



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG  
Analysis, Evaluation, External Relations  
**Impact Assessment, Evaluation**

## **Programming Period 2014-2020**

### **Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy**

#### **European Social Fund**

Guidance document

- draft -

<p>The guidance document will remain provisional up to the approval of legal provisions on cohesion policy.</p>
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# Table of content

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	3
<b>2. PROGRAMMING</b>	4
<b>3. MONITORING &amp; INDICATORS</b>	4
3.1 Common ESF indicators	6
3.1.1. Common output indicators	7
3.1.2. Common immediate result indicators	8
3.1.3. Common longer-term result indicators	9
3.2 Programme-specific ESF indicators	10
3.3 Baselines and Targets	11
3.4 Data collection and storage	12
3.5 Implementation reports	13
<b>4. EVALUATION</b>	15
4.1 Ex ante evaluation	15
4.2. The evaluation plan	15
4.3. Evaluation during the programming period	16
4.3.1 Implementation evaluations	17
4.3.2. Impact evaluations	17
4.4. Summary report	18
4.5. Ex post evaluation	19
4.6. Transparency	19
<b>5. ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION</b>	19
<b>ANNEXES (PARTLY TO BE DEVELOPED)</b>	20
1 Legal references (tbd)	
2 List of common indicators	
3 Definitions for the common indicators	
4 Glossary (tbd)	

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The European Social Fund (ESF) delivers a substantial contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and represents a substantial part of the budget of the European Union.

In the light of the enhanced need for efficiency due to tighter budgets and more public attention to the effectiveness of EU policy instruments in general, the demand for demonstrating the impact and added value of ESF-supported initiatives is growing. In this respect, monitoring and evaluation play a key role in providing the necessary evidence.

Against this background, and on the basis of the experience of the 2000-2006 ex-post evaluation, the new Cohesion Policy Regulations entail strengthened monitoring and evaluation arrangements. This should ensure that monitoring produces robust and reliable data that can be aggregated at EU level and that evaluation activities focus on assessing the effectiveness and impact of ESF support. Nevertheless, evolution but not a complete overhaul of the system reflects the spirit of the Commission's proposals.

This document aims at providing concise and practical guidance for the implementation of the new rules by the competent Member State authorities as well as by all relevant actors. It sets out some important changes in the understanding and organisation of monitoring and evaluation. The most important one is the emphasis on a clearer articulation of the policy objectives. This is key to implement a results oriented policy and moving away from an excessive focus on the absorption of funding. The second major concern is the better specification of differences in tasks between monitoring and evaluation. It sets out more clearly the different types of evaluation and calls for more methodological rigour in capturing the effects of our interventions.

While Structural Funds are governed by the same general regulation, some differences occur when it comes to implementation. Therefore this guidance paper covers the European Social Fund. For the Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund a separate guidance paper has been issued.

This paper does not include detailed guidance on evaluation methods or on the assessment of projects. Guidance on methods can be found in the online portal EVALSED, maintained and updated on the website of the Directorate-General for Regional Policy. The paper deals neither with Commission proposals on conditionality and the performance framework. Guidance on these issues may be provided separately if considered necessary.

Strengthening monitoring and evaluation, thus moving towards a results-oriented cohesion policy, will depend on the commitment of all actors involved, at European, national and regional level.

This guidance is part of the overall support which the Commission intends to provide to Member States and relevant actors.

**TBD**

## 2. PROGRAMMING

Operational Programmes (OPs) are the essential instrument to establish a close link between the ESF and the strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (Europe 2020). The analyses done by the Member States in view of preparing and assessing the NRP, complemented by regional needs analysis whenever necessary, and the analytical body available in the context of the European semester constitute the basis for identifying the particular challenges a Member State or region faces in reaching its Europe 2020 objectives. National or regional statistics might also be useful to complement the above analysis and highlight specific regional needs. The choice of thematic objectives and their financial allocations, as well as the choice of the investment priorities and their corresponding specific objectives must contribute to achieving the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, address the challenges identified in the National Reform Programme (NRP) and the relevant country specific recommendations. This process of strategic programming will support managing authorities to focus on the most pressing challenges identified in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy and the corresponding thematic objectives and investment priorities. The aim of strategic programming is thus to establish a clear *intervention logic* which addresses Europe 2020 objectives at national or regional level. A clear intervention logic constitutes the essential prerequisite for the evaluability of the programmes.

Operational programmes will continue to be built around priority axes. Each priority axis shall, as a rule, correspond to one *thematic objective* as defined in the Common Provision Regulation (CPR, 87 (1)).

For the ESF, the Regulation sets out the following four thematic objectives:

- Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility
- Investing in education, skills and life-long learning
- Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty
- Enhancing institutional capacity and efficient public administration

Within each of these thematic objectives, the ESF Regulation sets out a number of investment priorities. An OP priority axis may consist of one or more *investment priorities* (ESF Reg., Art. 3).

## 3. MONITORING & INDICATORS

*Monitoring has two sides: on the one hand, it is to be understood as a continuous and systematic process of generating quantitative data on implementation. On the other hand, it includes a more qualitative side – the examination of these data in the MC. This guidance will mostly deal with the former, i.e. with generating the data.*

Essential to programme monitoring is to observe on the basis of quantitative data whether programme implementation is proceeding in accordance with the initial plans. Monitoring takes place both at the level of operations as well as at programme level. Except for data on longer-term indicators, monitoring is carried out during an operation and the programme's lifetime.

Monitoring is thus a tool. It helps to detect any deviation from initial plans and programme objectives. Monitoring can lead to decisions about corrective actions so to improve programme performance. In addition, monitoring delivers data contributing to establish a solid basis for evaluating longer-term results and impacts.

- ➔ The Commission recommends that the managing authority provides updated monitoring data to each meeting of the monitoring committee. This will allow the monitoring committee to examine in detail all issues that affect the performance of the programme (CPR, Art. 43.2).

Monitoring will also allow aggregation of key information at European level across all OPs in order to be accountable to the Council, Parliament, the Court of Auditors and EU citizens in general on what the Structural and Cohesion Fund resources are spent on. This is mainly the task of the common indicators.

Data on all indicators, common and programme-specific ones alike, are submitted as structured data to the European Commission electronically as part of the Annual Implementation Reports (AIR). An implementing act will set out a model for AIRs. These data should be annual; the SFC2014<sup>1</sup> will automatically calculate the cumulative values of the former years together with the reporting year.<sup>2</sup> The data shall be transmitted in structured form electronically for each investment priority (ESF Regulation, Art. 5.2).

#### *Monitoring of OPs uses indicators*

Indicators are the main instrument of monitoring. Indicators are proxies to capture outputs and results. Their limitations are acknowledged, in that they can only to a limited extent capture the complexity of the programmes and their effects.

- ➔ Indicators should be clearly defined, the chosen measurement unit shall be indicated and they shall be periodically measured.

#### *Indicators relate to partially or fully implemented operations*

Fully implemented operations are those which do not involve physical investment in contrast to completed operation which do. Example: A training project is considered to be fully implemented after the last training day, when certificates have been handed out to trainees or after their final exam. At this stage there may still be expenditure which has not been incurred or paid (salaries for example) and the final payment to the beneficiary may follow considerably later.<sup>3</sup> Partially implemented operations refer to operations which fulfil the condition of operations as set out in Art. 2 of the draft CPR, but are not yet fully implemented.

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<sup>1</sup> "SFC2014" is a working title for the electronic data exchange system established pursuant to art 63.4 CPR.

<sup>2</sup> The guidance on ERDF and Cohesion Fund monitoring and evaluation requires cumulative data to be reported every year. SFC will accommodate these different reporting requirements.

<sup>3</sup> Two different terms are used in the Regulations to capture the difference between physical operations (physically completed) and operations where activities do not involve physical investment (fully implemented).

*Programme monitoring uses three different types of indicators:*

Financial indicators, output indicators and result indicators (CPR, Art. 24.3.)

- **Financial** indicators relate to the expenditure allocated. They are used to monitor progress in terms of the (annual) commitment and payment of the funds available for any operation, measure or programme in relation to its eligible cost.
- **Output** indicators relate to operations supported. An output is considered to be everything that is obtained in exchange for an operation supported by public expenditure. Outputs can be measured at the level of people as well as entities. Output indicators are expressed in absolute numbers (for instance the number of unemployed participants). The data for each indicator collected from partially and fully implemented operations shall be reported in one single data set, i.e. data stemming from fully implemented operations do not need to be reported separately from data stemming from partially implemented operations.
- **Result** indicators relate to individual priorities. They are supposed to report the effects on participants or entities brought about by the programme, for example, the employment status of participants. Result indicators are expressed in absolute numbers. Results can be immediate or longer-term. For immediate result indicators the data shall be recorded when the participants leave the supported intervention. This moment does not need to coincide with the full implementation of the operation in which the reported person participated. Longer-term result indicators are recorded some time after leaving (for participants) or implementing (for entities) the operation.

Result indicators need to meet certain quality criteria. They should be (CPR, annex IV):

- a) *robust*: reliable, that means analytically sound, correct and statistically validated;
- b) *normative*: having a clear and accepted normative interpretation (i.e. there must be agreement that a change towards a particular direction or its opposite is a favourable or an unfavourable result);
- c) *responsive to policy*: linked in as direct way as possible to the operation or priority axis for whose monitoring they are used.

Data shall be:

- d) *timely collected*: data needs to be collectable in time;
- e) *publicly available*: data should be made publicly available in the appropriate, lowest accepted aggregated form.

➔ Programme monitoring shall always use financial, output and result indicators.

### **3.1 Common ESF indicators**

Common ESF indicators are a set of indicators, reflecting two types of the above indicators, namely output and result indicators. They are listed in the Annex of the draft ESF Regulation (annex 2 of the guidance). They are common in the sense that *all OPs* supported by the ESF (mono- and multi-fund, national and regional OPs alike) are required to record and transfer the data for these indicators.

With regard to the common indicators relating to people, all participation records resulting from an ESF supported operation in a given year should be reported. This implies that those persons who participated in more than one ESF supported project in a given year are reported as many times as the person has benefitted from the support of a separate operation. The same principle applies to common indicators relating to ESF supported SMEs

Every single participation record shall at least provide data for all common output indicators which cover personal data (i.e. employment status, age – as applicable – and education), broken down by gender. If not all the personal data required by the common output indicators can be recorded, no data at all on the participation record shall be submitted.

Under all ESF investment priorities data for all common ESF indicators shall be recorded, although the values might be zero for some indicators.

#### Example

Investment priority on active and healthy ageing: The output indicator "participants below 25 years" will typically be reported either as 0 or as a very low value. In contrast the output indicator "participants above 54 years" will record much higher values because this group of people is expected to constitute a target group of this investment priority.

All participants entering an operation are to be recorded, including those who leave the operation early for unknown reason during the reporting year. This means that for instance a person who participated in an operation from January to August shall be reported just like the participant who stayed on until the end of the same year.

The data for all common indicators - as far as they concern supported people - shall be broken down by gender.

Annex 3 of this guidance contains the definitions for each common indicator. They largely rely on existing international definitions (e.g. LMP, LFS, ISCED...). Each individual output indicator relating to participants captures only one single dimension. The reason behind this is that the common indicators shall reflect as broadly as possible – subject to the definitions - the target groups receiving support. For instance, the common indicator "unemployed participant" should record all unemployed, independently of the type of support they receive and the aim of the project they benefit from.

- ➔ Programme monitoring shall always use common indicators as set out in the Annex of the draft ESF Regulation and may use programme specific indicators whenever appropriate.

### 3.1.1. Common output indicators

*Relate to persons as well as entities; reported annually, starting in 2016.*

The Annex of the draft ESF Regulation uses the term participants. Participants refer to persons benefiting *directly* from an ESF investment. Only those persons who can be identified

and asked for their personal data (i.e. gender, employment status, age, and educational attainment) and for whom specific expenditure is earmarked shall be reported as one participation record. Persons benefiting *indirectly* from an ESF operation should not be reported as participants.

Example for persons benefitting indirectly

Investment Priority "Reducing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good-quality early childhood, primary and secondary education".

Under this investment priority a school has been supported through curriculum development. Pupils attending this school would benefit *indirectly* from the support. They should therefore not be reported under the common indicators.

Data on participants shall be collected when the person enters an ESF supported operation. Data shall be reported at the earliest possible date after a person has entered the operation, even when the operation is still on-going (i.e. partially implemented) and the person is still benefiting from the support. No recording is needed on leaving participants. One individual participation record shall only be reported once, even if the participation continues over two or more reporting years. If deemed necessary the data may be corrected retroactively in SFC for the years concerned.

The total number of participation records will be calculated based on the following three common output indicators "unemployed, including long-term unemployed", "inactive" and "employed, including self-employed". There is no need to report the total number of participants separately.

### **3.1.2. Common immediate result indicators**

*Relate to persons only; are reported annually, starting in 2016.*

Through the monitoring system common immediate result indicators measure effects which appear directly after the participant has left the operation. It is conceivable that for one participation record two results could be reported in the course of a single intervention. They should be reported separately under the relevant result indicator.

Having regard to the definitions of the common result indicators (given in Annex 3 of this guidance), the following combinations of immediate results for one individual participant are possible:

- "inactive participant newly engaged in job searching upon leaving" and "participant gaining a qualification upon leaving";
- "participant in education/training upon leaving" and "participant gaining a qualification upon leaving";
- "participant gaining a qualification upon leaving" and "participant in employment upon leaving";



- "participants in education/training upon leaving" and "participants in employment upon leaving".

No other combination of different immediate result indicator for one single participation record is possible.

### 3.1.3. Common longer-term result indicators

*Relate to persons only; reported only in the AIR 2019 and in the final report.*

The common longer-term result indicators measure effects 6 months after the participant has left the operation. The data for longer-term result indicators are collected differently than for immediate result indicators. Namely the data are not generated through the regular monitoring procedures, but through for instance surveys commissioned by the managing authorities based on participants' samples.

As set out in the Annex of the ESF Regulation, the data collected for the longer-term result indicators is based on a representative sample of participation records under each investment priority. Hence not the entire population of participants need to be reflected in the data submitted under the longer-term result indicators.

Representative samples are established at the level of the socio-economic characteristics of the participants as captured by the output indicators. It is in particular required for those output indicators (i.e. participants' characteristics) for which targets were set or which constitute a main target group within the priority axis. In order to minimise the risk of establishing a biased sample and survey, it is considered good practice to entrust the task of drawing the sample and drafting the survey questions to an independent body or expert who has had no prior involvement with this exercise.

#### Example

Investment priority "Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility"

Output targets have been set for the following common output indicators: unemployed, long-term-unemployed, participants below 25 years and participants with primary/lower secondary education. The sample of participants included in the survey for collecting data on the longer-term result indicators shall be representative only with regard to these four common output indicators. I.e. a representative sample of unemployed participants needs to be included in the survey. In contrast the sample does *not* need to be representative for the other characteristics. That means that in this example representativeness does not need to be ensured for inactive participants because no target was set for them.

Representativeness shall also be ensured for the regional dimension of the output indicators which are linked with quantified target values. Regional representativeness shall be ensured to

the NUTS level which is below the level of the programme.<sup>4</sup> For instance, for an OP at NUTS 2 level representativeness should be ensured at the level of NUTS 3.

Internal validity of the sample should be ensured. That means that the data can be generalised at the level of priority axis or investment priority.

The required sample can include participants who left the support more than 6 months ago. For the two reporting rounds (i.e. 2019 & 2023) two distinct samples with non-overlapping participation records shall be established. The data from the first sample is to be reported in the AIR 2019 and cover operations up to mid 2018. The second sample covers participants who benefitted from support between mid 2018 until the end of 2022.

### **3.2 Programme-specific ESF indicators**

*Reported annually, starting in 2016*

Operational Programmes may use programme-specific indicators in addition to common indicators. They can be financial, output and/or result indicators. It is for the Member States/managing authority to decide on the need for and design of programme specific indicators. The data are transferred to the European Commission in electronic format using the SFC2014 system.

Unlike ESF common indicators which each capture only one single socio-economic feature of a participant and do not cover the type of support granted, programme-specific indicators can be very specific in order to highlight certain aspects of the ESF support which are of particular importance for the Member States/regions. A programme-specific indicator consisting of more than one dimension also allows the managing authority and the monitoring committee to monitor more specifically than the common indicators selected specific aspects of programme implementation.

Example

Investment priority "active and healthy ageing"

A programme specific output indicator could be "unemployed between 45 and 54 participating in ICT training". This indicator measures four different dimensions: 1) the employment status of the participant (i.e. unemployed), 2) the age range (i.e. between 45 and 54 years old), 3) the type of support (i.e. training), 4) the subject of the training (ICT).

A related programme specific immediate result indicator could be "unemployed between 45 and 54 certified in ICT".

A related programme specific longer-term result indicator could be "unemployed between 45 and 54 in employment xy months after leaving"

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<sup>4</sup> [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/nuts\\_nomenclature/introduction](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/nuts_nomenclature/introduction)

It is obvious that the more dimensions are included in one single indicator, the more focused the indicator becomes. Although a limited number of specific indicators for monitoring may be important, a multi-dimension indicator also carries the risk of excluding (or not recording) a potentially large number of participation records. In the above example workers above 54 years who receive training to improve their ICT skills are not be recorded under this programme-specific indicator.

- ➔ The Commission strongly recommends establishing clear, unequivocal and easy to understand definitions of the indicators. The definitions need to be made available from the very start of programme implementation. Beneficiaries should be made aware of them. In this way, any ambiguity in reporting data can be avoided.

In addition to setting out indicators in the operational programmes, managing authorities may consider it useful setting indicators and/or targets for internal purposes only. These indicators and/or targets do not require the Commission's approval.

### **3.3 Baselines and Targets**

Baseline values are required for all targets set for result indicators. No baseline is required for any target for output indicators. Baselines shall be expressed in the same statistical unit as the target.

Baselines currently mostly used are simple statements of a value for an indicator at the time of drafting the programme. The baseline is established when designing the programme against which progress is subsequently measured. That means it captures the situation at the beginning of the programming period for the dimension covered by the respective result indicator.

A baseline could also be drawn from analyses or reference values from similar types of activities or situations of target groups. Such an approach can help to understand the planned instrument better by putting it into relation with past or comparable activities or analytical evidence.

Each OP shall set cumulative quantified target values for output and result indicators for 2022 (ESF Reg. Art. 5.1). In addition Member States/regions may set additional annual targets or targets for certain years during the programming period.

Targets shall be quantified either in absolute numbers or in percentages. They shall be set for a limited number of common and for programme-specific indicators at the level of investment priority. Limited means in this context that not all indicators need to be linked with a quantified target value.

To set targets for output indicators essentially means to apply unit costs. For many investment priorities it will be possible to base the computation of unit costs on past experience, be it a programme co-financed by the ESF or national schemes or based on the use of sectoral norms. If an intervention is completely novel, setting targets can be challenging. At the programming stage, the planning body should give a best estimate and should update the target as soon as better information is gained through implementation.

It is recommended to logically link targets for result indicators with targets for output indicators.

The targets for result indicators shall take account of the baseline set for the respective result indicator, national Europe 2020 targets as well as the particular challenges identified in the context of the European semester. Targets translate a political intention for change in a certain direction into a quantified value.

### **3.4 Data collection and storage**

The CPR entails specific provisions geared to establish sound data collection systems. All official exchanges of information between the MS and the Commission shall be carried out using an electronic data exchange system established by the Commission. (CPR, Art. 63.4). This system will be based on the current SFC2007. This guidance tentatively calls the new system SFC2014. The Commission will adopt delegated acts laying down the modalities of the exchange of information (CPR, Art. 114.8).

CPR, Article 62(d) sets out that Member States shall provide for a computerised system for i.a. the recording, filing and transmission of data on indicators, for monitoring and for reporting. This system shall record and store in computerised form data for each operation necessary for monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verification and audit, including data on individual participants in operations (CPR, Art. 114.2(d)). The processing of records containing information on individual participants (microdata) is important to provide the managing authority with sufficient flexibility in monitoring programme implementation.<sup>5</sup> Microdata are also a sine qua non for undertaking impact evaluations. The Commission does not require nor receive the data on individual participants, but solely aggregated data.

It is for the Member State/managing authority to decide at which level of the management and control system it establishes this data processing system containing individual participants records. These data shall be processed in order to be used for management, evaluation and audit purposes. National Data protection rules implementing Directive 95/46/EC shall apply to the processing taking place.

The CPR and the ESF Regulations establish a legal obligation on the managing authority (MA) to process personal data in the form of individual participants data. The MA has the function of a data controller in the meaning of Art. 2 of the Directive on protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data. Art 7 of the Directive sets out criteria for making personal data processing legitimate. One of these criteria is that processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation to which the controller is subject. The CPR and ESF Regulations thus constitute the legal basis for the legitimate processing of personal data by the MA. *How* the processing is organized will be regulated by the applicable national law. As regards sensitive data, Art. 8 of the Directive provides that, subject to the provision of suitable safeguards, Member States may, for reasons of substantial public interest, lay down exemptions to the prohibition of processing special categories of personal data either by national law or by decision of the supervisory authority.

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<sup>5</sup> Definition of processing of data is set out in the Directive on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, EC Directive 95/46, OJ L 281, 23.11.1995, p.31. Processing of data covers all operations performed upon personal data, whether or not by automatic means, such as collection, recording, organisation, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, blocking, erase or destruction.

To ensure usability of these data to researchers and evaluators, the Commission recommends that Member States/regions establish from the start of the programme a data access system – possibly remote data access - for accredited researcher or designated institutions to access restricted micro data for evaluation purposes, possibly through approved safe data centres (e.g. research data centres). In this respect, in line with the national rules implementing article 17 of the Directive 95/46, the controller must implement appropriate technical and organizational measures to protect personal data against accidental or unlawful destruction or accidental loss, alteration, unauthorized disclosure or access, in particular where the processing involves the transmission of data over a network, and against all other unlawful forms of processing.

Managing authorities are required to submit data for ESF and match funded operations. The Commission recommends that data are entered into the system throughout the year (e.g. on a quarterly basis) by the beneficiaries and not only at the end of the reporting year.

- ➔ The Commission strongly recommends verifying as early as possible whether the data collection and storage systems currently in place are appropriate in the light of the requirements set out in the CPR. If the systems need to be further developed, this work should start as early as possible in order to avoid implementation problems.

In addition to exchange of information between Member State/managing authority and Commission, the Regulation sets out that no later than 31 December 2014, all exchanges of information between beneficiaries and managing authorities, certifying authorities, audit authorities and intermediate bodies shall be carried out solely by means of electronic data exchange systems (CPR, Art.112). The Commission will adopt an implementing act setting out detailed rules concerning the exchange of information. (CPR, Art. 112.3)

### **3.5 Implementation reports**

The first Annual Implementation Report (AIR) is due in 2016 (CPR, Art. 44 and 101). This AIR shall cover the financial years 2014 and 2015. The deadline for submitting this and the following AIRs is 30 April. The deadline for submitting the final report is 30 September 2023. The CPR aims to simplify the annual reporting. Therefore most annual reports follow a simplified procedure (for the years 2016, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022). The annual report submitted in 2017 and 2019 as well as the final report of 2023 are of a more strategic nature. The Commission will consider the implementation reports admissible only if they contain all the required information as set out below.

The simplified AIR is mostly geared to provide quantitative data on OP implementation. Besides financial data, this will require providing quantified values for common and programme-specific indicators and milestones<sup>1</sup> at the level of investment priorities. Data on common and programme specific indicators shall be submitted to the Commission using the European system of structured data exchange (SFC2014). The data reported shall reflect the participation records encoded for the reporting year. Cumulative values will be calculated automatically by the system when the annual data is uploaded into SFC2007. Values will relate to partially or fully implemented operations as defined above (art. 5 ESF).

AIRs 2016, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022 shall set out

- information on implementation of the programme and its priorities by reference to the financial data, common and programme-specific indicators and quantified target values, including changes in result indicators, and the milestones defined in the performance framework. They shall set out actions taken to fulfil the ex ante conditionalities and any issues which affect the performance of the programme, and the corrective measures taken. steps taken to fulfil the ex ante conditionalities;
- any issues affecting the performance of the programme, including the achievement of targets and corrective measures taken;
- progress in preparation and implementation of joint action plans.

AIRs 2017 & 2019 shall in addition set out and assess

- the information above
- the implementation of the principles of compliance with Union and national law, of promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination and sustainable development;
- and report on support used for climate change targets;
- progress in implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development, including sustainable urban development, and community-led local development;
- progress in implementation of actions to reinforce the capacity of Member State authorities and beneficiaries to administer and use the Funds;
- progress in implementation of any interregional and transnational actions;
- progress in implementation of the evaluation plan and the follow-up given to the findings of evaluations;
- the specific actions to promote equality between men and women and to prevent discrimination, including accessibility for disabled persons, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the OP and operations;
- the results of the information and publicity measure of the Funds;
- progress in the implementation of actions in the field of social innovation;
- progress in the implementation of measures to address the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty or of target groups at highest risk of discrimination or exclusion, with special regard to marginalised communities including the financial resources used;
- the involvement of the partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the OP.

The AIR 2019 and the final report 2023 shall in addition provide information on and assess

- the programme's contribution to achieving the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

## **4. EVALUATION**

Evaluations are meant to improve the design and implementation of programmes. They shall also assess their effectiveness, efficiency and impact (CPR, art. 47). In this way, they support implementing bodies and decision makers in shaping their strategies, inform about what works and what doesn't and *in fine* allow them to learn what has been achieved with the ESF support.

Member States are required to provide the necessary resources and to ensure that procedures are in place in order to produce and collect the data necessary to carry out good quality evaluations. Evaluation is a specific form of analysis and research. In order to adhere to the obligations set out in the Regulation data access for evaluators should be governed by the same legal framework as data access for academic research and analysis.

The overall approach to evaluation should be linked to the intervention logic and in particular the specific objectives and longer-term results a programme aims to achieve. Specific objectives, by their very nature as they respond to the particular challenges of a Member State or region, are not only influenced by the programme's interventions, but also by external factors. It is one of the primary tasks of evaluations to identify the effects which can be *directly* attributed to the ESF.

### **4.1 Ex ante evaluation**

The Member States/regions are responsible for ex ante evaluation (CPR, art. 48 ). The CPR sets out a number of requirements for the ex ante evaluation. Apart from its principal role in supporting and improving the quality of programming, the ex ante evaluation can also play a useful role in verifying baselines for result indicators and understanding data needs for future evaluations.

The ex ante evaluation shall contain an executive summary and shall be submitted to the Commission together with the operational programme.

In view of timing the ex ante evaluation Member States should keep in mind that the operational programmes shall be submitted to the Commission at the same time as the Partnership Contract (CPR, Art. 23) and that the latter must set out a summary analysis of the ex ante evaluations of the programmes. Therefore, the ex ante evaluations will need to be ready in time to allow for the summary analysis.

More detailed guidance on the ex ante evaluation will be made available by the Commission.

### **4.2. The evaluation plan**

The purpose of an evaluation plan is to improve the quality of evaluations carried out during the programming period and the management of the programme.

Each operational programme shall be covered by one evaluation plan (CPR, art. 49 ). The managing authority shall submit the draft evaluation plan to the first meeting of the monitoring committee. The Commission recommends approving the plan in the first or second meeting of the monitoring committee.

Where a single monitoring committee covers more than one operational programme, an evaluation plan may cover all the operational programmes concerned (CPR, art. 104.).

In addition, if a Member State sees the need, it may establish a national or multi-regional or thematic evaluation plan, covering several OPs.

#### *Elements of the evaluation plan*

It shall contain:

- a list of evaluations to be undertaken, their subject and rationale;
- methods to be used for the individual evaluation and their data requirements;
- provisions that data required for certain evaluations will be available or will be collected;
- an overall timetable;
- internal/ external/ mixed expertise used;
- human resources involved;
- possibly a training map;
- a strategy to ensure use and communication of evaluations;
- the budget for implementation of the plan.

The planning for evaluations to be carried out early in the programming period is likely to be more precise than for evaluations planned for a later point in time. However, for certain evaluation techniques, baseline data need to be created at the beginning of the programming period and omissions in this respect cannot be properly addressed later in the programming period.

If need be and in addition to evaluation arrangements set up at the level of the OPs, Member States may set up a national evaluation coordination mechanism (e.g. a central/ coordination unit that may cover several funds or several programmes).

#### *Review of the evaluation plan*

Among the functions of the monitoring committee are the examination and approval of the evaluation plan and its review (CPR, art. 100.2). The Commission recommends that the monitoring committee reviews the implementation of the evaluation plan at least once a year and approves changes if deemed necessary. Member States may also conduct *ad hoc* evaluations not foreseen by the evaluation plan.

### **4.3. Evaluation during the programming period**

During the programming period, managing authorities shall carry out evaluations including evaluations to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact, for each programme on the basis of the evaluation plan. At least once during the programming period, an evaluation shall assess



how support from the CSF Funds has contributed to the objectives for each priority axes (CPR, art. 49.2).

Evaluations can be horizontal, covering one or several programmes, priority axes, themes across programmes, etc. Member States may find it useful to carry out a mid-term evaluation.

Evaluations shall be carried out by experts that are functionally independent of the authorities responsible for programme implementation. This provision does not exclude the possibility that internal experts within the administration undertake evaluations. Verification of functional independence should be carried out on a case by case basis. As a general rule, functional independence within the same institution may be assumed when the entity carrying out evaluations does not have a hierarchical link with the entity responsible for programme implementation.<sup>6</sup>

This guidance paper focuses on two types of evaluations without wishing to diminish the importance other types of evaluations may have for the Member State or the Commission.

### **4.3.1 Implementation evaluations**

Implementation evaluations are likely to be carried out in the early stages of implementation. They typically look at how a programme is being implemented and managed: typical questions are whether or not potential beneficiaries are aware of the programme and have access to it, if the application procedure is as simple as possible, if there are clear and relevant project selection criteria, if there is a documented data management system, if the results of the programme are communicated, etc..

- ➔ To date, ESF evaluations have tended to focus more on implementation issues than capturing the effects of interventions. For the 2014-2020 period, the Commission wishes to redress this balance and encourage more evaluations which assess the impact of ESF interventions. This is an essential element of the strengthened results-focus of the policy.

### **4.3.2. Impact evaluations**

A variety of methods are available to capture the impacts of ESF supported interventions: it is for the managing authorities to decide which one, or which combination of methods, is most suitable to satisfy the regulatory requirements.

Two broad categories of impact evaluations are widely recognised:

- Theory-based impact evaluation, which follows each step of the intervention logic identifying mechanisms of change, answering the questions *why* and *how* an intervention works. This approach mainly produces a qualitative estimate of the impacts.

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<sup>6</sup> This recommendation is inspired by art. 146 of the implementing rules to the financial regulation applicable to the budget of the European Communities.

- Counterfactual impact evaluation, which uses control or comparison groups. This method is useful in answering *how much of the change* is due to the intervention and *for whom*, and in comparing the effects of different instruments (or the same instrument applied to different target groups). Rigorous quantification of the impacts of programmes/interventions involves *counterfactuals* which allow identify/estimate what would have happened in the absence of a specific intervention. Defining such counterfactuals requires to identify a *control group* (comprising people who might have been targeted, but were not subject to the intervention/programme) and to compare it with a group of programme participants (the *treatment group*). Essentially, two approaches to establishing a control group can be distinguished, i.e. *experimental* or *quasi-experimental* designs.

Counterfactual impact evaluations and theory based impact evaluations should complement each other. Experience shows that many of the types of support of the previous programming period continue with a new programme. Therefore, the Commission encourages MA to consider as far as possible including in impact evaluations data of previous programming periods.

Already during the programming period 2007-2013, some Member States carried out impact evaluations. DG EMPL organised events where MS shared their motivation for conducting such evaluations and the methodologies used. This showed that a considerable body of experience exists in the managing authorities in using such methodologies to different types of ESF interventions and target groups.

At the same time, experience has shown that conducting impact evaluations can present significant challenges, relating notably to availability and accessibility of data, capacity within the public administration and the evaluation community, and cooperation among authorities holding relevant data. Therefore, in order to support Member States in their efforts, DG EMPL will produce a practical guidance document for the ESF managing authorities to carry out counterfactual impact evaluations. This guidance will provide practical recommendations on how, when and why to carry out such evaluations and suggesting practical ways to overcome possible difficulties, such as data availability.

DG EMPL strongly encourages MS to use the existing experience with such evaluations and further develop managing authorities' capacity in this respect.

#### **4.4. Summary report**

By December 2020 managing authorities shall submit a summary report for each OP (CPR, art. 104.2).

This report shall summarise the findings of evaluations carried out during the programming period and shall provide qualitative assessment of the main outputs and results of the programme.

The main purpose of this report is twofold:

- to support the ex post evaluation that is under the main responsibility of the European Commission in close cooperation with the Member States;
- to assist Member States in preparing for the next programming period.

#### **4.5. Ex post evaluation**

The purpose of the ex post evaluation shall be to obtain a view of the programming period as a whole. It will examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the Funds and their contribution to the Union priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The ex post evaluations shall be carried out by the Commission, in close cooperation with the Member States and managing authorities. They shall be completed by 31 December 2023. The ex post evaluations will be facilitated by evaluations of Member States and Commission during the programming period, especially by the Member States' summary report of evaluations and main outputs and results.

Member States may find it useful to carry out their own ex post evaluation covering one or several programmes or specific issues they consider particularly relevant.

#### **4.6. Transparency**

Evaluations and their follow-up shall be examined by the monitoring committee. The monitoring committee may issue recommendations to the managing authority regarding the evaluation of the programme. It shall monitor actions taken as a result of its recommendations (CPR, art. 43.4). All evaluations are to be sent to the Commission in electronic format (CPR, art. 49.3).

All final evaluation reports shall be made public in their entirety, preferably via internet. English executive summaries are recommended in order to allow for a wider European exchange of evaluation findings.

### **5. ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

The European Commission may carry out evaluations (CPR, art 49.4). Moreover, the Commission will cooperate with MS and will further support them, when necessary.

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion will:

- make the knowledge and experiences of MS and regions in the field of evaluation available to their peers, for example via the publication of all evaluation reports on its CIRCA website;
- facilitate the exchange of experience across MS, for example via the ESF Evaluation Partnership convened three times a year;
- provide further guidance on evaluation approaches and methods;
- organise seminars and conferences on evaluation topics.

## **ANNEXES (PARTLY TO BE DEVELOPED)**

- 1 Legal references
- 2 List of common indicators
- 3 Definitions for the common indicators
- 4 Glossary

## ANNEX 2

### Common output and result indicators for ESF investments

#### (1) Common output indicators on participants

Participants<sup>1</sup> refer to persons benefiting directly from an ESF investment and who can be identified and asked for their characteristics, and for whom specific expenditure is earmarked. Other beneficiaries should not be counted as participants.

- unemployed, including long-term unemployed\*
- long-term unemployed\*
- inactive\*
- inactive, not in education or training\*
- employed, including self-employed\*
- below 25 years\*
- above 54 years\*
- with primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)\*
- with upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4)\*
- with tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)\*
- migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)\*\*
- disabled\*\*
- other disadvantaged\*\*

The total number of participants is calculated automatically on the basis of the output indicators.

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<sup>1</sup> The data processing arrangements put in place by the Member States must be in line with the provisions of Directive 95/46 of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, in particular Articles 7 and 8 thereof. Data reported under the indicators marked with \* are personal data according to Article 7 of the above Directive. Their processing is necessary for compliance with the legal obligation to which the controller is subject (Article 7(c)). For the definition of controller, see Article 2 of the above Directive. Data reported under the indicators marked with \*\* are a special category of data according to Article 8 of the above Directive. Subject to the provision of suitable safeguards, Member States may, for reasons of substantial public interest, lay down exemptions in addition to those laid down in Article 8(2), either by national law or by decision of the supervisory authority (Article 8(4)).

These data on participants entering an ESF supported operation are to be provided in the annual implementation reports as specified in Article 44(1) and (2) and Article 101(1) of Regulation (EU) No [...]. All data are to be broken down by gender.

(2) Common output indicators for entities

- number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or non-governmental organisations
- number of projects targeting public administrations or public services
- number of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises supported

These data are to be provided in the annual implementation reports as specified in Article 44(1) and (2) and Article 101(1) of Regulation (EU) No [...].

(3) Common immediate result indicators on participants

- inactive participants newly engaged in job searching upon leaving
- participants in education/training upon leaving
- participants gaining a qualification upon leaving
- participants in employment upon leaving

These data are to be provided in the annual implementation reports as specified in Article 44(1) and (2) and Article 101(1) of Regulation (EU) No [...]. All data are to be broken down by gender.

(4) Common longer-term result indicators on participants

participants in employment 6 months after leaving

participants in self-employment 6 months after leaving

participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving

These data are to be provided in the annual implementation reports as specified in Article 44(4) of Regulation (EU) No [...]. They are to be collected based on a representative sample of participants within each priority axis or sub-priority. Internal validity of the sample should be ensured in such a way that the data can be generalised at the level of priority axis or sub-priority. All data are to be broken down by gender.

## Annex 3 – Definitions for the common indicators

		Indicator	Definitions	Source of the definition and additional comments
	0	Total participants (calculated, sum of indicator 1 + 3 + 5)		
Common output indicators on participants	1	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	The employment status is determined on the date of entering the operation. Total number of unemployed. <i>Persons usually without work, available for work and actively seeking work. Persons considered as registered unemployed according to national definitions are always included here even if they do not fulfil all three of these criteria.</i>	Source: Eurostat, Labour market policy database (LMP)  <a href="http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-BF-06-003/EN/KS-BF-06-003-EN.PDF">http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-BF-06-003/EN/KS-BF-06-003-EN.PDF</a>  Comment: The definition in italics is identical to the LMP definition. This entails both the Labour Force Survey definition of unemployed plus registered unemployed.
	2	Long-term unemployed	The employment status is determined on the date of entering the operation. Total number of long-term unemployed (LTU). The definition of LTU varies with age: - Youth (<25 years) – more than 6 months continuous spell of unemployment (>6 months). - Adult (25 years or more) – more than 12 months continuous spell of unemployment (>12 months).	Comment: 'Unemployed' is defined as in the indicator 'Unemployed, including LTU' above, of which 'LTU' is a sub-group.
	3	Inactive	The employment status is determined on the date of entering the operation. Inactive are <i>persons currently not part of the labour force (in the sense that they are not employed or unemployed according to the definitions above) but who would like to enter the labour market and are disadvantaged in some way.</i>	Source: LMP  <a href="http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-BF-06-003/EN/KS-BF-06-003-EN.PDF">http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-BF-06-003/EN/KS-BF-06-003-EN.PDF</a>  Comment: The wording in italics is identical to the LMP definition. People in full-time parental leave are considered as 'inactive'. Self-employed (including helping family members) are not considered as 'inactive'.
	4	Inactive, not in education or training	The employment status is determined on the date of entering the operation. Inactive persons neither classified as employed nor as unemployed and who are not in training or education.	Comment: Inactive is defined as in the indicator 'Inactive' above, of which 'Inactive, not in education or training' is a sub-group.

## Annex 3 – Definitions for the common indicators

5	Employed, including self-employed	<p>The employment status is determined on the date of entering the operation. <i>Employed persons are persons aged 15 and over who performed work, even for just one hour per week, for pay, profit or family gain during the reference week or were not at work but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent because of, for instance, illness, holidays, industrial dispute, and education or training.</i> Self-employed persons with a business, farm or professional practice are also considered to be working if one of the following applies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <i>A person works in his/her own business, professional practice or farm for the purpose of earning a profit, even if the enterprise is failing to make a profit.</i></li> <li>2) <i>A person spends time on the operation of a business, professional practice or farm even if no sales were made, no professional services were rendered, or nothing was actually produced (for example, a farmer who engages in farm maintenance activities; an architect who spends time waiting for clients in his/her office; a fisherman who repairs his boat or nets for future operations; a person who attends a convention or seminar).</i></li> <li>3) <i>A person is in the process of setting up a business, farm or professional practice; this includes the buying or installing of equipment, and ordering of supplies in preparation for opening a new business. An unpaid family worker is said to be working if the work contributes directly to a business, farm or professional practice owned or operated by a related member of the same household.</i></li> </ol>	<p>Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (LFS)  <a href="http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/en/lfsa_esms.htm">http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/en/lfsa_esms.htm</a>  <a href="http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-BF-03-002/EN/KS-BF-03-002-EN.PDF">http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-BF-03-002/EN/KS-BF-03-002-EN.PDF</a></p> <p>Comment:  Definitions in italics are identical to LFS definitions. Helping family members are considered as 'self-employed'. Conscripts who performed some work for pay or profit during the reference week are not considered as 'employed'. People in full-time parental leave are not considered as 'employed'.  'Subsidised employment' is considered as 'employed'. It should be understood as employment incentives according to the LMP definitions (§72-§75): <i>Employment incentives (category 4) covers measures that facilitate the recruitment of unemployed persons and other target groups, or help to ensure the continued employment of persons at risk of involuntary job loss. Employment incentives refer to subsidies for open market jobs which might exist or be created without the public subsidy and which will hopefully be sustainable after the end of the subsidy period. The jobs that may be subsidised are usually in the private sector, but public or non-profit sector jobs are eligible too and no distinction is requested. With employment incentives the public money represents a contribution to the labour costs of the person employed and, typically, the majority of the labour costs are still covered by the employer. However, this does not preclude cases where all costs are covered by the public money for a limited period.</i>  <a href="http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-BF-06-003/EN/KS-BF-06-003-EN.PDF">http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-BF-06-003/EN/KS-BF-06-003-EN.PDF</a> )</p>
6	Below 25 years	<p>The age of the participant is calculated from the year of birth and determined - for reporting purposes - on the date of entering the operation.</p>	<p>Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (LFS)  <a href="http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu_lfs/lfs_mai/lfs/lfs_concepts_and_definitions.htm">http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu_lfs/lfs_mai/lfs/lfs_concepts_and_definitions.htm</a></p> <p>Comment:  The wording in italics is identical to the LFS definition</p>



## Annex 3 – Definitions for the common indicators

7	Above 54 years	The age of the participant is calculated from the year of birth and determined - for reporting purposes - on the date of entering the operation.	Comment: 'Above 54 years' is defined as in the indicator 'Below 25 years'.
8	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	<p>The educational attainment is determined on the date of entering the operation.</p> <p><b>Primary education (ISCED level 1)</b> <i>Primary education provides learning and educational activities typically designed to provide students with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics (i.e. literacy and numeracy), and to establish a sound foundation for learning and solid understanding of core areas of knowledge and personal development, preparing for lower secondary education. It aims at learning at a basic level of complexity with little if any specialisation.</i></p> <p><b>Lower secondary education (ISCED level 2)</b> <i>Programmes at ISCED level 2, or 'lower secondary' education, are typically designed to build upon the fundamental teaching and learning processes which begin at ISCED level 1. Usually, the educational aim is to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and human development on which education systems may systematically expand further educational opportunities. Programmes at this level are usually organized around a more subject-oriented curriculum, introducing theoretical concepts across a broad range of subjects.</i></p>	<p>Source: ISCED 2011 <a href="http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/ISCED_2011_EN.pdf">http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/ISCED_2011_EN.pdf</a></p> <p>Comment: All definitions in italics are identical to the definition used by the Unesco Institute for Statistics (uis)</p>
9	With upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4)	<p>The educational attainment is determined on the date of entering the operation.</p> <p><b>Upper secondary education (ISCED level 3)</b> <i>Programmes at ISCED level 3, or 'upper secondary' education, are typically designed to complete secondary education in preparation for tertiary education, or to provide skills relevant to employment, or both. Programmes at this level offer students more varied, specialised and in-depth instruction than programmes at lower secondary education (ISCED level 2). They are more differentiated, with an increased range of options and streams available.</i></p> <p><b>Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED level 4)</b> <i>Post-secondary non-tertiary education provides learning and educational activities building on secondary education preparing for both labour market entry as well as tertiary</i></p>	<p>Source: ISCED 2011 <a href="http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/ISCED_2011_EN.pdf">http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/ISCED_2011_EN.pdf</a></p> <p>Comment: All definitions in italics are identical to the definition used by uis.unesco</p> <p>'With upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4)' is explained as in the indicator 'With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)'.</p>

## Annex 3 – Definitions for the common indicators

		<p><i>education. It typically targets students who have completed upper secondary (ISCED level 3) but who want to increase their opportunities either to enter the labour market or to progress to tertiary education. Programmes are often not significantly more advanced than those at upper secondary as they typically serve to broaden rather than deepen knowledge, skills and competencies. It therefore aims at learning below the high level of complexity characteristic of tertiary education.</i></p>	
10	With tertiary education ( <b>ISCED 5 to 8</b> )	<p>The educational attainment is determined on the date of entering the operation.</p> <p><b>Tertiary education (ISCED levels 5-8)</b> <i>Tertiary education builds on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialised fields of education. It aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialisation. Tertiary education includes what is commonly understood as academic education, but is broader than that because it also includes advanced vocational or professional education.</i></p>	<p>Source: ISCED 2011  <a href="http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/ISCED_2011_EN.pdf">http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/ISCED_2011_EN.pdf</a></p> <p>Comment:  All definitions in italics are identical to the definition used by uis.unesco.</p> <p>'With tertiary education (<b>ISCED 5 to 8</b>)' is explained as in the indicator 'With primary (<b>ISCED 1</b>) or lower secondary education (<b>ISCED 2</b>)'.</p>
11	Migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)	<p><i>Non-national permanent residents in a country, nationals with foreign background or nationals from a minority, who need special help in the labour market because of language or other cultural difficulties.</i></p>	<p>Source: LMP  <a href="http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-BF-06-003/EN/KS-BF-06-003-EN.PDF">http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-BF-06-003/EN/KS-BF-06-003-EN.PDF</a>  The wording in italics is identical to the LMP definition.</p> <p>Comment:  Persons may cumulate several vulnerabilities. It is advised to record the dominant characteristic. The dominant characteristic is the main target of an intervention (e.g. integration of marginalised communities, promoting employment of disabled). Where an intervention permits a range of target groups to participate, 'dominant characteristic' could be understood as the single most important factor associated with a participant's vulnerability.</p>
12	Disabled	<p><i>Persons who are registered disabled according to national definitions.</i></p>	<p>Source: LMP  <a href="http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-BF-06-003/EN/KS-BF-06-003-EN.PDF">http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-BF-06-003/EN/KS-BF-06-003-EN.PDF</a></p> <p>Comment:  The wording in italics is identical to the LMP definition.</p>

## Annex 3 – Definitions for the common indicators

Common output indicators for entities				Please also consult explanations provided under the indicator migrant....'.
	13	Other disadvantaged	Disadvantaged people in the national labour market who are neither migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma) nor disabled. This entails all disadvantaged people, such as people facing social exclusion, who are not covered by the two preceding indicators.	Comment: 'Other disadvantaged' is explained as in the indicator 'Migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)'.
	14	Number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or non-governmental organisations	<p><i>'Social partners' is a term generally used in Europe to refer to representatives of management and labour (employers' organisations and trade unions).</i></p> <p><i>A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions, bring citizen concerns to Governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information.</i></p> <p>A project is partially implemented by social partners or non-governmental organisations when the beneficiary includes - amongst others – social partners or non-governmental organisations.</p>	<p>Source: Eurofound  <a href="http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/definitions/EUROPEANSOCIALPARTNERS.htm">http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/definitions/EUROPEANSOCIALPARTNERS.htm</a></p> <p>NGO Global Network  <a href="http://www.ngo.org/ngoinfo/define.html">http://www.ngo.org/ngoinfo/define.html</a></p> <p>Comment: The wording in italics is identical to the Eurofound and NGO Global Network definitions.</p>
	15	Number of projects targeting public administrations or public services	<p>ESF support enhancing institutional capacity and efficient public administration through the investment priorities:  <i>"- Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance.</i>  <i>- Capacity building for stakeholders delivering employment, education and social policies and sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at national, regional and local level."</i></p> <p>Number of projects aiming to provide support in these areas should be recorded.</p>	<p>Source: Proposal for a Regulation on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006, COM(2011) 607 final  <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2014/proposals/regulation/esf/esf_proposal_en.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2014/proposals/regulation/esf/esf_proposal_en.pdf</a> , p. 12</p> <p>Comment The wording in italics is taken from the proposed ESF Regulation.</p>

## Annex 3 – Definitions for the common indicators

	16	Number of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises supported	<p>Number of micro, small and medium sized enterprises supported, including social enterprises.</p> <p><i>An enterprise is considered to be any entity engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form.</i></p> <p><i>Staff headcount and financial ceilings determining enterprise categories:</i></p> <p><i>1. The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.</i></p> <p><i>2. Within the SME category, a small enterprise is defined as an enterprise which employs fewer than 50 persons and whose annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 10 million.</i></p> <p><i>3. Within the SME category, a microenterprise is defined as an enterprise which employs fewer than 10 persons and whose annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 2 million.</i></p>	<p>Source: Commission recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (2003/361/EC)</p> <p><a href="http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32003H0361:EN:HTML">http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32003H0361:EN:HTML</a></p> <p>Comment: The wording in italics is identical to the Commission recommendation.</p>
Common immediate result indicators on participants	17	Inactive participants newly engaged in job searching upon leaving	<p>Inactive persons who have received ESF support and who are newly engaged in job searching activities upon leaving the ESF intervention. This group comprises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- registered jobseekers: <i>this refers to all persons who are currently registered as jobseekers with the PES and</i></li> <li>- other registered jobseekers: <i>this refers to all persons registered with the PES who are not considered as registered unemployed and who have (1) contacted the PES for assistance in jobsearch, (2) whose personal details and circumstances have been recorded by the PES and (3) who have had personal contact with the PES within the current year, or as otherwise defined for PES operational purposes. All 3 conditions should be fulfilled at the same time.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Source: LMP</p> <p><a href="http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/statmanuals/files/KS-BF-06-003-EN.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/statmanuals/files/KS-BF-06-003-EN.pdf</a></p> <p>Comment: The wording in italics is identical to the LMP definitions (paragraphs 361 and 363 respectively).</p>
	18	Participants in education/training upon leaving	<p>Persons who have received ESF support and who are newly engaged in continuing education (lifelong learning, formal education) or training activities (off-the-job/in-the-job training, vocational training, etc.) immediately upon leaving the ESF intervention.</p>	

## Annex 3 – Definitions for the common indicators

	19	Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	Persons who have received ESF support and who gained a qualification upon leaving the ESF intervention. <i>Qualification means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.</i>	<p>Source: European Commission, European Qualifications Framework <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/terms_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/terms_en.htm</a></p> <p>Comment: The wording in italics is identical to the EQF definition. This indicator can be further split by ISCED and EQF levels, registering the highest level achieved.</p> <p>Only qualifications which have been achieved as a result of an ESF operation should be reported. They should be reported only once per participant/ project.</p>
	20	Participants in employment upon leaving	Unemployed or inactive persons who have received ESF support, and who are in employment, including self-employed, immediately upon leaving the ESF intervention.	<p>Comment: 'Unemployed' is defined as in the indicator 'Unemployed, including LTU'. 'Inactive' is defined as in the indicator 'Inactive'. 'Employment' is defined as in the indicator 'Employed, including self-employed'.</p>
Common longer-term result indicators on participants	21	Participants in employment 6 months after leaving	Unemployed or inactive persons who have received ESF support and who are in employment, <b>excluding self-employed</b> , 6 months after leaving the ESF intervention.	<p>Comment: 'Employment' is defined as in the indicator 'Employed, including self-employed', but excluding self-employed.</p>
	22	Participants in self-employment 6 months after leaving	<p>Persons who have received ESF support, and who are 6 months after leaving the ESF intervention registered as self-employed and actively working.</p> <p><i>Self-employed persons with a business, farm or professional practice are also considered to be actively working if one of the following applies:</i></p> <p>1) <i>A person works in his own business, professional practice or farm for the purpose of earning a profit, even if the enterprise is failing to make a profit.</i></p> <p>2) <i>A person spends time on the operation of a business, professional practice or farm even if no sales were made, no professional services were rendered, or nothing was actually produced (for example, a farmer who engages in farm maintenance activities; an architect who spends time waiting for clients in his/her office; a fisherman who repairs his boat or nets for future operations; a person who attends a convention</i></p>	<p>Source: LFS <a href="http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu_lfs/lfs_main/lfs/lfs_concepts_and_definitions.htm">http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu_lfs/lfs_main/lfs/lfs_concepts_and_definitions.htm</a></p> <p>Comment: The wording in italics is identical to the LFS definitions</p> <p>'Self-employment' is defined as in the indicator 'Employed, including self-employed'.</p>

## Annex 3 – Definitions for the common indicators

		<p>or seminar).</p> <p>3) A person is in the process of setting up a business, farm or professional practice; this includes the buying or installing of equipment, and ordering of supplies in preparation for opening a new business. An unpaid family worker is said to be working if the work contributes directly to a business, farm or professional practice owned or operated by a related member of the same household.</p>	
23	Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	<p>Persons who have received ESF support, who transited from precarious to stable employment, from underemployment to full employment, and/or have taken up a job requiring EQF competences 6 months after leaving the ESF intervention.</p> <p>Precarious employment should be understood as the 'temporary employment' and 'work contract of limited duration'. <i>Given institutional discrepancies, the concepts of 'temporary employment' and 'work contract of limited duration' describe situations which, in different institutional contexts, may be considered similar. Employees with a limited duration job/contract are employees whose main job will terminate either after a period fixed in advance, or after a period not known in advance, but nevertheless defined by objective criteria, such as the completion of an assignment or the period of absence of an employee temporarily replaced.</i></p> <p>- underemployment should be understood as <i>Involuntary part-time employment — This is when respondents declare that they work part-time because they are unable to find full-time work.</i></p>	<p>Source: Eurostat, LFS  <a href="http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_unemployment_lfs/methodology/definitions">http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_unemployment_lfs/methodology/definitions</a>  The wording in italics is identical to the LFS definition.</p> <p>EQF competences should be understood as <i>the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.</i>  <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/terms_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/terms_en.htm</a>).</p> <p>Comment:  Corresponding to Integrated Guideline no. 7: <i>Member States should tackle labour market segmentation with measures addressing precarious employment, underemployment and undeclared work.</i></p>