

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

The 2024 Work Programme



This comprehensive work programme has been developed through an in-depth face-to-face discussion with the members of the Community of Practice (CoP) on Social Inclusion at the Social Innovation Forum 2023 in Brussels, online meetings with Managing Authorities, thematic expert consultations, an online discussion and vote on 6 December 2023, and a final review session with experts on 13 December 2023. The activities of 2023 served as a valuable foundation for this work programme, which was inspired by the 'hop, skip, jump' methodology.

The actions undertaken in 2023, employing the 'hop, skip, jump' methodology, provided key insights for developing effective interventions against social exclusion. Through data collection, reflection, and setting the stage for impactful measures, the critical success factors for the 2024 work programme were discerned. It became clear that social inclusion challenges have increased amid an energy crisis, war, migration, and high inflation. Various barriers, including financial, political, structural, and conceptual, were identified as obstacles to social innovation.

The CoP reached consensus on the key characteristics of effective interventions, emphasising the importance of involving the affected individuals and communities, taking a long-term perspective, empowering people, incorporating expert advice, and allocating sufficient budgets. The final event of 2023 saw the CoP discussing interventions that have the potential to impact the entire ecosystem. Strategies such as involving end-users in the design of calls, exploring creative funding models, and implementing projects based on the best available approaches were highlighted as ways to bring about gradual change in rigid social protection and service systems. Game-changing interventions were identified.

The CoP aims to further explore how to address the long-term care elements of social inclusion challenges. Moreover, the work programme will review the ESF+ regulation, including the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/1676, in order to optimise the use of the EU's main social policy and funding instrument.

Key Lessons from 2023:

- Interventions should take a holistic approach to social exclusion challenges.
- Collaboration with the other CoPs could be beneficial in addressing the multifaceted nature of social inclusion challenges.
- The full potential of ESF+ and its regulation is yet to be fully understood and unlocked, with amongst others, the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/1676 offering additional opportunities.
- Long-term care systems and services are crucial in combating social exclusion, but existing approaches and models face challenges.
- ESF+ should facilitate and optimise the implementation of EU policy objectives and provide tangible support to Managing Authorities and stakeholders.

Significant social policy developments at the EU level:

- Social housing and Housing First are high on the EU social policy agenda, with the European Platform on Combating Homelessness (EPOCH) steering action against homelessness. Collaboration between the CoP on Social Inclusion and EPOCH is deemed essential.
- The first Member State reports on the implementation of the Child Guarantee in early 2024 could help to clarify the role of ESF+ tools, instruments, and innovative practices.
- The Disability Platform, as part of the new Disability Rights Strategy, is developing guidelines on deinstitutionalisation and promoting community living, where ESF+ could contribute to implementation.

Work Programme Activities:

1. ONLINE EVENT 1: 25/04/2024

Focus: Using the **Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/1676** (regarding the definition of unit costs, lump sums and flat rates and financing not linked to costs for reimbursement of expenditure) for effective Housing First actions. Incorporating a look at the issue of long-term care when addressing situations of persons with disabilities and children living in poverty.

This event could be the starting point for an expert task force to further explore the possibilities offered by the Delegated act.

Possible collaboration with other networks and EPOCH.

Outcomes: Guidelines on how to use the delegated act, practical examples, and a checklist.

2. JOINT ON-SITE MEETING WITH COP MIGRATION IN LISBON, PORTUGAL: 21-22/05/2024

Focus: Empowering support for specific target groups: persons with disabilities and children achieving adequate housing and living standards. Possible sub-themes include social and health care, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), education, and trafficking.

Outcomes: Policy guidelines on effective interventions.

3. FIELD VISIT: 9-10/09/2024 in Prague, Czech Republic

Themes: Promising practices on sub-themes linking housing programmes, child guarantee, and inclusion of people with disabilities. Long term care elements will be explored during the visits.

Half-day joint discussions focusing on the transnational calls.

- Information session on the calls
- Practical examples
- Discussion on guidelines

Outcomes: Practical experiences and guidelines for the effective use of transnational calls.

4. ONLINE EVENT 2: 26/09/2024

Focus: Exploring how ESF+ can support the **implementation of the Child Guarantee**. Working with the CoP on Material Support and discussing involving the Technical Support Instrument.

Collaboration with the CoP on Social Innovation and CoP on Material Support.

Outcomes: Examples of the use of ESF+ to meet the requirements of the Child Guarantee and a policy briefing.

5. SOCIAL INNOVATION FORUM: October (TBC) in person.

Focus and outcomes yet to be determined.

6. ONLINE EVENT 3: 28/11/2024

Focus: Empowering Community Living and Enhancing Support. Discussing the role of ESF+ in the transition from 'shelter to housing' and supporting disadvantaged families to prevent institutionalisation. Insights from the CoP on Social Innovation.

Possible collaboration with the Disability Platform.

Outcomes: Guidelines and a set of promising practices.

Outcomes and Products

Products:

1. Guidelines on the effective use of the ESF+ Regulation, in particular the **Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/1676**.
2. Policy briefing and recommendations on the implementation of the Child Guarantee.
3. A set of promising practices to facilitate the transition to community-based support services for persons with disabilities.
4. ...

Outcomes:

1. Coordination between ESF+ CoP on Social Inclusion and EPOCH.
2. Collaboration with the Disability Platform.
3. Support at Member State level for the implementation of the Child Guarantee.
4. Increased awareness of the importance of long-term care in the development of social innovations to combat homelessness, the Child Guarantee, and institutionalisation.

The 2024 Work Programme of the CoP on Social Inclusion is built on the needs and concerns identified by its members and will include more transversal cooperation with other CoPs and different EU platforms or structures. The ambition of the CoP is to provide models, tools, and instruments that not only manage social exclusion, but also pave the way towards its elimination by fostering inclusive policies, advocating for equal opportunities, and promoting societal change.

Activities calendar 2024

Date	Type	City	Country	Main Focus
25/04	Online	N/A	N/A	Utilisation of EU Regulation 2023/1676
21-22/05	On-site	Lisbon	Portugal	Joint meeting with the CoP on Migrant Integration
9-10/09	On-site	Prague	Czech Republic	Field visit
26/09	Online	N/A	N/A	ESF+ support for Child Guarantee
Oct (TBC)	On-site	N/A	N/A	Social Innovation Forum 2024, focus TBD.
28/11	Online	N/A	N/A	Empowering Community Living and Enhancing Support

If there are any changes to the dates, we will notify you promptly.

