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# **European Social Fund in Sweden**

The ESF supports projects that combat social exclusion and promote skill development.

# A coordinated transnational call for proposals in the field of: Social Economy, Inclusion, Youth Employment and Migrants

The Swedish ESF-Council, the managing authority of the ESF in Sweden, is launching this call in order for to promote project cooperation and mutual learning among the member states of the European Union. The aim is to apply or develop methods in a transnational context together with at least one partner from another member state (preferably two or more), within the following themes:

- Social Economy,
- Inclusion,
- Youth Employment or
- Migrants.

Specific priority will be given to projects addressing the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and projects demonstrating social innovation.

The call is a part of the Swedish ESF-programme priority 2 *Increase transition to work*, subtheme 2.3, *Apply and develop methods for women and men who are far from the labour market*.

The amount launched is 50 million SEK (approximately 6 million Euros) to be allocated among the themes. There is no-requirement for co-financing. Eligible costs are: Swedish activities taking place in Sweden and abroad according to the transnational agreement. Covering costs for the other transnational partners are not approved.

This call opens the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2018 and ends the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2018 at 16.00. Starting date for the projects will be 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2018 and the latest finalizing date is the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2021. Projects can last between 18-36 months.







### **Background**

Transnational cooperation in the ESF helps develop better and more effective employment and social policies by enabling people to learn from experiences and good practice in other countries. In previous programming period there was a lack of coordination among the member states regarding the calls which hindered projects transnational cooperation. In response to that the Common Framework was established in order to have coordinated calls on specific themes. Funding for this action has been set aside in several member states for their projects participation.

The call is launched on the basis of article 10 in the ESF- regulation and the thematic target 9 in the Structural Funds regulation, to promote social inclusion, combatting poverty and discrimination and the investment priority 9.1. That is the common denominator that binds this call to other European calls. In the Swedish Operational Programme the call is therefore launched in subtheme 2.3.

Not all member states have opted for participating or are just participating in some themes, but you can still cooperate with partners from all EU-countries as long as you have two ESF funded projects. In order for you to meet this eligibility criteria we recommend that you have three ESF-funded projects as a core (a minimum of two is required) in case one of the partners don't get their application approved.

A database is set up in order to help finding partners. It can be found on this address: <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality">http://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality</a> Regardless if you already have a partner you will have to register as part of the application process, since it will be used by the member states to monitor the matchmaking. The partnership must be established and a Transnational Cooperation Agreement (TCA) agreement must be drawn up before applying. There will also be a partner search forum in the end of March 2018, see more information on <a href="https://www.esf.se">www.esf.se</a>

Sweden has chosen the following themes: Social Economy, Youth Employment, Inclusion and Migrants. For a description of the themes see below. Our aim is to have projects within all themes and an indicative budget has been assigned each theme. **Each application should focus on one theme.** 

The funding for this call is from the subtheme 2.3 and from that follows that all projects should be directed to women and men who are very far from the labour market regardless of subtheme. For all projects we expect a suitable transnational partnership should be established to achieve this objective.





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Due to the specifics of transnational cooperation this call will differ from regular calls within 2.3. The target group is going to be the same, but the actual work will have more focus on development of methods and transfer of knowledge due to the transnational core of the projects. It is stated in the operational programme that development of methods can take place in all parts of priority axis 2 (page 52 and 82). The target group should be represented as far as possible for example by testing methods, participating in mobility or be used as a reference group when developing or evaluating methods. The central part of the project is the transnational cooperation regulated in the Transnational Cooperation Agreement, that is the binding element since the Operational Programmes looks different in all countries. The TCA will have to be negotiated with your partners and it is a very important document in the evaluation process.

### **Expected results and effects of the projects**

Transnational cooperation is an "easy" way for projects to develop innovation strategies. Good practices from other member states can have a powerful impact and stimulating reflection on your current practice. The Swedish ESF Council has a government assignment to work with the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and linking our project to the strategy. Primarily it is relevant to the theme Youth in this call.

We expect to see projects that brings added value through transnational cooperation. It is not a national project with a transnational component we foresee but a project where the transnational cooperation has real impact on the result.

For specific expected results and effects see each subtheme described below.

### Social Economy

The indicative amount allocated to this theme is: 10 million SEK

The Swedish organisations and enterprises of social economy and civil society have much in common with the European counterparts. We encourage projects and organisations to establish transnational partnerships to together tackle their challenges and possibilities.

Civil society organisations and the social economy comprise interventions that contribute to important social aspects such as; mobilization, support, education and job creation. The entrepreneurial achievements and contributions of the sector encompasses businesses, products and services where the social aspects are vivid and integrated.





The main objective of this theme is:

 New or improved sustainable solutions for the social economy and civil society in order to contribute to the EU 2020 strategy and to deliver high levels of employment productivity and social cohesion.

During the programming period of 2007-2013 Sweden was part of the European Social Fund transnational network on social economy. Two major result reports and several peer review PMs have been produced and are available at <a href="http://www.socialeconomy.pl">http://www.socialeconomy.pl</a> The projects should consider these achievements and build on the results achieved.

The Euricse Working Paper for the ILO "Social and Solidarity Economy and the Future of Work" (July 2017) gives a general picture of the main trends, facts and possibilities for the social economy sector. One important issue is the transition towards a digital economy. This is a key factor for the competitiveness of the EU economy and the sustainable growth and recovery in the European Union. The European Commission has recently stressed that the social economy has "to make the most out of the digitalization as a means to fostering a fairer economy and a resilient society."

Furthermore, the social economy offers new innovative ways to provide services of general interest to channel jobs in emerging sectors. Social economy can act as catalyst for structural change, new products, services and ideas, innovators and entrepreneurs that create market change through the capture of social change. In the Swedish ESF-Programme and the National ESF Action Plan one of the priorities is the role of social economy and civil society in the labour market both as an employability policy advocate and as an important employer.

Some themes which could be of interest to develop together with transnational partners are to share and expose good practices in adapting the social economy to new market demands and trends. New/future markets/opportunities could be the creative industries, eco-industry or green economy, blue economy - marine industry, mobile services, health and care. Another area of interest for developing new markets is circular economy. The connection to Agenda 2030 and the civil society/social economy organizations could be a used as a framework for development and cooperation.

We foresee that the projects are an alliance of several organisations in the civil society and social economy. The projects should engage the organisations themselves, the employed and members as well as unemployed and people from disadvantage groups (the final beneficiaries). The expected results need to include sharing and exchanging knowledge of methods, products and/or solutions to increase employability and participation in the labour market of disadvantaged groups.

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The expected results of the projects:

- Establishing well-functioning transnational partnerships, that brings the individual closer to the labour market or self-support/empowerment.
- New solutions, methods or products that will be implemented.

### Youth Employment

This subject is divided in two parts, projects targeting NEETs in general and one part where the aim is to implement the method mobility that was developed within the previous programme period.

### **NEETs**

The indicative amount allocated to NEETs: 10 million SEK

The term NEET is used to describe young people who are not engaged in any form of employment, education or training. In 2011, some 14 million young people under the age of 30 years were not in employment, education or training across the EU as a whole. The EU average of youth (age 14-24) NEETs is 13.0 percent varying between 5.0 percent in (Luxembourg) to 22.2 percent (Italy)¹ Even though male NEET rates increased sharply between 2007 and 2013, young women's rates (15–29) remain higher in the majority of EU28 countries, reaching 17.7% in the EU28 average for 2013, compared to 14.1% for young men. Female NEET rates are particularly high (above 20%) in eastern European (BG, HR, RO, SK and HU especially) and southern European (EL, IT and ES) countries. Only in some countries (ES, HR, CY) are NEET rates for males slightly higher than for females due to the increase in unemployment among young men. NEET rates and gender gaps are higher among young non-nationals (i.e. citizens of another country) than among young nationals.²

Those with low levels of education are three times more likely to be NEET than those with third-level education. The risk is 70 percent higher for young people from an immigration background than nationals while having a disability or health issue is also a strong risk factor. There are high economic costs involved but that is not the only cost. NEETs are at higher risk of being socially and politically alienated. There are also large gender differences in the reasons for not seeking employment. Family responsibilities are a key issue for young women, while the proportion of young inactive discouraged NEETs (i.e. those who consider it not worthwhile to seek employment because of the lack of opportunities) was almost twice as high among young men as among young women.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Eurostat Labour Force Statistics, (yth\_empl\_150).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> http://www.gendercop.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/youth-and-gender-in-the-esf chantal-samek.pdf



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The EU Member States have tried a number of measures to prevent young people from becoming NEETs and to reintegrate those who are NEETs. The involvement of a range of stakeholders in the design and delivery of youth employment measures is essential. Successful policies need to be innovative. They introduce new ways of reaching out to their target groups, with outreach activities forming an important part of efforts to engage disfranchised young people. The NEETs population is heterogenic and it needs to be addressed when designing projects and policies.

Expected results of the projects are:

- To develop, adjust or transfer methods between partners in order to promote mutual learning on the topic prevention of NEETs or reintegration. The target group should be women and men ages 15-30 that are far from labour market.
- To develop or adjust methods of outreach work to reach the NEETs target group.

### Mobility

The indicative amount allocated to mobility:10 million SEK

Projects within the current call should build on a common EU standard developed in the previous TLN Mobility (see <a href="http://www.tln-mobility.eu/EN/Home/home.html">http://www.tln-mobility.eu/EN/Home/home.html</a> for more information). The project should therefore consist of a preparatory phase, a foreign work placement and then a follow-up phase. The participants in the projects should be youth in isolation. The aim is to create favorable conditions for the participants to break with a negative social context through work experience in another EU country. After the internship the projects cooperate with the employment service to build on the new experience of the participant. By drawing from that momentum of the internship it helps the participant to gain access to the labour market, or entering into studies. The target group: Women and men ages 18-30 that are unemployed or that are far from the labour market due to factors such as health, disability and social reasons.

Expected results of the projects are:

- That women and men ages 18-30 that are far from the labour market, enter work or studies.
- For organizations to gain experience and building partnerships for a national call in 2019.
- That women and men aged 18-30 years strengthen their self-esteem after the internship abroad.

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#### Inclusion

The indicative amount allocated to this theme is: 10 million SEK

The Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth sets targets to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion and to increase employment of the population aged 20-64 to 75 percent. The ESF focuses on employment as a mean to eliminate discrimination, exclusion and poverty. Poverty depends on the organization of and interlinks between all sectors of society: the labour market, the family, social security systems, political life, the functioning of democratic institutions, etc. The structural dimension of poverty is closely related to its gender dimension, which goes beyond the statement that women are a potentially vulnerable group of citizens<sup>3</sup>.

Social exclusion arises when, for a variety of reasons, an individual, or a group, faces difficulties or discrimination in some aspects of their everyday lives. For example, a disabled woman or man who cannot get a job because employers doubt their abilities and they are 'excluded' from labour market. Ex-offenders, recovering drug abusers, ethnic minorities such as Roma, people with poor language skills, homeless people – these are all examples of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups who are at risk of social exclusion and the poverty that can accompany it.

Expected results of the projects are:

 We want to see projects having an innovative approach on how to get disadvantaged people to enter the labour market, studies or in some cases closer to the labour market. Special attention should be devoted to those facing multiple discrimination. In order to achieve this goal, it requires implementation or adaptation of methods to prevent discrimination and to promote equal opportunities between women and men.

# **Migration**

The indicative amount allocated to this theme is: 10 million SEK

A total of 229 000 persons were granted refugee status in the EU-28 in 2015, 56 000 subsidiary protection statuses, and 22 000 authorizations to stay for humanitarian reasons. 83



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Please see: <a href="http://www.gendercop.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/poverty-and-gender-in-the-esf">http://www.gendercop.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/poverty-and-gender-in-the-esf</a> stratigaki.pdf for more information.



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percent of the asylum seekers in the EU-28 in 2015 were less than 35 years old those in the age range 18–34 years accounted for slightly more than half (53 %) of the total number, while 29 percent applicants were minors aged less than 18 years old.

The distribution of asylum applicants by gender shows that more men than women were seeking asylum. Among the younger age groups, males accounted for 55 percent of the total number of applicants in 2015. In the age gaps 14–17 or 18–34 years old, around 80 percent of the applicants were male, with this share dropping back to two thirds for the age group 35–64.<sup>4</sup>

Even if Sweden is highly ranked when it comes to immigrants formal possibilities there are vast differences in unemployment between immigrants and individuals from Swedish origin, specifically women. On average, it takes 7 to 10 years for half of the immigrants to establish themselves on the labour market: for men approximately 2-7 years, and for women 9-11.

Also age, education level and origin of the country's level of development and where in Sweden you live are factors determining the time it takes for someone to enter the labour market. Studies also show that the reason for immigration is an important explanatory factor. One explanation for the establishment of the new arrivals take longer in Sweden than in comparable countries is that Sweden receives a significantly larger proportion of refugees. There are high demands on language proficiency in the Swedish labour market as well as on the level of education and few jobs are available that does not require this. The current measures involve language training, civic education and labour market measures — which has shown a low rate of success. The measures are criticized for not involving close relations with the actual labour market which means that the target group rarely has contact with employers because they are engaged in the modules mentioned above full time.

The labour market demand is focused on welfare services, where many professions are authorized. This increases the need for knowledge- and profession validation measures, supplementary education and sufficient language proficiency. Studies have shown that early integrated combinations consisting of proper validation, language training-professional Swedish and above all – consistent contact with employers have very positive effects on employment of newly arrived.

### Expected results of the projects are:

- To develop or adjust innovative methods to facilitate establishment in the labour market for newly arrived women and men, based on individual approaches.
- To further develop and adjust methods of work based training in order for the migrants

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Information från Eurostat http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum statistics



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to get faster access to the labour market.

• To develop or adjust innovative methods to integrating newly arrived with entrepreneurial skills.

In order to be the target group for this measure you need to have a residence permit in Sweden.

# Description of the analysis- and preparation phase, implementation and finalising phase.

The project period is between 18-36 months. You need to divide the time allocated into an initial analysis and preparation phase as well as taking into account that it will take time to finalize the project. Therefore, project is divided into an initial analysis and preparation phase, an implementation phase and a finalisation phase. These phases are also reflected in the budget and have its own allocations.

Possible activities in the initial phase are meetings, analysis, mapping, establishing the organisation structure of the project on national and transnational level. Since this is a transnational project with partners that has other rules to follow part of this work might have to be done before the application is handed in and stated in the TNC. The phase will be a minimum of three months and a maximum of nine months. The result of the analysis and preparation phase will be presented to the Swedish ESF-council in a report. The report has to problematize the issues the project will work with; define the target group and how it is impacted by the project; include a plan for project implementation; address the plan for evaluation and for monitoring; include a final risk-assessment analysis and a specified final budget. If the report is not approved the project may be discontinued.

The activities in the project will also be stated in the Transnational Cooperation Agreement so each part has to agree on it. The TCA can be found at: <a href="https://www.esf.se/sv/Vara-fonder/Socialfonden1/Overgripande-information-om-socialfondsprogrammet/Transnationellt-samarbete/">https://www.esf.se/sv/Vara-fonder/Socialfonden1/Overgripande-information-om-socialfondsprogrammet/Transnationellt-samarbete/</a>

In the implementation phase the project carries out activities according to the project plan to reach the goals and effects of the project. Monitoring and evaluation is carried out in close collaboration with the Swedish ESF-council and the project evaluator.

The finalization phase can be a maximum of three months. Suggested activities are a finalization of the final report, finalization of the evaluators report and activities for dissemination.





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The application should contain a description of the underlying problems and needs that the project will tackle. The application should also include a description of a possible solution for these problems and how the project will provide this solution. You can find more information on result based management and other tips at: <a href="https://www.esf.se/sv/Vara-fonder/Socialfonden1/Ansoka/Forbereda-ansokan/Planera-projektet/">https://www.esf.se/sv/Vara-fonder/Socialfonden1/Ansoka/Forbereda-ansokan/Planera-projektet/</a>

The Swedish part of the project can have cross financing activities related to European Regional and Development Fund.

Integrated measure for gender equality, accessibility for people with limited abilities and non-discrimination, "horizontal principles"

The projects must demonstrate how they will contribute to combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation by paying attention to those facing multiple discrimination. And promote equal opportunities and to the promotion of equality between women and men according to ESF regulations Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013

The principles are to guarantee an inclusive project, where participants regardless of gender, limited abilities or of any other reason, are included in project activities on an equal basis. To ensure that all can grow and be empowered in order to gain access to work, study or entering into a labour market programme in their own terms.

The Social Fund projects should promote gender equality non-discrimination and equal opportunities on the basis of the Operational program's objectives, targets and priorities. This is done by the project having expertise internally or through external support. An analysis of the project from a gender equality and discrimination perspective should be undertaken and the results included in the definition of the specific problem that the project addresses. The activities should also take into account gender mainstreaming in line with the analysis, and that the gender perspective should be included in the evaluation of the project. Please set aside some funding in the budget for these issues unless you have very good knowledge on the horizontal principles within your project staff.

You can find more information on: <a href="http://standard.gendercop.com">http://standard.gendercop.com</a>

https://www.esf.se/sv/Vara-fonder/Socialfonden1/Overgripande-information-om-socialfondsprogrammet/Horisontella-kriterier/Jamstalldhetsintegrering/





### **Monitoring and evaluation**

All projects financed by the European Social fund must be monitored and evaluated.

Monitoring differs from evaluation in that it is based on documentation and regular follow-ups. Baselines, indicators and status reports are important parts of monitoring. The projects are to describe how they will monitor and evaluate the results and actions taken. Both the national and transnational parts of the project must be evaluated and therefore it is important to include transnational travels for the evaluators.

Project evaluation aims to contribute knowledge to the management of the project and project / steering committee on how the results will be incorporated in organizations' development needs. Regardless of the type of project, however, the evaluation should contribute to the knowledge and benefits on several levels. It is up to both the evaluator and project management to ensure that relevant stakeholders will benefit from the evaluation. The evaluation will study both processes and results and impacts of the project connected to the call.

In the application form there should briefly be described:

- How the evaluation and its results will be used and how it contributes to the implementation of the project and how it strengthens the development of the participating organizations.
- How the project will be evaluated concerning gender equality, non-discrimination and equal opportunities.
- Resources earmarked for monitoring and evaluation and feedback of results.

In the project application, a budget for evaluation and follow-up should be provided. The concrete evaluation plan for a project should be designed in consultation with the Swedish ESF Council. The project evaluation should primarily be called off from the Swedish ESF Council's framework of procurement. The purpose of the framework agreement is to ensure the quality of evaluation and to simplify the procurement process for the projects. See also <a href="https://www.esf.se">www.esf.se</a> for tutorials and more information on evaluation.

### Selection criteria

The project must fulfil the Swedish selection criteria, please visit see <a href="www.esf.se">www.esf.se</a>. At the time of finalising the application a Transnational Cooperation Agreement (in English) must be





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enclosed. The template (please visit <a href="https://www.esf.se/sv/Vara-fonder/Socialfonden1/Overgripande-information-om-socialfondsprogrammet/Transnationellt-samarbete/">https://www.esf.se/sv/Vara-fonder/Socialfonden1/Overgripande-information-om-socialfondsprogrammet/Transnationellt-samarbete/</a>) must be filled and signed by all parties. The Swedish ESF Council prefers to have the application in English to ensure it can be read by all transnational parties.

The Swedish ESF council has a special assignment to take into consideration the European Baltic Sea Strategy and priority will be given to projects cooperation in that geographical area in line with the strategy. We specifically want to see cooperation of this sort within the Youth theme.

Social innovation addresses the risk of organizations to develop its own solutions in ignorance of developments elsewhere, so transnational cooperation is suited for transfer of good ideas across Europe. Transnational cooperation is an "easy" way for organizations to develop innovation strategies. Good practices from other member states can have a powerful impact in stimulating reflection by an organization. Therefore, priority will be given to projects demonstrating a degree of social innovation.

# Conditions for the implementation of the projects

### Standardised costs

The Swedish ESF-Council acknowledges the flat rate and standardised costs according to the delegated act (EU) 2015/2195. When Swedish parties are budgeting they have to use these costs. If other parties are to be reimbursed, their costs are to be registered as "Services (externa tjänster)" in the Swedish budget.

Eligible costs are: Swedish activities taking place in Sweden and abroad according to the transnational agreement. Covering costs for the other transnational partners are not approved.

#### State aid

ESF is regulated by the state aid rules, please visit <a href="https://www.esf.se/sv/Vara-fonder/Socialfonden1/Ansoka/Vanliga-fragor1/Statsstod/">https://www.esf.se/sv/Vara-fonder/Socialfonden1/Ansoka/Vanliga-fragor1/Statsstod/</a> A list of grants that have been categorised as state aid must be provided including de minimis (minor grants that add up to 1 678 000 Swedish crowns (or 200 000 euros) over three years.

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### Cost efficiency and procurement

If a public actor is administratively responsible for the project, its buying of products and services are regulated by the law of public procurement (Swedish LOU). The law is valid for local, regional, national and transnational activities.

Other organisations, private or NGOs, are to follow the principles of transparency, non-discrimination, mutual acknowledgement, proportionality and equal standing when procuring products and services on local, regional, national and transnational level. A preliminary plan of procurement and cooperation agreements must be attached to the application. Please visit <a href="http://www.konkurrensverket.se/upphandling/om-upphandlingsreglerna/om-lagstiftningen/uppphandlingsprinciperna/">http://www.konkurrensverket.se/upphandling/om-upphandlingsreglerna/om-lagstiftningen/uppphandlingsprinciperna/</a> (in Swedish).

# Webb-based application in "Projektrummet" and the partnership database

If you are applying for the first time, you need to open an account in "Projektrummet" (<a href="www.esf.se">www.esf.se</a>). You also must publish your idea and later the TCA in the partner search database (<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality">http://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality</a>). The signed (by all partners) transnational cooperation agreement and other attachment are to send by e-mail to <a href="mailto:transnationalitet@esf.se">transnationalitet@esf.se</a> or by post to Svenska ESF-rådet, Box 471 41, 100 74 Stockholm.

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