



# Evaluation of the ESF PROGRAMMING 2014-2020 WALLONIE-BRUXELLES 2020.EU

**Summary Report**  
October 2022

Editor : EDA Lead

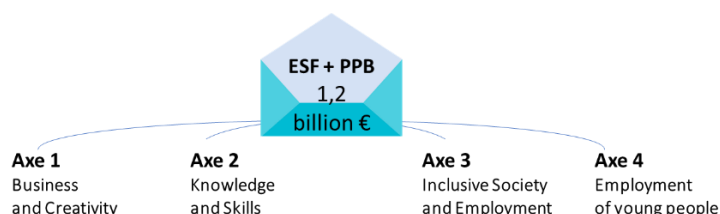


LE FONDS SOCIAL EUROPÉEN ET LES AUTORITÉS PUBLIQUES INVESTISSENT DANS VOTRE AVENIR

# 1. The Wallonia-Brussels2020.eu ESF program 2014-2020

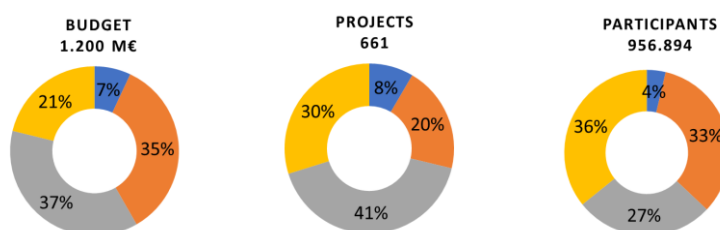
## A. OP key figures

The **Wallonia-Brussels 2020.eu**<sup>1</sup> Operational Program (OP) of the European Social Fund aims at the promotion of employment, social inclusion and training, with particular attention to the integration of young people into the labor market. It translates into 4 priority axes, divided into measures and actions.



Its total **budget** amounts to more than **€1.2 billion** (excluding REACT<sup>2</sup>) allocated to **661 projects**. Half of it is ESF-funded<sup>3</sup> and the remaining is provided by Belgian public financing (PPB - Wallonie, Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, COCOF).

More than **956.000 participations** were recorded, of which two thirds were job seekers or inactive (mainly Axes 3 and 4) and one third were employed (Axes 1 and 2). Systems actions are not directly addressed to participants. Areas in **Transition** (TA) received 67% of the budget to carry out 64% of the projects for 72% of the participants. **More Developed** Areas (MDA) received 33% of the budget for 36% of projects and 28% of participants. More than **144 million mentoring hours** were offered to participants.



Source: OHIP 2021 (excluding REACT)

Figure 1 : ESF OP - Allocation of budgets, projects and participants according to the 4 axes (2014-2020 cumulative)

## B. OP 2014-20 evaluation

In order to comply with European Regulation 1303/2013 on the evaluation of ESF-financed operations, the ESF Agency has implemented

- 1) the **OP and its performance framework** which specifies the objectives and expected results;
- 2) the **OP Evaluation Plan** which defines the evaluation objectives and the resources allocated;
- 3) the **annual monitoring** of the output and result indicators attesting to the implementation of the projects;
- 4) **surveys** at 6 and 12 months on the fate of certain participants;
- 5) an **evaluation of the impact** of the implementation of the 4 axes of the OP;
- 6) the specific evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative (**YEI**) and
- 7) the **thematic qualitative evaluations** of Axis 1 and Axis 2.

In order to have field data, to ensure the independence of the evaluations and the objectivity of the recommendations issued, the ESF Agency has retained the services of external experts, both public and private. The evaluations carried out followed proven methodologies and were approved by the Evaluation Committee and presented to the Monitoring Committee. They have been published on the ESF Agency's website.

Various **methodological precautions** were taken when interpreting the evaluation data, such as:

- Refine the **purpose** of evaluations and the choice of indicators;
- Formalize the **collection** of quantitative and qualitative data;

1 [https://fse.be/fileadmin/sites/fse/uploads/documents/Programmation\\_14-20/PO\\_2014-2020/PO\\_programmation\\_14-20\\_version-20210621.pdf](https://fse.be/fileadmin/sites/fse/uploads/documents/Programmation_14-20/PO_2014-2020/PO_programmation_14-20_version-20210621.pdf)

2 EU Regulation 2020/2221 REAC-EU addresses the impact of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Validate the selection of relevant and consistent **indicators**;
- Visibility of **positive** outputs;
- **Interpret** the measured data with caution;
- Integrate participants outcome **survey** results at 6-12 months;
- Take into account the Belgian socio-economic, institutional, political and health **context**.

OT PI	Specific Axes / Objectives	Budget (ESF + PPB)	Actions	# Particip % OP	# Projects % OP
<b>EO 8</b>	<b>Axis 1 - Business and Creativity</b>	<b>€84M</b> <i>7% OP</i>		<b>35,231</b> <i>3.7% OP</i>	<b>56</b> <i>8% OP</i>
PI 8 .iii	<b>SO 1.1:</b> Job seekers create their own jobs or businesses.	27,7M€ <i>2.3%</i>	<b>Action 1.1.1:</b> Train and accompany self-employment	29,039 <i>3.0%</i>	23
PI 8. v	<b>SO 1.2:</b> Raise awareness of and support innovation and creativity: training, networking and support.	€56.3M <i>4.7%</i>	<b>Action 1.2.1:</b> Innovation and creativity in Wallonia	System /	18
			<b>Action 1.2.2:</b> Support, continuous training of entrepreneurs, managers and self-employed	6 192 <i>0.7%</i>	15
<b>EO 10</b>	<b>Axis 2 - Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>€418.5M</b> <i>34.7% OP</i>		<b>319 148</b> <i>33.4% OP</i>	<b>134</b> <i>20% OP</i>
PI 10. iii	<b>SO 2.1:</b> Provide high value-added training and skills validation services to job seekers and employed workers.	€368.2 M <i>30.5%</i>	<b>Action 2.1.1:</b> Promotion of validation of skills and the use of experience	30,761 <i>3.2%</i>	5
			<b>Action 2.1.2:</b> Support for high value-added training	225,082 <i>23.5%</i>	62
			<b>Action 2.1.3:</b> Training of teachers and trainers and supervisors, including business tutors	63,305 <i>6.6%</i>	23
PI 10. iv	<b>SO 2.2:</b> Promote a successful training and education system.	€50.2 M <i>4.2%</i>	<b>Action 2.2.1:</b> Promote, enhance and improve education and training systems	System /	44
<b>EO 9</b>	<b>Axis 3 - Inclusive Society and Employment</b>	<b>€447.7 M</b> <i>37.1% OP</i>		<b>260 325</b> <i>27.2% IN</i>	<b>274</b> <i>41% OP</i>
PI 9 .i	<b>SO 3.1:</b> Accompany and train people at risk of exclusion with a view to their access to integration and training facilities	70,2 M€ <i>5.8%</i>	<b>Action 3.1.1:</b> Facilitate access to training, education and employment facilities for people at risk of exclusion	39,555 <i>4.1%</i>	59
	<b>SO 3.2:</b> Train and support job seekers and people who are vulnerable for their integration into the labor market.	€314.2 M <i>26.1%</i>	<b>Action 3.2.1:</b> (Pre)train job seekers and vulnerable people for high-value-added training or employment	136 359 <i>14.3%</i>	162
	<b>SO 3.3:</b> Accompany job seekers to and in employment.	€55.7M <i>4.6%</i>	<b>Action 3.3.1:</b> Accompany and support job seekers in accessing the labor market, including active job search	84,411 <i>8.8%</i>	39
PI 9 .iii	<b>SO 3.4:</b> Promote equal opportunities for men and women and combat discrimination in Wallonia and Brussels.	€7.6M <i>0.6%</i>	<b>Action 3.4.1:</b> Combating discrimination by promoting equal opportunities	System /	14
			<b>Action 3.4.2:</b> Combating discrimination through actions to prevent and reduce poverty		3
<b>EO 8</b>	<b>Axis 4 – Sustainable Integration of young people in employment</b>	<b>€255.3 M</b> <i>21.2% OP</i>		<b>342.190</b> <i>35.8% OP</i>	<b>197</b> <i>30% OP</i>
PI 8 .ii	<b>OS 4.1:</b> 'Youth Guarantee' - The integration of young people under 25 into the labor market is ensured.	€69.9 M <i>5.8%</i>	<b>Action 4.1.1:</b> Provide young people under 25 with vocational training, work-linked training and work placements with a view to sustainable integration into the labor market	147 299 <i>15.4%</i>	35
	<b>OS 4.2:</b> 'YEI - Youth Employment Initiative' - The increase in the number of young NEETs from Hainaut, Liège or Brussels who have become active.	€185.4 M <i>15.4%</i>	<b>Action 4.2.1:</b> Offer young people in the Provinces of Hainaut and Liège training, support, work experience or employment and combat dropping out of school	194 891 <i>20.4%</i>	106
			<b>Action 4.2.2:</b> Offer young people in the Brussels-Capital Region training, psychosocial support and combat early school leaving		56
		<b>1.2 billion €</b>		<b>956,894 Particip.</b>	<b>661 Projects</b>

(Source: FSE\_RAMO Agency 2021 - Table EdaLead)

Figure 2 : PO ESF - OT, PI, Axes, Measures and Actions (source PO FSE WBxI2020.eu)

A description of the projects can be found at [www.enmieux.be](http://www.enmieux.be).

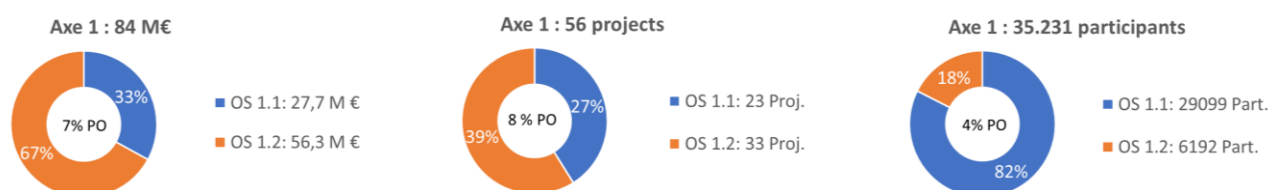
## 2. Axis evaluations

### A. Axis 1 - Enterprise and Creativity

**Axis 1 'Enterprises and Creativity'<sup>4</sup>** contributes to the development of Walloon and Brussels enterprises through 2 measures:

- SO 1.1 aims to support entrepreneurs in the creation of their business;
- SO 1.2 aims to promote innovation and creativity.

The budget for Axis 1 is **€84 million** (ESF+PPB) or 7% of the total ESF OP budget and is allocated for 1/3 on OS1.1 and 2/3 on OS1.2. The **56 projects** (42 in TA and 14 in MDA) concern 4% of the PO participants.



Source: OHIP 2021 (excluding REACT)

**Figure 3 : Axis 1 - Key figures - 2014-2020 total**

◇ The **measure OS 1.1** aims to support job seekers (89%) and inactive people (11%) **in self-employment and business creation**. The budget of €27.7 million financed 23 projects carried out by 16 beneficiaries and benefited 29.100 participants. These are qualified (41% higher education diploma and 40% CESS), 29% are under 25 years old, 62% are women, 17% migrants. More than 8 million hours of training and support were provided (75% in MDA and 25% in TA) and 38% of the participants benefited from an internship of more than 3 months. The average duration of the coaching is 300 hours/participant, very variable depending on the beneficiaries. Over the period 2014-2020, 17% of participants are employed after leaving the action and 30% after 6 months. 50% continue their training or coaching and 20% are of unknown or job-seeking outings.

◇ The **measure OS 1.2** aims to **promote innovation (R&D) and creativity**, whether by integrating the results of scientific research carried out in Wallonia or by adapting companies to new modes and production processes. The budget of €56,3M (4,7% PO) supported 33 projects. More than 77.000 hours of training were organized for 5.663 highly qualified employed workers, 2.646 entities were made aware of innovation and 5.126 structures were supported.

Key elements of this Axis 1 are:

- Supporting the creation of companies requires **multidisciplinary partnerships** and different mechanisms for an integrated path of the creator/entrepreneur;
- **The services offered** vary widely depending on beneficiaries and participants, which is a real richness of the measures, even if it complicates inter- beneficiary comparisons;
- The eligible **public** would benefit from being open to other applicant profiles;
- Only 10% of the participants obtained a degree or qualification. The majority of participants do not receive any certification formalizing the skills developed;
- The beneficiaries' strategy is for the **self-determination** of participants. Sectoral opportunities related to shortage occupations / labor are rarely highlighted. There is no incentive to promote validation of skills, complementary training or specific enabling sectors;
- **Post-creation monitoring** would benefit from developing in order to guide creators in their economic and professional development.

#### 4 Evaluation reports:

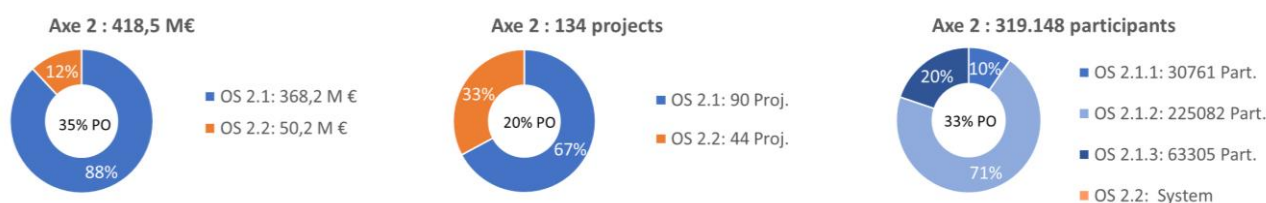
- The 6 Annual Implementation Reports 2014-2020;
- Evaluation of the implementation of Axis 1 'Enterprise and Creativity', BDO Advisory, 2022;
- Evaluation of the added value of the European Social Fund in support and training for self-employment, BIEFOR, 2022
- Uses and effects of employee participation in continuing education. Exploratory survey of graduates of ESF-funded training in Wallonia and Brussels, IWEPS, 2022;
- Survey and interpretation of data collected on trainee insertion (5 Sonecom surveys).

## B. Axis 2 - Knowledge and Skills

Axis 2 'Knowledge and Skills'<sup>5</sup> contributes to business development through 2 measures:

- SO 2.1 aims to enhance the employability of job seekers and inactive people by equipping them with skills required by employers,
- OS2.2 promotes the adaptability of workers through the development of their skills throughout their lives.

Axis 2 is one of the priorities of the ESF programming. With over € 418,5 million (35% of the OP), this Axis supported 134 projects (19% of the OP) carried out by 68 beneficiaries. All types of target groups are involved (51% job seekers, 13% inactive, 36% employed). They have a heterogeneous qualification (27% Higher Educ., 20% CESS, 13% primary, 30% unknown). The share of those under 25 is close to 20%.



Source: OHIP 2021 (excluding REACT)

Figure 4 : Axis 2 - Key figures - cumulative 2014-2020

◇ Measure **SO 2.1** aims to **strengthen the skills and employability** of job seekers, inactive people and employed workers. The budget of €368,2M (88% of the Axis 2 budget) supported 90 projects (66 separate) carried by 46 beneficiaries. It has generated more than 319.000 participations.

- **Action 2.1.1** supports the **Validation of Skills (VDC) and Validation of Professional Experience (VAE)**, from a lifelong learning perspective. Validation of skills is characterized by a population of low-skilled job seekers (56%) or inactive (26%). It is organized according to an effective process by the Competency Validation Consortium and provides encouraging results since 77% of the participants have obtained a qualification/certification, of which 1/3 are women and 2/3 are men. Among them, 58% do not have the CESS or are "without a diploma". The employment rate is 46% after 6 months (although this is not the primary objective of the VDC).
- **Action 2.1.2** provides '**High Value Added**' (HVA) trainings that meet the expectations of companies in emerging and future occupations and are in response to labor market developments. 33 million hours of HVA training were organized for 225.000 participants (71% of Axis 2) with a diversified but already qualified profile (job seekers, inactive people or employed workers). The satisfaction rate is very good. One quarter of participants obtain a diploma or official certificate and 2/3 receive a certificate of achievement or attendance. The employment rate of job seekers or inactive people is 30-40% after 6 months and 53% after 12 months.
- Action **2.1.3** is specific to the **training of teachers, trainers and supervisors**, including business tutors. More than 63.000 participants have benefited.

◇ Measure **OS2.2** aims to **promote effective training and education systems** by supporting innovative actions in terms of governance. The budget of €50.2M (12% Axis 2) supports 44 projects (36 separate) carried out by 22 beneficiaries.

- In **Action 2.2.1**, 144 interventions were carried out, of which 60 promoted training systems (54 in TA and 6 in MDA), 109 contributed to the development of business benchmarks and 32 experimented with new teaching tools.

5 Evaluation reports:

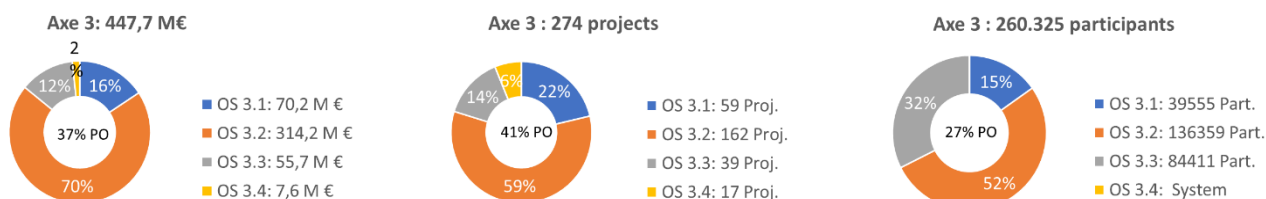
- The 6 Annual Implementation Reports 2014-2020;
- Assessment of the implementation of Axis 2 'Knowledge and skills', BDO Advisory, 2022;
- Evaluation of ESF actions in the context of validation of competences and the use of experience, BIEFOR, 2022;
- Uses and effects of employee participation in continuing education. Exploratory survey of graduates of ESF funded training in Wallonia and Brussels, IWEPS, 2022;
- Survey and interpretation of data collected on trainee insertion (5 Sonecom surveys)

## C. Axis 3 - Inclusive Society and Employment

**Axis 3 'Inclusive society and employment'**<sup>6</sup> is focused on the support and socio-professional integration of people remote from the labor market and proposes an integration pathway which is divided into 3+1 measures:

- SO 3.1 aims at the hanging up and the reintegration of participants;
- OS 3.2 provides pre-training and integrated pathways to employment;
- SO 3.3 focuses on sustainable integration into employment;
- OS 3.4 relates to system actions.

The **274 projects** (41% PO) carried out by **191 beneficiaries** involved more than **260.000 participants** (36% PO), for whom more than 40 million hours of training or support were offered. At the geographical level, 152 projects were carried out in AT and 118 in MDA.



Source: OHIP 2021 (excluding REACT)

Figure 5 : Axis 3 - Key figures - 2014-2020 total

◇ The **OS 3.1 measure** aims at **active inclusion**. The budget of €70M (16% of the Axis) supports 59 projects that have benefited 40.000 participants. The actions have focused on **outreach and social reintegration**. The average number of accompanying hours is 152 hours/participant. The rate of entry into employment at exit (5,1%) is of little relevance since the actions are carried out ahead of the training and vocational integration schemes.

◇ The **measure OS 3.2** aims at combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities through **integrated pathways to employment**. The budget of €314,2M (70% of the Axis) supports 162 projects and benefits 136 thousand participants. The average number of accompanying hours is 330 hours/participant. The rate of entry into employment is 8,2%.

◇ The **measure OS 3.3** is intended exclusively to **support persons in employment** with a sustainable integration perspective. The budget of €55,8M (12% of the Axis) supports 39 projects that have supported more than 84.000 participants (32% of the Axis). The average number of accompanying hours is 93 hours/ participant. 36% of inactive or job seeker participants are employed at the end of the action and 13% of inactive participants have started their job search at the end of the action; 72% of them in the AVIQ project.

◇ Measure **SO 3.4 'System'** concerns **actions against discrimination** (promotion of equal opportunities and prevention of poverty). A budget of €7,5M (2% of the Axis) supports 27 projects.

Key elements are:

- **A target population that is vulnerable, precarious** or in great psychosocial difficulty: 82% are job seekers (including 2/3 of the long-term unemployed). They have a very low qualification. 31% are under the age of 25, 31% are migrants and 8% are disabled;
- **A diversified socio-professional integration path** (20% remedial training, 50% in preparation for work, 20% work situation placement, 5% language);
- **A multidimensional and personalized support** to stabilize the accompaniment (hang, integrate, keep in the course) and respond to precariousness.
- Employment insertion rates are 10% higher at 12 months;
- The **rate of integration into employment** is higher for actions carried out by beneficiaries developing **local** support with local anchoring and, to a lesser extent, by beneficiaries carrying out more cross-cutting actions with a certain impact force, in particular budgetary.

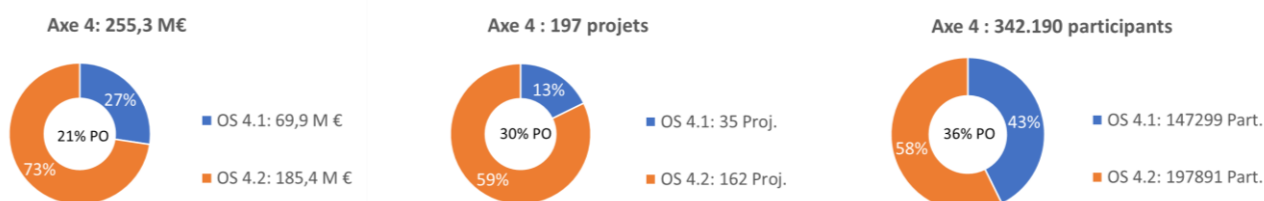
<sup>6</sup> Evaluation reports:

- The 6 Annual Implementation Reports 2014-2020;
- Evaluation of the implementation of Axis 3 'Inclusive Society and Employment', BDO Advisory, 2022;
- Uses and effects of employee participation in continuing education. Exploratory survey of graduates of ESF-funded training in Wallonia and Brussels, IWEPS, 2022;
- Survey and interpretation of data collected on trainee insertion, (5 Sonocom surveys)

## D. Axis 4 - Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)

**Axis 4 'Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative'<sup>7</sup>** aims to promote the sustainable integration of young people under 25 into the labor market and to increase the number of young people in employment, including those qualified as NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

The budget is **€255 million** (€158.6 million ESF + €96,7 millions PPB) or 21% of the total ESF OP budget. It supported **197 projects** (30% PO) to the benefit of more than **342 thousand participants** (36% PO). 127 projects were carried out in TA and 67 in MDA.



Source: OHIP 2021 (excluding REACT)

Figure 6 : Axis 4 - Key figures - cumulative 2014-2020

◇ The **measure OS 4.1 concerns the Youth Guarantee**. It has offered more than 148.000 young people under the age of 25 (50% of whom are job seekers and 50% inactive or in training) vocational training, work-linked training, or internships in companies, with a view to sustainable integration into the labor market. Its budget of €70 million has made it possible to organize more than 24 million hours of training or internships (60% in TA and 40% in MDA) of which 32% are aimed at women. 36% of participants have had a positive exit, 20% of whom are pursuing education or training, 8% are in a job, 7% have obtained a qualification though unemployed.

◇ The **measure OS 4.2 "Youth Employment Initiative YEI"** has helped approximately 198.000 NEETs, including young people who have dropped out of school or who have psychosocial needs, to be reintegrated into an education, training or employment system. Its budget of €185 million (73% of the Axis) has made it possible to offer more than 14 million hours of training and support. Participants are young people aged 15-24, with few or no qualifications, job seekers (43%) or those not in training (55%). Women are underrepresented. At the end of the action, 12,5% of participants who have taken training actions or a traineeship are employed. At 6 and 12 months, one in two young people is employed, but this employment remains precarious; 96% of participants who complete a psychosocial support action obtain a qualification or a job. 60% of participants who drop out of school continue to be followed (internship or training). The positive exit rate is 66% at 6 months and 77% at 12 months, far higher than the other measures of the OP. It varies according to the type of support. Young long-term unemployed find it difficult to reactivate and find employment.

Key elements are:

- The **paradigm shift**: Some beneficiaries have put the young person at the heart of the activity and have reviewed their operating methods and teaching methods;
- The **duality of the NEET public**: on the one hand, an easily accessible and activatable public (78%) and, on the other hand, a highly vulnerable public (22%), outside institutional radars and whose identification, attachment and coaching must be more intense;
- The **integration pathways between several beneficiaries** made it possible to take overall responsibility for the problems of the participants. It is a question of meeting their psychosocial needs for re-socialization and self-esteem, even before addressing socio-professional integration itself;
- **The development of partnerships between beneficiaries** with specific skills and different approaches required a collaborative approach. While they have allowed us to look at each other, to broaden the strategies of action, to make economies of scale, to exchange good practices, ... They have sometimes been complex to manage.

7 Evaluation reports:

- The 6 Annual Implementation Reports 2014-2020;
- Evaluation of the implementation of Axis 4 'Measure 4.1 and Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)', BDO Advisory, 2022;
- Evaluation of the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), BIEF, 2016;
- Survey and interpretation of data collected on the integration of trainees (5 Sonocom surveys)

### 3. A cross-sectional view of evaluations

The aim of the ESF OP is to improve the employability and adaptability of the working population, in order to meet the needs of the labor market and the population.

#### A. The relevance of the OP to outcomes and impacts

The 4 axes, focusing on supporting individuals (job seekers or inactive people, workers, young NEETs) and on so-called 'system' actions are **relevant** and contribute to the political objective of **making** the individual further **responsible** for his integration into the labor market.

The ESF support has enabled beneficiaries to increase **quantitatively** and **qualitatively** their projects, to **professionalize** themselves and to increase the efficiency of their **network**. The **innovations** have enabled them to increase the relevance of their actions (e.g. taking into account the specific needs of a wider target group).

In the 4 Axes, various **new needs** have emerged, namely:

- Young people with a short period of inactivity or workers with relatively stable or privileged status seem overrepresented. There is a need to reach, through other accompanying methods or other **eligibility criteria**, a more vulnerable public, further from the labor market or with similar but currently ineligible needs;
- **The development of IT skills** of participants and beneficiaries, taking into account the increasing digitalization and hybridization of support activities and professions;
- A better definition of **innovation**, it must be real, measurable, directed towards needs, target groups or pursued benefits, since some innovations were considered to be unproactive or even linked to windfall effects;
- **Better articulation to shortage occupations** and to the **critical functions** ("bottleneck jobs") established by FOREM.

#### B. The internal and external coherence of the OP

The strong internal coherence of the OP is linked on the one hand to its articulation (in Axes, OS and actions) and to the precise segmentation of the target groups, and on the other hand to the management of projects by **portfolio** and the presence of **institutional actors** capable of managing large projects.

The evaluators highlight the following key elements:

- Portfolio **management** was to foster synergies, promote collective intelligence and share experiences. It appears that, although the **cross-cutting** and **partnership** have been effective in some portfolios, they would benefit from being more developed;
- The numerous **eligibility criteria** were binding because they were established in programmatic terms (Axis/measure/action), geographical terms (ZT and ZPD), target groups (administrative status) or portfolios;
- The logic of **accompanying or multi-beneficiary integration pathways** requires a very good articulation between beneficiaries in order to ensure their relevance, coherence and completeness.
- **Innovations** have mainly been the result of small, reactive and flexible structures, while large institutions may have tended to perpetuate actions already undertaken. Innovation required a significant effort not to be underestimated;
- ESF funding has become institutionalized, an **indispensable complement** to public policies on social innovation, socio-professional integration or training.

#### C. The effectiveness of the OP

The 4 axes have been **relatively effective**. The projects were successfully completed and most of the operational objectives were met. Surveys (at 6 and 12 months) show **the effects of integration into employment** and a **positive exit** volume that is both diversified and larger than the outcome indicators suggest.

The evaluation of effectiveness was difficult because some indicators were found to be of little **relevance**, **representative** or **discriminatory**, and some achievement rates were linked to overly **prudent** quantified targets. Outcome indicators assessed at the **exit of the action** relate mainly to employment or qualification and impact indicators at 6 or 12 months were essential to take account of **positive exit** and **socio-economic developments** of participants.



## D. The efficiency of OP

Given its **social nature**, the ESF aims to optimize results for the benefit of its **target population**. Assessing the efficiency of the OP should be done with caution. In fact, the **diversity** of realities on the ground, the lack of data at **operational** level, the difficulty of measuring the real **added value** of projects on the **socio-economic** situation of participants and the prudent **innovation** dynamics of certain beneficiaries, make evaluation complex and comparisons unconstructive.

## E. The impact of the health crisis 2020-22

The 2020-22 health crisis has been perceived differently by beneficiaries, participants or projects. Indeed, beyond the inevitable **reduction in service provision** (-20% in terms of participants and -25% in accompanying hours) and the **complex digitalization**, at technical, pedagogical and social level, it appeared that many projects have implemented a **positive hybridization**. An **investment** in the equipment and the development of the IT skills of the trainers and their participants has enabled them to increase the number of people affected, the quality of the follow-up on a la carte basis, the presenteeism and the effectiveness of certain accompaniment.

The **perception** varies depending on the participants' fear of the impact on their career path (54%) and their job search (50%). Three quarters of the participants who found employment, consider the crisis to have had little impact.

## 4. Recommendations following the programming

Recommendations for the evolution of the participants tracking model and ESF intervention logic are structured in **5 tracks**.

### A. TRACK 1 - Supporting a network and partnership dynamic

Promote strategic portfolios and the involvement of beneficiaries in the more integrated design, implementation, piloting and evaluation of projects. Increase the relevance and coherence of projects, the effectiveness and efficiency of the schemes by pooling resources, complementarity or specialization of the actors

1. Promoting the role of the ESF Agency in stimulating and supporting innovation
2. Designing integrated multi-beneficiary portfolios meaningful to participants
3. Ensure eligibility of diversified partnership management activities

### B. TRACK 2 - Improve monitoring and piloting from the outset of projects

Promote collective reflection between the ESF Agency and beneficiaries on the objectives and modalities of evaluation and monitoring, taking into account European requirements and margin of manoeuvre.

1. Promote project management and evaluation methodology to beneficiaries
2. Optimize selection of relevant, valid and reliable evaluation indicators
3. Evaluate and pilot individual participants pathways
4. Pursue an ambitious evaluation plan

### C. TRACK 3 - Promote relevance and coherence of actions with regard to the target groups

Ensure more relevance of the actions supported, whether by identifying the target population, formalizing their needs and carrying out actions in line with the objectives expected.

1. Ensure that all target groups are engaged and involved
2. Objectify the needs of participants, regardless of their status
3. Continuously tailor projects to meet identified needs in an integrated manner
4. Formalize and enhance further the development of participants' skills and the alignment of ESF actions with the labor market

### D. TRACK 4 - Diversify, innovate, co-create forms of accompaniment

Promote innovation and develop a transitional and partnership approach to actions in order to avoid 'closed-door' operations that are not conducive to the emergence of integrated pathways.

1. Promote quantitative and qualitative innovations
2. Promote pedagogical and methodological innovations
3. Promoting technological innovations
4. Promote partnership and institutional innovations

### E. TRACK 5 - Promoting the animation and management posture of the ESF Agency

Strengthen the role of the ESF Agency as a support for innovation, responsible for making project portfolios meaningful and robust.

## 5. Conclusions

The evaluations carried out in the context of the ESF OP Evaluation Plan illustrate the relevance of ESF support to initiate and support actions contributing to European objectives.

The PO Wallonie.Bruxelles.eu has created a leverage effect for many beneficiaries who have had the opportunity to increase the number and quality of actions implemented for a diverse population.

The results obtained, beyond the quantitative aspects (661 projects, 956.894 participations) or economic aspects (1,2 billion €) are also qualitative. Support from the ESF has made it possible to improve the quality of projects, as evidenced by the partnership dynamics put in place, the personalized and preventive integration pathways of participants, the paradigm shifts of service providers, the innovations or experiments implemented, and even the reorientation of regional policies according to European priorities

The various evaluations summarized in this report highlight in terms of evaluation processes:

- Methodological precautions to be taken in interpreting the results;
- The importance of taking into account positive outputs;
- The relevance, through surveys, of refining the impact of actions on participants over time;
- The importance of the very purpose of an evaluation process, namely to make decisions.

The proposed cross-cutting recommendations benefit from being implemented in an agile manner within the new operational program 2021-2027.