is in charge of allocating personal budgets to adults with disabilities – a research centre; and EASPD and EAN, two EU-level networks advocating for the rights and support needed by persons with disabilities and older people.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

The toolbox, once developed, will be piloted for one year in Flanders, where a PB system is already being tested. In parallel, the project team will develop knowledge transfer workshops in Spain, Austria, the Czech Republic and Finland. These workshops will help the project team to evaluate the toolbox, to adapt it, and make it flexible enough to be transferable and adaptable to other contexts, countries and target groups.

Delivering the upscaling of the user-centred funding model to countries outside of the project is not foreseen, although the project team foresee taking into account factors to allow for transferability.

The pilot stage will focus on persons with disabilities but partners such as the European Ageing Network will use the tools also for older people. Some partners will work both on persons with disabilities and older people. Usually, services are conceptualised for one target group. This project instead has the additional objective to test the model with different

⁴⁰³ UNIC (2021), Models of good practice report, p. 38.

⁴⁰⁴ UNIC (2021), Models of good practice report, p. 39.

target audiences: anyone who has LTC support needs, such as children, persons with mental health problems, homeless people, etc. EASPD will make the model available to all its members.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

It is too early to identify barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability, and the project does not have clear plans for transferring/scaling its results.

Project's internal and external coherence

- No evidence of synergies between the project and other EaSI projects has been found. The project team participated in the EaSI kick-off meeting organised by the European Commission, but it was too early to identify possible synergies. However, they are open to collaborating with other projects, if synergies are identified.
- No evidence of synergies with other EU funds has been found either.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The project team argued that this project would have not been possible without EaSI support. The project team aimed to carry out such experimentation about personal budgets in a transnational dimension a few times. However, since there have been no EU funding schemes on LTC (with the ESF funds administered by national policymakers), the project struggled with transnational projects are complex as different managing authorities from different countries have to publish coordinated calls on the same subjects. EaSI is really the only EU funding opportunity so far, allowing to implement activities of different nature: research, social experimentation, and transnational cooperation.

EU added value:

The project partners applied for funding in the framework of EaSI, because it allows them to carry out transnational cooperation and cross-border learning, which would not have been possible with national programmes. Different pilots on PB are being held in Europe, but in isolation. Thanks to EaSI, the project has become an opportunity to bring people together and gather the learning experience on how to do personal budgeting, which can be useful for different stakeholders. Moreover, this project allows the project team to develop common guidelines, build knowledge, and gather examples. There is a common understanding that the topic of PB is important, but its implementation raises a lot of questions. Several authorities and service providers are lost on where to start and what to look at. It was a request from EASPD members and partners to develop a transnational project on this topic.

List of literature and references:

- AEIDL (2021). Interview with the UNIC project team.
- UNIC (2019). Grant application VP/2019/003/0055.
- UNIC (2021). Models of good practice report.
- UNIC (2021). Official website: www.unicproject.eu.

CASE STUDIES: 2020 CALL

4IM

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Miskolc is a rather segregated city with distinct neighbourhoods and districts suffering from high concentrations of vulnerable people, many of them being of Roma ethnicity. Such neighbourhoods tend to suffer from well-known issues such as deep poverty, discrimination, lack of education, health issues, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, etc. In addition, residents' housing situation tends to be worse than elsewhere. They are often found living in derelict barracks and stone houses of former vineyards.

Project team (implementers): A public-private partnership led by the City of Miskolc (HU) and complemented by the local NGOs Abaujrakezdes Public Association (HU) and HARFA Foundation (HU) as well as the University of Miskolc (HU), AEIDL (BE), and the City of Košice (SK).

Objectives: This pilot had two main objectives. First, it sought to foster active inclusion of residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, especially Roma people, drawing on a holistic approach. Second, it sought to make the services on offer more targeted and efficient. In addition, it aimed to establish a mechanism of local coordination for the implementation of these services. All of the above was based on a newly formed partnership between relevant public authorities, NGOs, service providers and the community as a whole.

Method: This pilot tested a new model of benefits and social services delivery. It involved the cooperation and incorporation of several newly formed boards and committees, whose job was to facilitate outreach and implementation with the ultimate goal of institutionalising cooperation between relevant stakeholders. The project also placed emphasis on co-production.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The pilot sought to treat 300 beneficiaries from two of the sixteen disadvantaged and segregated neighbourhoods in Miskolc. Out of those, 80% or 240 were expected to be in employment, training, or other activation measures by the end of the intervention. In addition, 80% were projected to be more socially included than before by means of various other activation and inclusion measures. Moreover, the pilot foresaw a general improvement in terms of economic and living conditions in the two pilot neighbourhoods.

The pilot also foresaw several institutional changes at the city level. This entailed the introduction of several new community bodies, such as a city-wide Social Innovation Committee, whose role would be to advise on the incorporation of socially innovative approaches into municipal legislation. For the purpose of the pilot at hand, this would include the legal framework necessary to carry out the foreseen action. The Social Innovation Resource Centre would be tasked with the stirring and practical implementation of the pilot. There would also be Neighbourhood Access Points in each pilot area, so as to reach out to the local communities and get residents involved in the actions. Their work was closely related to that of the Resource Centre. Finally, there would be Community Action Groups for each neighbourhood. They related to the pilot's co-production aspect. They were being assembled by specially trained community coaches and were designed to empower beneficiaries by participating in local governance. However, all new structures were temporary and limited to the duration of the pilot, at the reporting date. The ultimate goal

would, therefore, be to consolidate those new structures and embed them into the city's administrative structure permanently. In terms of the monitoring of the project effects, as of January 2022, the project had not published the details of its evaluation approach.

Efficiency:

The project team conceded that there would be no cost savings over the implementation period. Indeed, cost-saving within this pilot was not a part of the city's plans. Instead, the city expected to find a more efficient way of spending available funds, which would yield better social outcomes. However, in the long run, cost savings were likely to accrue as the social situation improved and fewer people would depend on social benefits. Consequently, the project team did not believe the same results could have been achieved with fewer resources. Indeed, they insisted that the current funding constituted the bare minimum (see also 'Barriers and drivers of social experimentation').

Finally, the project team doubted the appropriateness of results-based funding for experimental social innovations such as 4IM. That was because grants-based funding, as currently provided, guaranteed more flexibility in case of negative results or in case changes need to be made on short notice. However, the project team also noted that they would be more favourable towards results-based funding if the relevant call for proposals was framed more explicitly and would allow for the formulation of concrete and realistic goals.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

There were three aspects to 4IM's innovativeness. First, the holistic integration of services at the city level was quite new to the region. Second, the creation of a Social Innovation Resource Centre as a separate department of the townhall, a dedicated Social Innovation Committee, and the Neighbourhood Access Points, all working on developing an integrated approach to service delivery, which 4IM was trialling, allowed the remaining departments to continue their daily tasks without interruption. Finally, the pilot's focus on co-production was strong. This aspect was embodied by the creation of the Community Action Groups.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

Political change in Miskolc's city administration substantially drove the implementation of this social experimentation. In 2019, a new opposition party coalition entered power. Their programme significantly differed from that of the previous administration and emphasised inclusive local development. Another driver was that the 4IM was able to derive its methodology from a Roma programme implemented by the Council of Europe that was based on participatory dialogue between city administrations and end-beneficiaries. One member of the project team was one of the designers of said programme and that is why 4IM was able to apply the methodology.

A significant barrier arose from an administrative error that occurred during the application stage. By mistake, the project team indicated 30% instead of the 10% the EaSI call for proposal would have allowed for co-financing. This meant that project partners needed to contribute substantially more of their own resources than would have been necessary.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

Given the early stage of implementation upscaling, plans were not settled at the reporting date. However, what could be said was that should the pilot yield positive results, the

approach would likely be implemented in Košice, which was one of the project's co-beneficiaries. In addition, the pilot included a thorough dissemination strategy that aimed to promote the project results at local, national and international levels.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

There were two key drivers of scalability and transferability. In the first place, the cities of Miskolc and Košice shared an extensive history of collaboration on various topics thus facilitating the inclusion of Košice in the pilot, also as a potential first destination for transferring the approach trialled by 4IM. Furthermore, the pilot included one co-beneficiary (AEIDL) whose sole job would be to network and disseminate it at the European level.

Project's internal and external coherence

There was no evidence of internal or external coherence at the time of this report.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

On the whole, the relevance of EaSI was perceived as high because the project team considered that although other international projects had attempted to address similar problems to those in Miskolc, none had led to local changes. In addition, the interviewee, who is an advisor external to the main beneficiary (City of Miskolc), believed that the city and the entire project team could grow as social innovators through EaSI. The interviewee believed that the project team were still missing some of the tools needed to produce innovation. Hence, the project team argued that it would be prudent for EaSI, or a similar programme, to maintain its support for social innovation. According to them, it allows for thinking out of the box.

However, relevance seemed limited in one aspect: the project team found it difficult to ask for changes to social benefits in the Hungarian context because most of them were being administered by the national government. Hence, city administrations such as Miskolc have little flexibility to adjust such benefits themselves, no matter how innovative the proposed project is.

EU added value:

There was a strong sense of EU added value in the 4IM project. First, national funds are not made available for social experimentation and innovation projects. As such, the pilot could not have started, had it not been for EaSI. In fact, the city attempted to resolve the social needs in question, but to no significant avail. All such attempts occurred at a smaller scale, too. Furthermore, the project team were built on a diverse partnership of stakeholders from Hungary, Belgium and Slovakia, which was seen as an important factor in cross-border learning.

List of literature and references:

- Visionary Analytics (2022). Interview with the 4IM project team representatives.
- 4IM (2022). Project application documents.
- EC (2022). 2020 call projects kick-off presentation.

Lone Parents (Digital Action)

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: The pilot's end-beneficiaries are lone parents in three countries: Ireland, Finland and Greece. Even though this group faces different realities in the three pilot countries, there are common social needs revolving around the difficulty of reconciling work and family life. Long periods away from work can lead to losing skills and reducing employability. As a result, lone parents often find themselves in precarious and low-paid work. Consequently, lone parents have consistently ranked among the most vulnerable groups in all three countries.

Project team (implementers): A public-private partnership straddling three Member States which consists of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Ireland); One Family (Ireland); the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment in Uusimaa (Finland); the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Greece); Agalia (Greece); and Ark of the World (Greece).

Objectives: Objectives slightly vary from country to country. The Irish and Greek pilots seek to integrate employability and social support through digital service and training delivery. The Finnish pilot will expand a pre-existing pilot focused on parents on extended parental leave to all unemployed single parents. All pilots ultimately work towards improving lone parents' employability and facilitating their (re-)integration into the labour market.

Method: The project will provide targeted employability support to lone parents with low incomes at locations in Ireland, Finland and Greece. The key feature of this action is that a large proportion of trainings and other measures will be delivered digitally. Parents lacking the means to purchase their own equipment will be provided with it free of charge.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The project was launched in early 2022, which means that no information on the intervention's effectiveness is available to date. The only available output is extensive desk research on the social need in Ireland, and to a lesser extent also in Greece and Finland. As such, the following will be restricted to a summary of Lone Parents' expected results and outputs.

Lone Parents seeks to effect substantial improvements across three key indicators: (1) take-up of education; (2) take-up of training or employment; (3) the degree of social inclusion. The consortium will evaluate these targets against the status quo. There are plans to collect data on a range of other indicators to capture the progress of lone parents in more detail. This includes data on key work skills (e.g. teamwork, communication, timekeeping and literacy), attitudinal skills (e.g. motivation, confidence, responsibility and self-esteem), personal skills (e.g. appearance, attendance and timekeeping) and practical skills (e.g. ability to complete forms, ability to complete CVs and money management). There will be what the project team term a 'semi-experimental' evaluation instead of a counterfactual one. That is because there will not be dedicated experimental and control groups. Instead, participants of the pilot will be statistically matched with comparable non-participants. This has been done to allow as many lone parents as possible to benefit from the intervention without having to insist on a strict participants cap.

Another important set of outcomes relates to capacity building and sustainability. Neither Finnish nor Greek social services currently target lone parents specifically. Only Ireland

does so to some extent. As such, this intervention is expected to generate the expertise and capability of handling lone parents effectively and efficiently among the involved stakeholders. Ireland, for example, will develop profiling and distance travel tools (i.e. tools for the categorisation of lone parents and the remote delivery of services, respectively) that are tailored to the needs of lone parents.

Efficiency:

The project team have only been able to make statements about the cost efficiency for the Irish pilot at this point. If successful, the pilot is likely to generate cost savings compared to existing solutions. That is because the cost of inactivation is greater than that of activation measures. This is related to the rather generous Irish social security payments for lone parents as well as to generational poverty. That is to say, investing in activation might appear more expensive in the short term, but long-term gains will outweigh those short-term losses.

At this point in project implementation, there does not seem to be much potential to achieve the same results with fewer resources than currently budgeted. The project team imagine that hardware made accessible to first-generation beneficiaries could be passed on to beneficiaries of further iterations of the pilot. However, this is contingent on there being another iteration.

Finally, the project team are apprehensive of the prospects of a payment-by-result condition. That is because they believe that negative results carry an inherent value, too. Hence, the Irish implementers would only consider applying for results-based funding for social experimentation, if they had assurances from their own department of expenditure that the national government would cover any losses from unexpected results.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

What is most innovative about this project is the use of digital technology to facilitate the labour market integration of this specific target group of lone parents, especially in Ireland. To this end, the project will develop a new and refined assessment tool for the needs of lone parents. In addition, there will be a distance travelled tool that will capture personal progress as well as metrics for the evaluation. Finally, the digital delivery of trainings and services is innovative because it has never been applied to this target group and will allow them to better combine training and family responsibilities.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

In the Irish context, social experimentation is being driven by two factors. First, the Irish partner NGO One Family previously conducted a small-scale trial to test the feasibility of delivering employability courses for lone parents online successfully. It is now able to contribute this experience to the EaSI pilot. Furthermore, the Irish government department has extensive experience in engaging lone parents in its activities.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

There are currently no clear transfer plans given the early stage of implementation. However, the project coordinator, being part of the lone parents' division of the relevant government department, stresses that they are in continuous conversation with all relevant divisions of the Irish government.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

In Ireland, upscaling prospects are being driven by the fact that this pilot is in line with Irish national policy. This policy has been shifting from the blunt provision of support payments toward more activation-based approaches. However, previous policy measures have not had the desired effects, which is why the project team are hopeful that the pilot's methodology will be incorporated into national policy, given the project evaluation is positive. The fact that the project coordinators belong to the relevant policymaking unit will certainly aid this undertaking.

Project's internal and external coherence

There is currently no evidence of internal or external synergies. However, the project team do intend to contact some projects of the same call for proposals to discuss possible synergies, complementarities, and collaborations.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

As mentioned in the preceding section, the Lone Parents project is taking place at a time of policy shift regarding lone parents in Ireland. The policy is shifting towards a more activation-based approach. Lone Parents is doing just that. Another aspect of relevance is that EaSI allows for testing and validating innovative practices before assimilating them into national legislation. This is particularly important considering that previous policy initiatives launched by the Irish government were not as successful as hoped. Finally, the Irish government has been working to enhance its cooperation with NGOs.

EU added value:

The most important EU added value which has been emphasised by the project team is the transnational dimension. That is because, according to them, it will enable experience and practice sharing among the Irish, Finnish and Greek pilot locations and partners. The project team believe this to be quite valuable as it is likely going to enhance capabilities and create synergies. After all, each country has its unique challenges, but also insights.

Importantly, such cooperation would not have been possible, had the pilot been run on national funding only. In addition, the scale of the pilot would have likely been smaller, too. However, the project team believe that only the current transnational scale would equip the eventual results with sufficient validity to be of any use for transfer and upscaling.

List of literature and references:

- Visionary Analytics (2022). Interview with the Lone Parents project team representatives.
- Lone Parents (2022). Project application documents.
- EC (2022). 2020 call projects kick-off presentation.

CRIS

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: In all three pilot countries (Hungary, Germany and Slovakia) long-term unemployed or working-age inactive people face multiple problems including labour market discrimination due to their ethnic origin, low skills level, health problems, poor housing conditions, and weak social networks, or employer discrimination. Due to the complexity of problems faced by these groups, a combination of social services is often required, which needs to be coordinated so as to be effective. The target groups in the selected locations represent long-term unemployed marginalised immigrant and/or ethnic communities living in other parts of the pilot countries.

Project team (implementers): A cross-country partnership including MainArbeit (Germany); CSPS SAS (Slovakia); Artemisszió Foundation (Hungary); Bischitz Johanna Centre (Hungary); People in Need (Slovakia); as well as some associate partners.

Objectives: The broader goal of the project is to improve labour market inclusion and social inclusion in the target countries through three operational objectives: (a) increasing the uptake of social benefits through awareness-raising; (b) providing effective referral and cooperation mechanisms and ensuring the delivery of effective services and support; (c) establishing and/or enhancing cooperation between responsible organisations and contributing to their capacity-building.

Method: The project promotes a complex methodological approach of 'systemic counselling', which consists of three parts: (1) conducting outreach activities to improve the existing referral mechanisms; (2) capacity-building of responsible organisations; and (3) developing a model of subcontracting NGO services. The implementation of these methodological activities is coordinated by the so-called Innovation Labs.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The project has only been launched in 2022 with most of its effects pending. To monitor and evaluate the project's impact, the project implementers intend to combine both quantitative and qualitative methods. As reported by the project team, the quantitative impact assessment would be subcontracted to an independent organisation, while the qualitative evaluation would be conducted in cooperation between an independent organisation and project partners. The qualitative evaluation will be based on the interviews with project implementers and a review of project documentation. The Innovation Labs will coordinate the production of the main project outputs such as detailed guidelines and instructions on referral and cooperation mechanisms or a model of subcontracting NGO services.

Efficiency:

As of early 2022, the project documentation had not elaborated upon the fact whether their approach was more cost-effective than the existing ones. However, during the interview, its representatives expressed a very strong commitment to evaluating the efficiency of the solution and upscaling it only in the case of positive results. In terms of internal budget distribution, the project team proposed a budget involving a variety of coordination activities, which could help to improve the project's internal efficiency (e.g. peer-reviewing internal deliverables and publications, together with co-ordinating thematic webinars). Regarding the payment by results concept, the project team argued against the approach, citing the

inherently risky nature of social experimentation. The team would not have applied for EaSI funding, had the condition been in place.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

The innovative content of the project consists of two elements. The first innovative aspect was that the project employed the so-called systemic counselling methodology (see above), which will connect counselling with employment services. The methodology was first developed in psychotherapy but has recently shifted into the field of social counselling. Furthermore, the project team also intend to involve the target groups in developing the services they would receive (i.e. employ the so-called co-production approach). The project team also aim to reflect upon the UK regional experience of developing 'family centres' and transfer it to the project partner countries – especially Slovakia and Hungary⁴⁰⁵.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

The project team have started the implementation very recently and could not share any insights on either barriers or drivers of social experimentation as of early 2022.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

As of February 2022, the project is in its early implementation phase and has developed only a broader sustainability strategy. As pointed out by the project implementers, sustainability of the new methods of cooperation mainly depends on whether the project can prove the methods' effectiveness and achieve an attitudinal change in the institutional cultures of their target countries. Due to a high level of involvement of the local policymakers in the process of project implementation, the project team express careful optimism. Specifically, they hope to give a substantive push to Slovak and Hungarian municipalities to invest more in the specialised services of NGOs that enable the social and labour market inclusion of vulnerable people. Finally, the project team will also make openly available a large share of the sustainable project outputs (such as implementation protocols and tools), which can be continuously used by other stakeholders in the future.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

The project team have started the implementation very recently and could not share any insights on either barriers or drivers of upscaling/transferring the project results.

Project's internal and external coherence

- There is some evidence of synergies between the project and a different EaSI project (RIAC) from a previous EaSI call, at a conceptual level (knowledge spill-over). As of early 2022, the project team aim to develop plans for potential cooperation with other projects within the 2020 call.
- There is also some evidence of synergies at the financial level with the ESF+ actions. Specifically, an ESF-supported project called REACT (Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe) is funding projects at the regional level. Some of the project team members also benefit from REACT's funding.

⁴⁰⁵ 'Family Centres' are established most often as service-appendices to kindergartens. The institution exists in many countries, but in the UK, where it originated, family centres have a strong relation to employment services (also known 'Early Excellence Centres' or 'Family Hubs').

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value**Relevance of EaSI:**

The project implementers pointed out that while EaSI resources and funding are important to them, they are not totally dependent on them. The main motivation behind their application was because they thought that the programme would be appropriate for them to help with the development of their own skills as social experimenters, also through cross-country exchanges with partners from Slovakia and Hungary. The relevance of the programme for the team is reflected in two factors. First, the priorities outlined by the call are directly relevant to the project's goals as the project implementers have been a part of an EU-wide discussion about service integration for a long time (e.g. with the European Social Network). Second, the needs that the project addresses are relevant both at the EU and national levels (in Hungary, Slovakia and Germany) as a policy area. To improve the in-transparency of social systems and prevent overlapping work, additional stimuli coming from the EU institutional framework are particularly important.

EU added value:

The project implementers stress the importance of the cross-border nature of the cooperation taking place in the project, particularly in the light of potential learning synergies. They believe that participation in EaSI would be important for expanding the horizon of evaluating project activities and ensuring their long-term sustainability. Furthermore, cooperation with other EU Member States provides the participants with bench-learning possibilities and a chance to expand the project beyond the national level. Preliminarily, the project team plan to utilise the EaSI credentials to better expose their project also in the European Social Network and in the European Association of Local Authorities as a part of their communication and dissemination efforts. That said, the project team have also admitted that the EaSI funding opportunity was not unique, especially for Germany, where there are a lot of funding opportunities both by local and national authorities as well as private foundations (e.g. SPGT or Crespo Foundation).

List of literature and references:

- Visionary Analytics (2022). Interview with the CRIS project team representatives.
- CRIS (2022). Project application documents.
- EC (2022). 2020 call projects kick-off presentation.

NOVA

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: 34.3% of the population in the Republic of Serbia (2.28 million) is at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This value is significantly higher than the average value for the EU 28 countries (21.7%). Approximately 40% of the population exposed to a risk of poverty or social exclusion faces a combination of two or three risk factors such as labour inactivity, high informal employment, poor educational background, and gender-based discrimination, among others. Such combinations significantly influence the situation of the most vulnerable, their access to education, social services, labour markets and overall inclusion in the society.

Project team (implementers): A public-private partnership between the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia; National Employment Services of Serbia; Centre for Social Policy; ISM Strategic Marketing; The Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia; the Serbian Red Cross as well as its local offices.

Objectives: A specific objective of the project is to reduce barriers to social services and access to the labour market of the most vulnerable groups in Serbia by using integrative approaches and new multistakeholder partnerships.

Method: The project uses the model of integration of services for the target groups based on gradual reforms, which also considers the limited administrative capacity in the national context. The model is focused on increasing access to different types of services and encompassing key phases in policy development. The methodological approach includes a proposal for a new process of work and improvement of current practices at the local level (municipalities).

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The project has only been launched in early 2022 which means that no information on the intervention's effectiveness is available to date. The aims are to improve the access of the most vulnerable groups to the labour market and their employment status. It also aims to improve the use of existing public support measures in the field of employment and social protection, as well as measures to promote cross-sectoral cooperation at the local level, thus improving coordination between stakeholders in social protection, employment and other relevant fields.

The project team have foreseen an evaluation process based on extensive survey work with vulnerable groups/households to assess the level of progress while the project is being implemented. Specifically, they aim to conduct three types of assessment activities:

- Repetitive representative national surveys
- Repetitive sample surveys for 300 social assistance beneficiaries and 100 control groups
- An ethnographical survey

However, the project team have not yet specified the details of the proposed assessment approach.

Efficiency:

As of early 2022, the project team have not made yet any comparative estimates of the cost-efficiency of their proposed solutions, but their project management plan foresees several measures aimed at ensuring the internal cost-efficiency of the project. For example, the project team foresee a very limited number of travelling arrangements and propose to actively use their partnership's media presence and communication networks (supplemented by public and TV appearances) to distribute the information about the project in the most economical fashion possible. For these reasons, at this point in project implementation, there does not seem to be much potential to achieve the same results with even fewer resources than currently budgeted.

The project team stressed that they would not have applied for the EaSI funding, had it been conditioned on a payment by results clause. Specifically, they characterise their national public funding systems as too rigid and unwilling to support programmes that involve an experimentation element. By contrast, they see the EU funding schemes as a more flexible tool. The only rearrangement that the project team deem feasible is to adjust the existing co-funding scheme and encourage the national and regional governments to provide a higher co-funding rate (e.g. 50%).

Innovativeness of the project**Innovative content:**

The innovative content of the project is largely centred around the new cooperation modes and new ways of delivery of services in the national context (Serbia). As regards the new way of cooperation, the proposed project intends to bridge the existing initiatives at the local level in Serbia and coordinate this cooperation at the national level. The project team foresee creating local bodies in the participating municipalities. These bodies will connect relevant stakeholders and address the needs of the target groups individually. The coordinating institution at the national level will also contribute to sharing experiences and best practices between these local institutions. As for the new way of delivering services, the project represents a holistic approach to addressing the needs of target group members as well as to devising individual activation plans, which have not been tried in Serbia before.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

The project team have started the implementation very recently and could not share any insights on either barriers or drivers of social experimentation as of early 2022.

Scalability/Transferability**Current state of scaling/transfer plans:**

As of early 2022, there are no detailed transfer plans given the early stage of project implementation. However, the project team aim to develop detailed dissemination and mainstreaming plan as a part of the project deliverables. They believe that by sharing the experiences of beneficiaries from the target group, they can increase demand for their services (e.g. by asking beneficiaries to advocate for the model to be implemented in their local communities on a broader scale). Furthermore, the project team will leverage the fact that policy decision-makers are involved in the project activities in their attempts to mainstream and, eventually, embed the results at the national level.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

The project team have started the implementation very recently and could not share any insights on either barriers or drivers of upscaling/transferring the project results.

Project's internal and external coherence

As of early 2022, there is no evidence of internal or external synergies. Their external cooperation possibilities are somewhat constrained by the fact that Serbia is a non-EU Member State, but the project team have expressed readiness to leverage the cooperation possibilities within the 2020 call.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The project team highly assess the programme's relevance because of four factors. First, they argue that EaSI represents a unique funding opportunity for social experimentation at the EU level as well as for their region. As a country they are not eligible for the EEA funding and the national funds for social experimentation/innovation are very limited. Second, the programme's objectives largely correspond to what the project team see as relevant for their country (Serbia). They believe that testing any policy solutions is essential before changing the national legislation and implementing reforms since the government needs to know whether the proposed mechanisms are appropriate and adequate. Furthermore, the lead project partners highlight that the opportunities offered by the EaSI programme well correspond with their preceding wish to establish cooperation with the national employment service, the Red Cross, and other relevant stakeholders. Finally, the project team believe that implementing the project will contribute to strengthening the capacities of individual team members as well as of those at the local level (e.g. subcontractors). Particularly, they expect to grow capacity in the field of applying for, implementing and monitoring EU-funded projects.

EU added value:

The project team see a relatively high level of EU added value in the programme. First, they see EaSI opportunity for international cooperation as an important part of the programme's added value, which would not have happened without the said EU support. Their team structure already implies a cross-border partnership (between a Slovenian and several Serbian partners in the consortium). The project team have also scheduled several study visits to Slovenia and Denmark (with the latter's social protections system being analysed for potential good practices). Moreover, the project team hope to achieve a higher level of exposure to project results through the EU level cooperation, which could help them to find potential donors in the future.

List of literature and references:

- Visionary Analytics (2022). Interview with the NOVA project team representatives.
- NOVA (2022). Project application documents.
- EC (2022). 2020 call projects kick-off presentation.

COPE

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: The needs of the NEET (Not in Education, Employment and Training) individuals aged between 15 and 29 years old are the focus of the project's holistic approach. In 2019, the proportion of young NEETs in the EU ranged from 7.3% in Sweden to 27.8% in Italy with groups of extremely disadvantaged people. According to the academic literature, the problems faced by the NEETs are largely caused by the lack of engagement, cognitive deficits, psychiatric sub-threshold and full-blown symptoms, and reduction in interpersonal functioning. As the result, NEETs distance themselves from the labour market due to a combination of factors such as lifestyle, poor level of mental well-being, lack of access to social and community networks, and general socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions in the national contexts.

Project team (implementers): A public-private partnership of the Autonomous Province of Trento (Italy); COGES Don Milani Group (Italy); University of New Lisbon (Portugal); European Foundation for Philanthropy and Society Development (Croatia); Trento Federation of Cooperatives (Italy); SHINE 2Europe, Lda (Portugal); and University of East London (UK).

Objectives: The main goals of the project are: (a) to implement an intervention based on the 'relational proximity' community network approach for social inclusion; (b) to evaluate how the intervention may add value and can be integrated into the way employment and social services are currently designed and implemented for NEETs in target groups.

Method: The project will address the need factors simultaneously through the proposed method of 'relational proximity'. The method, which is developed and sustained through a multistakeholder approach, is focused on the social and health needs – particularly mental health needs – and assets of young NEETs. The network created through relational proximity is accessed through the support of a link worker who builds a trusting relationship with each young NEET.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The project has only been launched in 2022 with most of its effects pending. To monitor and evaluate the project's impact, the project team intend to adopt a mixed-methods approach. The approach will emphasise the importance of assessing effects at the level of individuals but also understanding the context and mechanisms underpinning the implementation of the intervention. The evaluation findings will feed into project sustainability and scalability. The outcome evaluation will use the data collected by the employed link workers from at least 600 referred NEETs at the initial stage and follow-up data from at least 380 users in the six month follow-up period via an online platform. Specifically, the project team will assess changes in the following social and health outcomes:

- Demographic characteristics and NEET status
- Quality of life (Euroqol approach, EQ-5D-5L)
- Self-esteem (Rosenberg self-esteem scale)
- Mental health/well-being (Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale)

- Social capital (incl. neighbourhood trust, social networks and community involvement)

It will also be supplemented through routine data collection during the project implementation such as data on securing and maintaining employment after two months, type and frequency of services accessed, access to resources as well as social outcomes, such as finance and other contextual factors. This will cover a sub-set of 30 people through in-depth qualitative interviews.

Finally, to understand the mechanisms and contextual factors that drive the project development through its main components the project team will employ the method of process evaluation. The process evaluation will employ in-depth interviews with a variety of stakeholders as well as focus groups for the purposes of data collection and analysis.

Efficiency:

As the project is only in its early implementation phase, the project team do not yet have evidence to demonstrate that their proposed approach is more cost-effective than the existing ones. However, the project documentation points out that a detailed approach to efficiency evaluation will be developed in the course of the project implementation, complemented by a cost-benefit analysis which will provide a financial assessment of the intervention.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

The main innovative aspect of the intervention is that it applies the methodology of relational proximity networks to a new target group (NEETS), which had not been explored before. Conceptually, the project also represents a new service at the individual level but also a new way of partnering between institutions and all other informal entities and resources existing in the communities of the target countries.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

The project team have started the implementation very recently and could not share any insights on either barriers or drivers of social experimentation.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

The project team are considering upscaling and transferring the project results in two different national contexts in Italy and Portugal. Specifically, they intend to expand the regional project and access additional sites, where the approach could be tested further. As of early 2022, the project team are working on an operational design of the intervention's transfer through the involvement of local stakeholders in both countries (e.g. recruiting workers for interactions with NEETs).

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

The project team have started the implementation very recently and could not share any insights on either barriers or drivers of upscaling/transferring the project results.

Project's internal and external coherence

- No evidence of synergies between the project and other EaSI projects has been found. As of 2022, the project team are considering whether they can approach other organisations within the framework of the same call for the purpose of creating a cooperative network.
- No evidence of synergies with other EU social innovation actions has been found either.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The project team believe that the support offered by EaSI for social experimentation is essential to build and validate an action framework and to make it replicable in different national contexts. They view other actions such as legislative changes or policy reforms as mere supporting tools. During the interview, the project team confirmed that the priorities outlined in the project call are pertinent to all of the organisations involved in the process of project proposal drafting. The most important part of EaSI's relevance for the project team is its strong networking aspect, which the team could use for the future upscaling and development of the project.

EU added value:

As evidenced by an in-depth interview with the project implementers, EaSI has provided the project team with a unique opportunity for funding their social experimentation efforts, since they could not find similar schemes at the national level (e.g. in Italy). The project implementers believe that the true EU added value of EaSI is the ability to exchange knowledge and, potentially, replicate one's project in a different national context. The project team have also stressed that the visibility provided by the EaSI programme will likely contribute to better sustainability of their project results. While the project team intend to strengthen cooperation with other organisations and networks involved in this topic at the EU level (e.g. within the framework of the same call), as of early 2022 they do not have a detailed plan of action.

List of literature and references:

- Visionary Analytics (2022). Interview with the COPE project team representatives.
- COPE (2022). Project application documents.
- EC (2022). 2020 call projects kick-off presentation.

RETICULATE

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Despite the growing attention to effective social policies aimed at addressing poverty and social exclusion to promote sustainable and inclusive growth, many difficulties pertain across the EU such as coordination at the local level, limited access to social services, or poor administrative capacity at the national level. In Italy (target country), a new measure was developed to combat poverty and promote social and labour market inclusion of particularly vulnerable families and individuals (called Citizenship Income or *Reddito di Cittadinanza* – RdC). However, integrated access to social and employment services, accompanied by income support measures, has not yet been achieved (particularly, in some areas of Italy) due to the difficulty in ensuring effective coordination among services, departments and policies. The project aims to address these problems.

Project team (implementers): A largely Italian private-public partnership (Anci Toscana Associazione; Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale; Tuscan Regional Agency for Employment; Italian Federation of Organisations for Homeless People; Società della Salute Pistoiese 'Coeso Società Della Salute Delle Zone Amiata Grossetana, Colline Metallifere e Area Grossetana'; Capannori Municipality; Livorno Municipality; and Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale) in partnership with the European Social Network ASBL.

Objective: To make the opportunities offered by the fragmented system of public and private services more accessible to families with children and homeless people.

Method: The project integrates the above mentioned RdC services within a one-stop-shop approach (i.e. providing services within a single access point and an integrated network of services with protocols, procedures and tools) developed through the process of multistakeholder cooperation.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The primary specific objective of the project is setting up a model of an integrated system aimed at offering the combination of adequate income support provision with labour market activation and effective access to enabling goods and services. It strives to do so through the systematisation of practices and procedures, integrated by a coordination model of all resources, opportunities, skills and professional roles dispersed among services and organisations.

Despite having started relatively recently, the project team have already developed a broad framework for the evaluation of the project outcomes, results and impacts. These will be evaluated at three different levels – individual, meso and macro-levels respectively. The evaluation of the experimentation results will be conducted at the local level with a perspective for potential upscaling. Thus, for example, the indicators for the individual level will include coverage rates, consistency, dropout rates and satisfaction with the provided services. The project foresees a separate working package on monitoring and evaluation. However, the exact details of the evaluation approach were not available as of January 2022, since its development was foreseen only in the third month after the project kick-off.

Efficiency:

At the early point in implementation, the project team cannot provide exact estimates of their approach's efficiency. However, they believe that creating a one-stop-shop will help to

decrease overlaps between the existing services and additional expenditures, elimination of which will feed into their solution's efficiency. The project team are not entirely sure about the implementation of funding by results clause, claiming that the EaSI projects should be 'about the process and not the final results'. As the result, the project team expressed doubts about whether they would have submitted a proposal for funding that was entirely based on such a condition.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

There are several dimensions of the project's innovative content. First, is the idea to implement the one-stop-shop system in the context of RdC. The project foresees creating new physical spaces where different services such as psychological, social and financial support will be provided in an integrated way. Second, the project will work at the financial level to improve connections between different financial EU, national and regional level funds, which have been absent before. The project implementers also argue that their evaluation approach will be innovative due to its process-oriented nature, but its details are unavailable so far (see the section above).

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

The project team have started the implementation very recently and could not share any insights on either barriers or drivers of social experimentation as of early 2022.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

The project team have developed a preliminary strategy for the mainstreaming of the project results as a part of their communication strategy. For now, it largely foresees making all project outputs available in open access, but no long-term attempts to transfer the project results at their own initiative. However, the project implementers are also in dialogue with the Welfare and Social Innovation Department of the Tuscany region, which is an associate partner in the project implementation. They believe that Tuscany can potentially become a fertile ground for transferring the project results.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

Given the lack of concrete upscaling or transfer plans, no barriers or drivers of scalability and transferability were evident as of January 2022.

Project's internal and external coherence

As of January 2022, the project team were considering both potential internal and external synergies with other social innovation projects. First, they were exploring cooperation opportunities with the Trento-based project COPE (since the COPE project is a part of the same national social protection system) in the framework of the 2020 call. Second, they were studying potential expansion avenues within the ESF+ framework.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The relevance of EaSI for this specific project is relatively high. First, the project implementers argue that their proposed approach to integrating services is necessary and better than that of pushing for new reforms of the national legislation (because the legislation is allegedly already incoherent and requires integration). Second, the priorities as described

in the call are pertinent to the region because it needs service integration. Broadly, they also correspond to the Italian strategic policy priorities as of 2022. Furthermore, the proposed project in the EaSI framework fits well into the EU's long-term policy priorities such as, for example, the European Pillar of Social Rights and the EP Resolution on minimum income policies as a tool for fighting poverty. Third, the project team believe that the long-term duration of the project will help to cement the partnership that has emerged before their project application and grow as social innovators (e.g. by learning more about the methods of outreach and evaluation), thus satisfying their needs as social innovators.

EU added value:

The project team argue that the project would not have taken place at the same scale, had it not been supported through the EaSI programme. While the project team are aware of other funding alternatives and is even using some of them (e.g. EEA funding on a green jobs project), they see the EaSI 2020 call as a unique opportunity to start working on a one-stop-shop approach specifically in the context of social policy and using the method of social experimentation. Furthermore, the project team point out that EU programmes help them establish more diverse partnerships with organisations from other EU Member States (such as Belgium and Greece in their case, which already have significant experience with one-stop-shop approaches). The team also believe that their participation in the EaSI programme might generate additional exposure for the project results.

List of literature and references:

- Visionary Analytics (2022). Interview with the RETICULATE project team representatives.
- RETICULATE (2022). Project application documents.
- EC (2022). 2020 call projects kick-off presentation.

Rights First

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: The main need is that many homeless people in Brussels are not registered with the municipality or the responsible Public Centre for Social Action. Without registration at one of these offices, people are unable to access any social benefits, besides urgent medical care. In addition, Brussels is currently experiencing a housing crisis, meaning that approximately 5,300 people reside in inadequate housing, or in emergency/transit centres at any given point in time. This figure has grown from only 500 back in 2008. This means that Brussels has not only witnessed a sharp increase in homelessness which needs addressing but also that many homeless people cannot access their social entitlements.

Project team (implementers): A multinational, but Brussels-centred public-private consortium consisting of Bruss'Help (Belgium); New Samusocial (Belgium); L'Illot, Asbl Biogenes VZW (Belgium); Hobo (Belgium), Crsisi UK (UK); Sant Joan de Deu Serveis Socials (ES); Centre Public d'Action Sociale de Forest (Belgium).

Objectives: The pilot's most immediate aim is to get beneficiaries re-registered with the competent authorities to assure access to their basic entitlements. The objective then is to assist beneficiaries in finding housing, despite Brussel's ongoing housing crisis, and ultimately, to integrate them into the labour market.

Method: This intervention targets homeless people who are not registered with the authority and, thus, cannot access their social rights. Hence, the project seeks to reach out to the homeless to re-register them, and to provide targeted housing support, and employment support.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

Despite not having achieved any results as of the time of writing, Rights First does define a set of expected results. The pilot foresees treating 375 end-beneficiaries. This is equivalent to almost 10% of the entire homeless population in Brussels. It is expected that, out of the 375 beneficiaries, approximately 300 or 80% will have been registered with their responsible Brussels municipalities by the end of the intervention. Out of those 300, 190 beneficiaries are expected to have their social rights reactivated, 50 to have found housing, 70 to have benefitted from individual job coaching, and 150 beneficiaries to have benefitted from collective job training. In addition, 30 new housing solutions are expected to have been mobilised, and 10 partnerships with employers to be agreed upon.

Another expected result is that the project will also identify enabling factors for re-integrating homeless people through employment, housing and social support. This analysis is going to be focused on the way these three axes interlink and affect one another. Based on the results of the analysis, the project team will draft a practical guide on how to re-integrate homeless people through a holistic activation model, such as the one piloted in Rights First. The detailed description of the impact evaluations, however, had not been developed as of January 2022.

Efficiency:

At this point in implementation, the project team are unsure as to whether this pilot is going to be more cost-effective than existing solutions. Similarly, the project team are uncertain whether the pilot could be implemented using fewer resources due to the lack of data as of

early 2022. In fact, they suggest that the financial means currently available to them might be inadequate to produce truly impactful results. That is because the present pilot only includes four out of 19 Public Centres for Social Actions in Brussels. The project team insist that involving all 19 would be needed to achieve a good impact. At the same time, they hold that involving all 19 at this early stage might prove too complicated. Hence, the undecidedness regarding the resource question. Finally, the project team do not reject the prospect of results-based funding for EaSI or a similar programme. They believe that as long as there is a willingness to innovate there is space for results-based funding. They do recognise that such a solution might face some resistance from Brussels' public administration because it generally tends to be rather resistant to change.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

There are two components to Rights First's innovativeness. First, it presents a solution that is new to the Brussels region. Previously, homeless people could only access single homelessness service providers who would tackle only a single of the many issues homeless people would face. Rights First changes that by promising to deliver a holistic service package that consists of integrated social rights, housing and employment support. Second, Rights First constitutes a new way of cooperation between stakeholders. Over the past 30 years, the regional delivery of social rights and services has remained unchanged in Brussels. As a result, separate public and private service providers would hardly communicate with each other, given the fragmentation of service delivery. Now, organisations such as Public Centres for Social Action, which administer the minimum income, and others are cooperating as part of one consortium to deliver their services in a concerted way.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

The only barrier to social experimentation that already seems apparent is change management. As mentioned before, the social services landscape in Brussels has not changed much over the past 30 years, according to the project team. As such, the involved public authorities will first need to get used to the idea of change and the idea of integrated service delivery before meaningful change can occur.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

The project team hold that upscaling or transfer is the pilot's ultimate goal. Indeed, they see many other profiles to which the model pilot in this project might be applied. However, the current focus is on implementing the project and getting the involved stakeholders used to change. Concrete plans for upscaling will, therefore, only follow towards the end of the project.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

Given the lack of concrete upscaling or transfer plans, no barriers or drivers of scalability and transferability were evident as of January 2022.

Project's internal and external coherence

The project team currently do not foresee any internal or external synergies with other projects of social innovation.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value**Relevance of EaSI:**

In sum, EaSI seems highly relevant to Rights First. First, social innovation seems to provide the most adequate response to the social needs in question. That is because changing legislation or direct funding of social organisations is not useful, in the project team's view. According to them, such actions would only spread financial means but not necessarily foster coordination. However, the said lack of coordination is part of the problem that exacerbates the impact of homelessness in Brussels. Consequently, the project team insists that there needs to be one coordinating organisation – Bruss'help in this case – upon which all other involved stakeholders can fall back.

Second, the priorities outlined in the 2020 EaSI call for proposals were quite pertinent to the region and the target group. Housing has clearly been an issue in Brussels for some time with ever-increasing rent and, therefore, an ever-decreasing supply of affordable housing. More importantly, Rights First seeks to support beneficiaries in accessing their social rights by registering them with the relevant authorities. Thus, the project is not only in line with Principle 14 of the European Pillar of Social Rights but also with the notion of holistic support as demanded by the call.

EU added value:

Most likely, this project would not have taken place, at least not at the same scale, had it not been for the EU support through the EaSI programme. The project team are aware of alternative funding sources, primarily those provided by foundations, but holds that these would not have enabled a pilot at said scale. Indeed, they saw EaSI as the key opportunity and, putting it bluntly, just gave it a shot without considering other funding sources too extensively.

Another aspect of the EU added value is that the programme is likely to generate quite a strong exposure of the pilot because, as the project team claim, participation in EaSI provides additional credentials at the national level. For now, the project team are planning on harvesting said interest through a kick-off event which is planned for March 2022. Indeed, there seem to be many expectations among the administration regarding the results and outputs of this pilot and the social innovation. There, therefore, seems to be some pent-up willingness for change which has been tapped by virtue of EaSI enabling this socially innovative pilot.

List of literature and references:

- Visionary Analytics (2022). Interview with the Rights First project team representatives.
- Rights First (2022). Project application documents.
- EC (2022). 2020 call projects kick-off presentation.

Un toit sur la tête: un job dans la poche!

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: As of 2017, 12% of 168,300 residents of the greater Lyon area were aged between 18 and 24. Out of those, approximately 8,900 were living on less than €300 a month. In addition, 22.6% of fiscal households with people aged between 19 and 29 as their referent find themselves below the poverty line. This equals 15.7% of all households in greater Lyon. Given these stark numbers, there is a clear need to improve social outcomes for young people in Lyon, especially considering the lack of a minimum income tool for the 18-to-24 years old age group.

Project team (implementers): A public consortium headed by Métropole de Lyon (France) and complemented by the local NGOs ALYNEA (France); CLLAJ (France); ACOLEA (France) as well as the international NGOs Rock Trust (Scotland, UK) and FEANTSA (Belgium).

Objectives: This pilot seeks to integrate two public policies of strategic importance for Lyon. The first goal is to test a minimum income for young people, combined with employment support, and implement a housing support programme. The ultimate goal is to sustainably promote the social inclusion of young people at risk of unemployment and homelessness.

Method: The project follows a methodology involving two steps. First, it will trial Youth Solidarity and Minimum Income measures which will allow beneficiaries to access housing and employment support. In the second place, the action aims to integrate the housing and employment services that are now available to young people.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The pilot is likely going to involve at least 300 young participants, who are already benefitting from the youth minimum income. The said income is being trialled independently from the EaSI pilot and it has been in place since June 2021. As a part of the other action, 611 young people have been accepted into receiving the said income benefit. Participants of the pilot will be chosen from this pool. However, as is the case with all other pilots of the 2020 call, this project was still very much at the start of the implementation phase as of early 2022. Hence, there is no further effectiveness data available just yet. The pilot will involve a start, interim and final evaluation which will shed light on beneficiaries' employment and housing outcomes.

Efficiency:

The housing aspect of this pilot is likely going to be more efficient than existing solutions, according to the project implementers. The main reason for that is that the current standard solution in France for young people struggling with homelessness is providing them with hostel rooms, which are rather expensive. This pilot is instead going to guarantee beneficiaries proper housing regardless of their rental background.

Cost savings regarding other aspects of the pilot are less clear. It stands to reason that the introduction of a new social benefit payment such as the minimum income for young people will add extra cost to public budgets in the short term. At the same time, the project team do not believe that the pilot could be implemented with fewer resources, especially concerning the minimum income theme. In terms of the results-based funding conditions,

the project team seem quite positive about it. That is because they are quite confident in their results, especially those concerning minimum income.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

The most innovative aspect of the pilot certainly is the idea of providing minimum income for young people itself: such a scheme has never been trialled for this age group in France. In addition, the pilot provides a new way of cooperation between new institutions. In the project, Metropole de Lyon is cooperating with several local NGOs to procure and maintain apartments for beneficiaries, which has created a new partnership. The apartments and infrastructure do already exist, but the new way of cooperation suggests a new way of finding them and making them available to beneficiaries.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

One driver of social experimentation that is already apparent is the minimum income for young people itself because this income support only makes beneficiaries eligible for other types of support. Hence, without this base of support, all the other support services (i.e. employment and housing support) that beneficiaries will receive would not be available, the project team argue. Otherwise, the target group would be faced with the prospect of a 'dry exit' from child support.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

There are no scaling or transfer plans yet. This is likely going to be addressed towards the end of the project once the results of the pilot's evaluation become known. In fact, the project is foreseeing a comparative study in collaboration with its European project partners to measure the feasibility of transfer to other European locations. In addition, the project team noted that municipal governments in France enjoy significant autonomy in pursuing their own policies, which is why implementing the same programme in a different city might be difficult.

However, it should be noted that the Municipality of Lyon, the project coordinator, is promoting and communicating the state of this project in order to build a consortium of cities with the purpose of encouraging the national government or even the EU to increase the priority of housing policies.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

Given the early stage of implementation this project is currently in, there is no information available regarding drivers and barriers to scalability and transferability at this point.

Project's internal and external coherence

There is currently no evidence of internal nor external synergies with other socially innovative actions. The project team do note, however, that they are planning on building an EU-wide network of cities with the aim of effecting widespread integration of housing policies. Since there are some past and current EaSI projects with similar goals, some potential for synergies in the future is present.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The project team hold that social innovation is the most adequate response in addressing youth homelessness and unemployment because they intend to initiate a change in national legislation through this pilot. Currently, there is no national minimum income for young people under 25. By experimenting with one, in combination with housing and employment support, the project team are seeking to build a strong evidence base to argue that a minimum income can work at the national level, too. As such, the priorities which the 2020 EaSI call for proposals outlined are highly relevant to this pilot. In addition, the project team believe that the call's requirement to provide holistic and integrated services will improve cooperation between Lyon's housing and employment units. These two units have been separated by differences in financial support and professional culture, thus erecting walls between the two policy areas.

However, the project team criticise the short- to medium-term support which EaSI provides. They argue that the target group would likely benefit even more from a support programme that lasts longer than only two years. At the same time, they do recognise that housing programmes, in general, are quite expensive and that cities such as Lyon would be able to carry out such programmes entirely on their own, without EU or national financial support.

EU added value:

According to the interviewees, the EaSI programme demonstrates a moderate level of EU added value for their project. On the one hand, there are national funds available such as the Housing First programme. In fact, one of the French NGOs involved in the pilot is going to draw on this fund. On the other hand, EaSI does add value in the sense that it allows for the experiment to occur at a larger scale. This is evidenced by the fact that the NGO concerned only has the capacity to represent 50 of the 300 young people who are expected to participate in the pilot. The project team also note that the funding priorities of housing programmes such as Housing First tend to vary from year to year, which makes it difficult to implement longer pilots such as *Un toit sur la tête*.

List of literature and references:

- Visionary Analytics (2022). Interview with the *Un toit sur la tête* project team representatives.
- Un toit sur la tête (2022). Project application documents.
- EC (2022). 2020 call projects kick-off presentation.

xEITU

Contextual part: Summary

Needs: Asturias introduced a minimum income concept in 2005. After the first round of evaluations, data have shown that many people remain in the system for long periods of time. Especially as a result of the 2008 financial crisis, a lot of people enrolled on the benefits system and have remained there for several years. The project explores why such cases occur within the system chronically and whether there are any issues of coordination between different social services providers at play.

Project team (implementers): The project team are coordinated by the Consejería de Derechos Sociales y Bienestar (Spain) and includes the Regional Ministry of Social Rights and Welfare; the Public Employment Service, the Municipalities of Tineo, Mieres, and Gijón; the Red Cross Asturias; the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations; and the European Social Network.

Objective: The broad objective is to design and pilot an intervention model that links economic benefits, activation of the labour market and access to quality services (targeting people who face multiple barriers to social inclusion in Asturias).

Method: The project intends to garner the power of digitalisation to ensure a more holistic, but at the same time more tailored, approach towards service provision by developing respective apps/platforms for service providers and service recipients. The design of the produced tools has been validated in some previous EU-level projects.

Source: Own elaboration based on the project documents and interview.

(Expected) Effects

Contextual description of effects (measured outputs, results and impacts):

The proposed project will be tested in a group of 500 beneficiaries in three different municipalities of Asturias that face critical risks in terms of unemployment and social exclusion. The project foresees using two ICT tools: one as a platform for professionals, which will be based on the data collected, while the other one is an app for participants to collect data. This way, it also aims to contribute to improving e-inclusion and access to e-services. While the approach to service delivery will be holistic, it will also be tailored to the individual needs of citizens.

Furthermore, the project team foresee some spillover effects for themselves and the public sector environment while implementing the project. Specifically, they believe that their public employment system could benefit from multistakeholder and multilateral exchanges at the European level and learn more about the implementation of similar ICT tools in other national contexts. Furthermore, the involvement of policymakers will help the project team to strengthen their professional networks in the long run. As of early 2022, the project has not yet developed a comprehensive evaluation methodology.

Efficiency:

The project team do not have an efficiency assessment of their proposed solution as opposed to those developed already, as of February 2022. However, they point out that the project itself aims to make the social services system more efficient by detecting overlaps and making sure that unemployed people can find professional and/or other opportunities

more quickly. Their assessment is based on an economic simulation, which they had to run before submitting the proposal. Thus, they hope to make efficiency gains in the long run.

In terms of internal budget, the project team representatives are not sure whether they could implement the project with a smaller budget due to the project being launched only relatively recently. There is no actual budgetary expenditures data available yet. Finally, the project team have expressed their active opposition to the introduction of funding by results clause. Their main argument against the clause is that not all members of the consortium would support such a condition and, thus, it would be much harder to build multistakeholder partnerships from both private and public sectors.

Innovativeness of the project

Innovative content:

The most innovative part of the proposed solution, according to the interviewees, is a method of more effective coordination of the social services and the technological support in the national context. The solution demonstrates its innovativeness in a two-fold fashion. On the one hand, it offers a new and more coordinated way of cooperating between institutions for service provision. At the same time, it is also a new, alternative type of service provision which lasts for a shorter period of time, nevertheless involving more intensive types of support.

Barriers and drivers of social experimentation:

The project team have started the implementation very recently and could not share any insights on either barriers or drivers of social experimentation as of early 2022.

Scalability/Transferability

Current state of scaling/transfer plans:

The project team have developed only a preliminary strategy to mainstream the project results to the full national territory (currently only 78 Spanish municipalities are involved in xEITU, while the remaining 75 ones are waiting for the pilot results). A plan for upscaling has not been developed yet, but developing one is within the scope of the project.

Barriers and drivers of scalability/transferability:

Given the lack of concrete upscaling or transfer plans, no barriers or drivers of scalability and transferability were evident as of January 2022.

Project's internal and external coherence

Despite its limited external coherence, xEITU is currently exploring cooperation opportunities with other EaSI project teams, including those of the previous calls (e.g. ERSISI in Navarra). Specifically, they target Spanish projects to get better insights into the EaSI programme and an overall project implementation process.

Assessment of the EaSI programme's relevance and added value

Relevance of EaSI:

The project team consider the EaSI programme highly relevant because it sees social experimentation as the first step toward changing the legislation in the social policy area. They believe that the programme and the objectives very well correspond to their own interests – both thematic and professional. Thematically, the EaSI programme has provided them with a unique opportunity to receive funding that was tailored to the goal of social

experimentation. Professionally, they believe that the individual project implementers could also benefit from learning synergies, especially in such fields as the project results evaluation.

EU added value:

The project team see a moderate level of the EU added value in the EaSI programme. Even though there are some funding opportunities available at the national level, they see the EaSI programme as more network-oriented compared to the alternatives. The project implementers particularly value the potential cooperation opportunities with ESF+ after their EaSI participation. Furthermore, they see the chance of participating in EaSI as an important factor in attracting additional investments because this experience strengthens their credentials as social experimenters in the eyes of the more sceptical Spanish policymakers. While they were not entirely sure about the stronger exposure of their project results as of January 2022, the project team certainly recognised the value of existing cross-border opportunities.

List of literature and references:

- Visionary Analytics (2022). Interview with the xEITU project team representatives.
- EC (2022). 2020 call projects kick-off presentation.

4.5. Annex IV – Detailed operationalization of the evaluation angles

Effectiveness

Evaluation of effectiveness aims to assess, to what extent, why and how has the intervention delivered the expected results and impacts. According to our conceptual model, SIs can produce effects at three different levels: (i) individual level – effects for the end-beneficiaries; (ii) organisational level – increased innovation capacity of the project implementers; (iii) policy level – embedding of SI into mainstream policies. We have examined both the actual effects of the intervention as well as the potential ones (with relation to scalability/transferability) at all three levels.

Specifically, when examining the effects of the intervention for the end-beneficiaries, we look at whether they have been (or are likely to be) successful in providing effective and efficient solutions to their social needs. For completed projects, we have also examined whether their effects have remained impactful even after the finalisation stage. Furthermore, we have also looked at whether projects have been implemented as planned and achieved their objectives (or whether they are likely to be implemented as planned and making sufficient progress towards achieving their goals).

When assessing improvements in organisational capacities to further develop innovations, we have focused on two questions. First, we have examined whether relevant organisations have planned to / have allocated resources for / have already started developing new SIs, beyond the supported projects. Second, we have also explored whether the networks that participate(d) in project implementation are (likely to be) sustained after project completion and whether the project team continues its work in developing and scaling innovations.

Finally, when assessing the effects of the intervention at the policy level, we have explored whether the approaches suggested by the social experimentation projects have been (or are likely to be) adopted at the policy level within the same MS and/or in other EU MSs to address a pertinent social problem(s). Moreover, we have examined the transfer/adoption of the developed innovations at scale. Specifically, we have analysed whether the project became a sustainable and established approach to solving pertinent local problems; whether the implementers have gathered the necessary resources for scaling; and whether the piloted project can be/has been adapted to the new local ecosystem(s).

When examining whether the changes/effects achieved can be credited to the intervention, we have also proceeded with analysis at three levels (as outlined in our conceptual model – individual; organisational; and policy levels). To determine whether the intervention has led to changes at the individual level (i.e. results and impacts of the social experimentation projects), we have largely relied on examining the existing counterfactual evidence as provided in the final reports. The share of finished evaluated pilots with net positive results has been an important indicator here. To determine whether the changes at the organisational level can be attributed to the intervention, we have sought to understand how exactly the intervention impacted the project teams' capacity to innovate through interviews. Finally, to determine whether any achieved policy changes can be attributed to the intervention, we have asked project teams special targeted questions about the role of the intervention in those changes and cross-referenced it with the data provided in the interviews with policymakers.

Overall, when evaluating effectiveness, we have relied on analysing the final technical reports and other available project documentation (e.g. project outputs; project websites). We have cross-referenced this evidence in targeted interviews with project representatives and/or policymakers at EU or MS levels. With regard to the currently ongoing projects, however, we have instead used any other preliminary data sources available, such as, for example, interim reports or project application documents. Thus, some of the questions related to effects (i.e. to the long-term results and impacts) have not been applicable.

The table below summarises the key evaluation and operational questions as well as the methods to be applied for the assessment of effectiveness.

Methodological note: While Tender Specifications have outlined three effectiveness evaluation questions, we have covered the third question (*To what extent can factors influencing the observed achievements be linked to the EU intervention?*) under the EU-value added criterion.

Table 18 – Operationalisation Effectiveness.

Evaluation questions	Operational questions	Methods
Effectiveness		
1. What have been the (quantitative and qualitative) effects of the social policy experimentation? What have been the concrete, factual impacts of the action (actual or expected) on the population (local, national or EU), the organisations that are part of the consortia and on the policy (at the local, regional, national or EU level)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the intervention in question helped the end-beneficiaries by providing effective and efficient solutions to their social needs, as witnessed by the counter-factual evidence? Have the overall/specific/operational objectives of the individual projects been met? (Are they likely to be met?) What has helped/hindered the progress? Have the project teams allocated/planned to allocate additional resources to developing new SIs beyond their EaSI projects? Have the project teams developed sustainable networks and partnerships (internal or external) during the project? Is the project team intending to further develop and scale innovation(s)? Have the developed social experimentation projects been adopted at the policy level within the same MS or in another MS to address pertinent (social) problems? (Are they likely to be adopted?) What were the factors that helped to upscale/transfer the projects? Do the project teams have the necessary resources for scaling/transfer of the developed innovation? Has the project been adapted to the local ecosystem? (Can it be adapted?) 	Case studies (for every social experimentation project) based on targeted interviews; desk research; project mapping
2. To what extent can these changes/effects be credited to the intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the intervention led to changes/effects at the individual level of projects as witnessed by the counterfactual evidence? To what extent has the intervention empowered the capacity of project implementers to innovate and upscale/transfer their pilot at the organisational level? To what extent can the policy changes claimed by embedded projects be attributed to the intervention? 	

Source: Consortium (2021).

Efficiency

Efficiency is understood as the extent to which the desired effects are achieved at a reasonable cost. In the framework of this assessment, efficiency has been examined considering the special nature of social experimentation projects. From a strictly financial point of view, social experimentation is always inefficient due to three factors. First, piloting

requires additional resources for the design, roll-out and evaluation, while established interventions typically do not have such additional expenditure items. Second, pilot projects are small and cannot exploit economies of scale. Hence, the costs per beneficiary are likely to be higher in comparison to the large-scale established interventions. Lastly, some pilots inevitably fail and do not produce the expected results, which has negative effects on the cost-effectiveness of such projects.

Therefore, the assessment of efficiency of social experimentation intervention has taken a slightly different approach to standard ex-post evaluations. In particular, we have focused on three broad questions: (a) to what extent are the costs proportionate and justified given the benefits of the intervention? (b) how cost-effective was implementation: was it possible to achieve the same results with fewer resources (or better results with the same resources)? (c) what internal/external factors influenced the efficiency of the intervention and how the efficiency could be further improved? The last question is horizontal and has been addressed under the first two questions. Below we have discussed our strategy for answering these questions.

To what extent are the costs proportionate/justifiable, given the benefits of intervention?

The rationale for investing in piloting social innovations is as follows: although a number of pilots may not achieve the desired effects, the successful ones, once adopted at scale, should generate sufficiently high benefits to justify the total costs of investments. Accordingly, the analysis should compare the total costs of the intervention with the (likely) benefits of successful pilots that have been or are likely to be implemented at scale, i.e. scaled-up and/or transferred. Given the diversity of thematic priorities of the calls, the benefits could cover a range of outcomes, including:

- Social benefits: addressing social needs that were beyond the reach of established interventions
- Economic benefits: delivering social benefits more efficiently than the established interventions
- Environmental, health and other types of benefits could emerge during fieldwork.

Furthermore, even if some pilots are not likely to be implemented at scale, they may have, nevertheless, strengthened organisational capacities to develop and scale/transfer social innovations. The evaluation of effectiveness has explored whether this has indeed occurred. Under efficiency, we have assessed whether organisations strengthened their innovative capacities:

- Managed to attract additional funding to SI developed outside the EaSI project. If this occurred, EaSI might have acted as leverage in attracting additional investments.
- Developed SI outside of the EaSI project, which was successfully scaled up / transferred. If such SI benefited from the lessons learned and capacities developed during the EaSI funded project, then the intervention produced positive unexpected effects. These need to be considered when judging the efficiency of social experimentation calls.

Lastly, we have explored what internal/external factors had the largest influence on the social returns to investment. In addition to multiple factors that could emerge from the interviews, we have also explored the potential trade-off between risk and reward. This pertains to the question, of whether more risky projects indeed are likely to generate higher social value (and *vice versa*).

How cost-effective was the implementation of the intervention?

To assess the cost-effectiveness of implementation, we have explored the following issues:

- How efficient was the intervention when compared to other similar programmes that support SI at regional/national or cross-border levels? Direct benchmarking of costs and benefits might produce misleading results because each programme had unique objectives, thematic policy priorities and implementation modalities. However, interviews with project implementers who have also participated in other social experimentation initiatives could provide important insights. Guiding questions include: if the pilot was funded from a different source/programme, would the attainment of the same results require more or fewer resources? Why? Some of the cross-border programmes for comparison could include EEA & Norway Programmes on Social Inclusion, Youth Employment and Poverty Reduction or the Nordic Council's Cooperation 'Welfare for all' grants or funding opportunities.
- Efficiency in management and implementation of the programme. This has explored, whether specific implementation modalities (e.g. reporting requirements) have resulted in higher / lower costs of the projects.
- Potential of alternative funding instruments. Academic and policy debate over the past decade has focused on the extent to which alternative policy instruments, that establish payments by results, could have been more efficient than the provision of grants. Hence, the analysis explores what specific instruments could provide a feasible alternative, how they could be implemented (e.g. which results should be taken into account) and are likely effectiveness and efficiency implications of such alternatives.

The table below summarises the key evaluation and operational questions as well as the methods to be applied for the assessment of efficiency.

Table 19 – Operationalisation Efficiency.

Evaluation questions	Operational questions	Methods
Efficiency		
1. To what extent are the costs of the intervention justified and proportionate, given the changes/effects it has achieved? To what extent are the costs associated with the intervention proportionate to the benefits it has generated? What factors are influencing any particular discrepancies? How do these factors link to the intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent do the benefits of successful pilots, once adopted at scale, justify the total costs of investments? To what extent do the indirect positive effects (attracting additional funding, developing SI beyond the funded project) justify the costs? What internal/external factors, related to the design of the intervention, affect the costs and benefits? 	Project mapping; desk research
2. To what extent has the social innovation intervention been cost-effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How efficient was the intervention when compared to other similar programmes that support SI? How efficient was the management and implementation of the intervention? What would have been potential efficiency and effectiveness improvements of alternative results-based funding instruments? 	

Source: Consortium (2021).

Relevance

Relevance refers to the extent to which an intervention is pertinent to the needs and challenges faced by the target groups and society at large. The examination of relevance has been based on two evaluation questions:

- To what extent is the social innovation intervention still relevant?*
- To what extent have the original objectives proven to be appropriate for the intervention in question?*

Below we have discussed our strategy for answering these questions.

To what extent is the social innovation intervention still relevant?

Social innovation aims to find solutions that address societal challenges more effectively and efficiently within a tight budget compared to the existing ones. Social experimentation, which aims to test the validity of these innovations before implementing them at a larger scale, often needs financial, administrative, and other types of support from private and public sources due to its risk-inherent nature. Thus, the rationale for designing the intervention in question was not only to directly support social experimentation and stimulate the innovative capacities of social entrepreneurs but also to enable a positive environment for venture finance (including risk capital) to be supportive of social change⁴⁰⁶. In contrast to standard interventions like channelling funds directly to the market or social economy organisations already functioning in the market, the intervention in question attempts to

⁴⁰⁶ See https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/research_and_innovation/groups/rise/rise_social-innovation-2017_summary.pdf, p. 6.

ensure a systemic positive change in approaches, while willing to take the risks of social experimentation.

Therefore, to answer the evaluation question, we have first examined whether the intervention in question helped to satisfy the needs of innovators, end-beneficiaries, and policymakers. Secondly, we have explored whether the project teams could have implemented their project using similar cross-border cooperation programmes, similar programmes at the national level or more standard interventions referred to above. Finally, we have looked into whether the project teams have faced any unexpected challenges while implementing the project and decided if these should have been taken into account when designing the intervention.

To what extent have the original objectives proven to be appropriate for the intervention in question?

To answer this question, we have done the following:

- First, we have determined the original objectives of the intervention. We have done that by reconstructing the intervention logic based on the mapping of individual projects grouped by calls.
- Secondly, we have examined whether these objectives actually corresponded to the needs and problems of the involved stakeholders (project implementers, end-beneficiaries, and policymakers).
- Finally, based on the answers to the first question, we have examined whether the new/emerging challenges that the project teams have faced should have been reflected in the original goals of the intervention in question.

The evaluation of relevance has heavily drawn upon targeted interviews with different stakeholders, where we have compared the perspectives of the project implementers and policymakers at European and national levels. We have also cross-referenced the reasoning provided by stakeholders with the evidence available in the project documentation (final and interim reports). Specific illustrations of the intervention's relevance through individual cases have been provided in the section on horizontal analysis.

The table below summarises the key evaluation and operational questions as well as the methods to be applied for the assessment of relevance.

Table 20 – Operationalisation Relevance.

Evaluation questions	Operational questions	Methods
Relevance		
1. To what extent is the social innovation intervention still relevant?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the intervention helped the project implementors, end-beneficiaries, and policymakers to satisfy their needs? Why is there still a need to continue the social innovation intervention in question? Are there any viable alternatives to it? (see also EU added-value) Is there evidence of unforeseen/emerging issues that should have been taken into account?⁴⁰⁷ 	Targeted interviews (with beneficiaries and policymakers); Desk research (EaSI evaluations and project documentation)
2. To what extent have the original objectives proven to be appropriate for the intervention in question?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were the original objectives of the intervention? To what extent did they correspond to the needs and problems of the stakeholders? Should the unforeseen/emerging issues have been reflected in the intervention's objectives? 	

Source: Consortium (2021).

Coherence

Coherence is understood as the measurement of quality showing how well the intervention works internally as well as with other EU interventions. Therefore, we have approached the examination of the intervention's coherence from two sides by searching for both internal and external synergies (i.e. between the EaSI projects themselves as well as between the intervention and other EU social innovation actions). For internal coherence, understanding the share of projects that have benefited from synergies with other EaSI projects has been an important indicator. For external coherence, we have used the results of the conducted mapping, which has covered both the EaSI projects and other relevant EU social innovation actions. Assessment of internal and external coherence has relied on two criteria:

- Existence of complementarities
- Absence of duplications.

Complementarities exist if there are preconditions for the coherence of efforts between different actions. This means that, first, the actions have similar objectives and use a coordination mechanism. Second, there have to be some synergies, which include (i) non-financial complementarity/additionality (e.g. reaching wider or new target groups, improving the quality/quantity of outputs); and (ii) financial complementarity/additionality (e.g. reducing the costs of the actions, such as costs and acquisition of information for beneficiaries, costs of programme management, etc.). Third, there is pro-active dissemination of good practice and policy learning/policy spill-overs. This means that similar national interventions were set up or existing ones were improved as a result of learning from the success of the intervention/strands of action within the same programme.

⁴⁰⁷ In view of the new ESF+ programming period.

Duplications exist if the same type of intervention has the same objective, same target group and provides similar/competing support.

To examine complementarities and duplications, we have cross-referenced the evidence provided in the project documentation with the data gathered from the targeted stakeholder interviews. When examining other EU social innovation actions, we might conduct interviews with their representatives, if necessary. The table below summarises the key evaluation and operational questions as well as the methods to be applied for the assessment of coherence.

Table 21 – Operationalisation Coherence.

Evaluation questions	Operational questions	Methods
Coherence		
1. To what extent is this social innovation intervention coherent with other interventions which have similar objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are other EU interventions with similar objectives? • Is there any evidence suggesting the intervention's non-financial complementarity with other EU interventions? • Is there any evidence suggesting the intervention's financial complementarity with other EU interventions? • Is there any evidence of duplications? 	Mapping, case studies (based on targeted interviews and desk research)
2. To what extent is the intervention coherent internally?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any EaSI social experimentation projects with similar objectives? • Is there any evidence suggesting the projects' non-financial complementarity with each other? • Is there any evidence suggesting the projects' financial complementarity with each other? • Is there any evidence of duplications? 	

Source: Consortium (2021).

EU added value

European added value is defined as the value that is additional to what would be achieved if the intervention was carried out by the Member States (MS). Analysis of the European added value refers to the questions of causality, i.e. whether the observed additional resources, process and results can be causally attributed to intervention at the EU level. Additionality and causality, however, cannot be established by simply asking all project teams about a hypothetical scenario without the intervention in place. Thus, the assessment of the EU added value has relied on the following criteria groups:

- Resource additionality (incl. project and input additionality)
- Process additionality (incl. acceleration, scope, and network additionality)
- Result additionality (incl. experimentation, outcomes, and follow-up additionality)

Under resource additionality, first, we have examined whether the project could have been implemented without the intervention in question (project additionality). The additionality is high if the activities were (or would have been) cancelled unless they were supported by

the EU intervention. Secondly, we have looked into how the intervention in question stimulates additional investments made by project implementers and other target groups such as MS Managing Authorities (input additionality).

Under process additionality, we have first assessed the extent to which the implementation of activities was accelerated by the EU level intervention. Secondly, we have looked at how the intensity and scale (in terms of target groups reached, activities carried out) of the action were impacted by the intervention. Finally, we have examined whether the intervention enhanced cross-border cooperation and helped to create new networks that would help to upscale/transfer the project effects (network additionality).

Under result additionality, we have focused on three criteria. First, we have examined whether the funding from the intervention allowed for effective social experimentation, which may or may not produce better results, despite the action's challenging and risky nature (experimentation additionality). Second, we have looked into what results and impacts (in terms of social needs addressed; best practices exchanged; achieved upscaling/transferability) would be unattainable without the EU intervention (outcome additionality). The additionality of outcomes has also helped us to determine whether the factors influencing the intervention's effects could be attributed to the intervention itself. Finally, we have analysed whether the intervention also empowered implementers to develop and implement new ideas, attract additional funding for scaling, or start new SI projects (follow-up additionality).

To ensure a balanced assessment of the EU added value, we have cross-referenced the evidence provided by the project implementers with that of policymakers, both at the national and EU levels. Particular attention has been paid to the interviews with policymakers at the MS level as they might have offered important counterarguments regarding the EU added value in this intervention. Furthermore, we have also examined the complementary evidence available in the existing reports and programme assessments (specifically related to the EaSI's PROGRESS axis and social innovation calls). The table below summarises the key evaluation and operational questions as well as the methods to be applied for the assessment of the EU added value.

Table 22 – Operationalisation EU added-value.

Evaluation questions	Operational questions	Methods
EU added-value		
1. What is the additional value resulting from the EU intervention, compared to what could reasonably have been expected from the Member States acting at national and/or regional levels? What would be the most likely consequences of stopping/withdrawing the intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could the projects have been implemented without the intervention? Has the intervention helped to stimulate additional investments into social experimentation project(s)? • To what extent has the intervention helped to accelerate social experimentation? Has the intervention helped the project implementors to reach wider targets groups and implement activities at a broader scale? 	Horizontal analysis of cases, case studies (based on targeted interviews and desk research)
2. To what extent can factors influencing the observed achievements be linked to the EU intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key factors influencing the intervention's effects? • To what extent has the intervention improved the projects' effects at the individual/organisational/policy level (esp. cross-border ones)? Could these impacts have been made possible without the intervention? 	

Source: Consortium (2021).

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