



Ministry of Investment and European Projects  
Programme Evaluation Office of the General Directorate for  
Programming and System Coordination

Implementation of the Evaluation Plan of the Technical  
Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020

Evaluation Report for 2021, including related dataset and metadata

Final version

June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022





UNIUNEA EUROPEANĂ



## Executive Summary

This document is the final version of the third Evaluation Report of the project "Implementation of the Evaluation Plan of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020", within the framework of the service agreement no. 61451/09.08.2019, concluded between the Ministry of Investments and European Projects and the Association consisting of S.C. ERNST&YOUNG SRL (Leader), National Institute for Scientific Research in Labour and Social Protection (Associate) and SC QURES Quality Research and Support SRL (Associate).

The objectives of the evaluation are the following:

- Facilitating informed management of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020 and strengthening evidence-based decision-making at programme level;
- Strengthening the annual and progress reports to be submitted to the European Commission by including evaluation results and reporting evaluation findings by December 2022;
- Supporting the strengthening of the evaluation culture within the European Structural and Investment Funds system and increase the level of information to the European Commission and the public on the effects of the interventions financed by the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020.

This Evaluation Report covers the period 2014-2021.

### Evaluation topics

The project aims to measure the contribution of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020 to:

- Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries of the European Structural and Investment Funds/Technical Assistance Operational Programme, the Large-Scale Infrastructure Operational Programme and the Competitiveness Operational Programme;
- Dissemination of information on the Structural and Investment Funds/Technical Assistance Operational Programme, Large-Scale Infrastructure Operational Programme and Competitiveness Operational Programme;
- Coordination and control of European Structural and Investment Funds;
- Management of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme, the Large-Scale Infrastructure Operational Programme and the Competitiveness Operational Programme;
- Functionality and efficiency/effectiveness of the IT system;
- Efficiency and effectiveness of human resources in the European Structural and Investment Funds system.

In this evaluation exercise, the additional evaluation topic analyzing the contribution of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020 to GDP formation and employment was also analyzed and this was treated transversally.

The mentioned areas are the "Evaluation Themes" and are related to the intervention logic of the programme, i.e. its specific objectives, as shown in the table below.

Table 1. Evaluation topics

| Evaluation Topics | Specific objective of the Program in the coverage area  |
|-------------------|---|
| 1                 | 1.1. Strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries of projects financed by European Structural and Investment Funds to prepare and implement projects   |
| 2                 | 1.2. Ensuring the transparency and credibility of the European Structural and Investment Funds and the role of the European Union Cohesion Policy   |
| 3                 | 2.1. Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds - with the exception of specific support for the Technical Assistance Operational Programme, the Large-Scale Infrastructure |

| Evaluation Topics | Specific objective of the Program in the coverage area  |
|-------------------|---|
|                   | Operational Programme and the Competitiveness Operational Programme   |
| 4                 | 2.1. Improving the regulatory, strategic and procedural framework for the coordination and implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds - activities related to specific support for the Technical Assistance Operational Programme, the Large-Scale Infrastructure Operational Programme and the Competitiveness Operational Programme |
| 5                 | 2.2. Developing and maintaining a functional and efficient IT system for Structural and Cohesion Funds and strengthening the capacity of its users  |
| 6                 | 3.1. Developing an improved management policy of human resources to ensure stability, qualification and adequate motivation of staff working within the coordination, management and control system of the European Structural and Investment Funds   |

The agreement covers four evaluation years, for 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2023. According to the Tender Book, the Evaluation Report for 2018 covered six evaluation themes and the second one covered only the first two evaluation themes. This report, for the third evaluation exercise, covers only the first two evaluation themes, as detailed below.

### Evaluation Questions

For each of the two Evaluation Themes covered in this Report, a series of General Evaluation Questions have been addressed on:

- Effectiveness of the interventions financed by the Technical Assistance Operational Programme in relation to the achievement of planned targets (i.e. measured by result and immediate output indicators);
- Progress achieved on the specific objectives of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020, as identified in the Intervention Logic of the programme (see Table 1);
- The extent to which the observed progress is causally linked to projects financed under the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020;
- The extent to which projects financed under the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020 produce unintended positive or negative effects different from those identified in the Intervention Logic of the programme;
- Likelihood that the observed progress and unexpected effects will be maintained after the end of the programme;
- Existence of mechanisms or contextual factors that facilitated/prevented progress and unexpected effects.

In addition to the General Evaluation Questions requested by the Tender Book, the Provider also proposed a Supplementary Evaluation Question, applicable to both themes, on the existence of good practice cases regarding the Technical Assistance Operational Programme interventions and related implementation mechanisms.

**The objective of the Report** is to provide answers to the Evaluation Questions as well as an overview of the status of the data collection work required for the evaluation, given the limitations on the availability of information.

This version of the Report is based on the Evaluation Methodology approved by the Evaluation Steering Committee, consulted in writing between 14.07.2021-09.08.2021 and the General Implementation Schedule of the activities updated in the framework of the Addendum No. 2 to the financing agreement dated 22.05.2020. The *cut-off* date for this Evaluation Report is 31.12.2021.

### Data collection methods

In order to answer the Evaluation Questions, the methodological approach used was built on a mix of data collection methods and tools, both qualitative and quantitative, depending on the particularities of



each Evaluation Theme. These helped to formulate robust, reliable conclusions on the Evaluation Questions.

The methodological approach used was complex, involving the application of theory-based evaluation methods, impact self-assessment methods, case studies, complemented by other research methods, i.e. literature review, desk research (programming and implementation documents at programme and project level), analysis of administrative data on projects funded at Operational Programme level and data that may indicate unintended effects or sustainability of some effects. The literature review helped to highlight the types of potential effects, factors and mechanisms by which the expected (planned) effects occurred, and external factors that enhanced or mediated the occurrence of effects.

To triangulate the information, data were collected using additional collection methods, namely:

- Survey (1) addressed to project managers who manage/have managed the interventions financed under the Technical Assistance Operational Programme;
- Survey (2) addressed to persons who have participated in horizontal and/or specific training activities financed under the Specific Objective 1.1 of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme;
- Survey (3) addressed to beneficiaries of the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020.

The number of answers collected in the surveys ensured the representativeness.

In order to fill-in the results obtained by applying the above mentioned methods, two focus groups were organized with well-defined purposes, namely:

- A focus group for each evaluation theme to analyze the mechanisms identified or contextual factors that facilitated/ hindered progress and unexpected effects;
- A focus group for each evaluation theme to validate the preliminary findings of the evaluations in this Report.

The Stakeholder Analysis Matrix was the tool used to systematically organize the analysis.

### **Challenges faced and solutions**

The third evaluation exercise of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020 analyses developments following the implementation of the programme in the period 2014-2021.

The limited level of implementation of the programme was a first challenge to assess both the main effects of the programme and their sustainability and the existence of mechanisms that facilitated/prevented the achievement of these effects. The effects of any complex programme are visible and lend themselves to robust evaluation when a representative number of funded interventions have been completed. In the period 2014-2020, 48.5% of all projects financed under the programme were completed (i.e. 57 of 148). The level of implementation of the programme allowed the evaluation team to assess the status of activities (e.g. level of achievement of planned activities and progress indicators). Also, the effects visible on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 were discussed with stakeholders and the conditions under which the expected effects are to be achieved were analyzed. The results and conclusions of this evaluation exercise will be verified, developed and integrated into the next evaluation cycle.

The limited willingness of project managers to participate in interviews organized for the case studies was also a challenge for the evaluation team. In the case of the surveys addressed to project managers, the training participants and beneficiaries, there were some questions and some categories of respondents for which the number of answers was low, but examples could be identified that reflect typologies or patterns found by triangulating the data.

As regards the immediate output indicators, the analysis was based on the indicators reported in MySMIS up to 31.12.2021. According to the case study interviews, there may be situations where reported progress and the state of progress to date may be different because progress on outcome and immediate achievement indicators has been reported to the Management Authority after the evaluation baseline date

or, in some cases, is yet to be reported. The values of the indicators will be monitored and analyzed in the next evaluation exercises under this agreement.

The implementation of the measures adopted following the establishment of the states of emergency and alert, decreed at national level from March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, in order to protect all persons concerned and eliminate the risk of spreading Covid-19 infection, prevented the implementation of some activities as originally planned (e.g. study visits, information events, training sessions with physical presence), but progress was observed in adapting beneficiaries to the hybrid working mode.

In order to apply the methodology for assessing the contribution of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme to GDP formation and employment, it was necessary to aggregate the Leontief model industries at the level of economic sectors Nomenclature of Economic Activities NACE Rev. 2(A-S) due to the limitation given by the availability of data for the civilian employed population by NACE Rev.2 sectors only. Also, the results are calculated on the basis of the GDP value at the level of 2019 (from the input-output table), although the amounts related to public procurement contracts concluded under the Technical Assistance Operational Programme refer to the entire implementation period of the programme, until the end of 2021 year. The amounts related to public procurement agreements concluded in the Technical Assistance Operational Programme projects have been attached to the corresponding NACE codes and classified according to NACE sections and divisions.

### Effectiveness of the interventions financed by the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020

As of 31.12.2021, the total number of projects contracted under the Technical Assistance Operational Programme is 148, with a total value of the public budget of approximately 1.76 billion lei. The amount of payments made to beneficiaries is approximately 1.06 billion lei. Thus, the execution rate is 59.9%, down from the value recorded at the end of 2020, due to the signature of new financing with significant values. Moreover, the amount of payments made in absolute values has increased compared to 2020, as shown in the following table.

*Table 2. Amount of funding granted through the Technical Assistance Operational Programme, in RON, detailed by Priority Areas and Specific Objectives, 31.12.2021 versus 30.12.2020*

| PA / S.O.    | Funding granted on 31.12.2020 | Payments made 31.12.2020 | Financing granted at 31.12.2021 | Payments made 31.12.2021 | Execution rate (%) at 30.11.2020 | Execution rate (%) 31.12.2021 | Execution rate (%) 31.12.2021 in relation to funding granted in 2020 |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| PA 1         | 235,484,502                   | 74,674,910               | 537,425,371                     | 97,515,369               | 31.7%                            | 18.1%                         | 41.4%  |
| S.O. 1.1     | 196,173,131                   | 65,611,280               | 508,420,060                     | 83,740,348               | 33.4%                            | 16.5%                         | 42.6%  |
| S.O. 1.2     | 39,311,372                    | 9,063,630                | 29,005,311                      | 13,775,015               | 23.1%                            | 47.5%                         | 35%  |
| PA 2         | 438,442,939                   | 155,558,711              | 464,456,159                     | 219,325,867              | 35.5%                            | 47.2%                         | 50%  |
| S.O. 2.1     | 371,253,969                   | 146,799,327              | 406,037,525                     | 198,114,332              | 39.5%                            | 48.8%                         | 53.3%  |
| S.O. 2.2     | 67,188,970                    | 8,759,384                | 58,418,634                      | 21,211,535               | 13.0%                            | 36.3%                         | 31.5%  |
| PA 3         | 769,941,725                   | 696,914,225              | 767,386,805                     | 743,387,846              | 90.5%                            | 96.9%                         | 96.5%  |
| S.O. 3.1     | 769,941,725                   | 696,914,225              | 767,386,805                     | 743,387,846              | 90.5%                            | 96.9%                         | 96.5%  |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,443,869,166</b>          | <b>927,147,846</b>       | <b>1,769,268,335</b>            | <b>1,060,229,076</b>     | <b>64.2%</b>                     | <b>59.9%</b>                  | <b>73.4%</b>   |

*Source: List of Technical Assistance Operational Programme projects as at 30.12.2020 and 31.12.2021, made available by the Contracting Authority*



UNIUNEA EUROPEANĂ



## **Progress achieved in the targeted areas, sectors and groups in relation to the specific objectives of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020**

The review identified evidence of progress towards meeting the programme's Specific Objectives.

Overall, the analysis indicates an increase in the capacity of beneficiaries of projects financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds to identify and prepare quality project proposals with strategic impact. The positive perceptions of beneficiaries in this respect are confirmed by the increase in the number of projects contracted in relation to the number of proposals submitted, a clear indication of an increased capacity to prepare quality project proposals, as well as an increase in the amounts contracted compared to the 2007-2013 period, suggesting a greater complexity of the projects submitted and thus an increased strategic impact.

Improvements were also seen in the capacity to implement projects financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds efficiently, although more efforts are needed. Progress is perceived at the level of beneficiaries who consider that the efficiency of project implementation has increased. These positive perceptions are, however, partly reflected by the quantitative data on the degree of implementation of projects contracted under the Operational Programmes. The level of execution at the end of 2021 is limited, but consistent with the stage of implementation of the projects, with almost half of them contracted in the same year.

Improvements have been observed in particular in the integration of management and control systems at the level of beneficiary organizations with those of the implemented projects, the transfer of technical expertise and the management capacity of human resources involved in project implementation. However, beneficiaries face a low level of specialist skills and there is a need to receive technical assistance support as the complexity of projects has increased, the legislative framework is dynamic and beneficiaries feel the need to be in a continuous process of training and improvement.

The analysis also reflects an increase in the level of information and awareness of citizens compared to the beginning of the programming period. In terms of partnership culture, it is difficult to identify and assess progress, as there is no such indicator at programme level, and involvement may vary according to different contextual factors. It is noted that there have been some delays in the implementation of projects due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and because of this the progress observed in the activities aimed at ensuring the transparency and credibility of the European Structural and Investment Funds and the role of the European Union Cohesion Policy is less evident compared to the activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries of projects financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds to prepare and implement mature projects. General information dissemination actions were identified and logistical support was provided to the social partners, their selection process was made transparent and communication with them was streamlined. However, there is a need for dissemination of information tailored to the specific needs of each operational programme, but also a need for support in strengthening the partnership framework, in particular with regard to increasing capacity for active involvement.

### **Extent to which observed progress is attributed to the programme**

Following the analysis, the evidence identified indicates that the above-mentioned progress is consistent with the Specific Objectives of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme and is largely due to the funded interventions.

For example, the Technical Assistance Operational Programme has made an important contribution to increasing the capacity of beneficiaries of projects financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds to identify and prepare projects. Concrete results have been observed, such as improved project management issues as a result of training sessions, while increasing values of project contract values and application success rates indicate an increase in project quality and complexity. Beneficiaries' perception is that there are improvements in the integration of the project management system into their own organizations' management and control systems, in terms of human resource management, transfer of technical expertise and increased skills to monitor progress, which were also identified in the case studies analyzed. However, it is not possible to quantify exactly to what extent the programme has





contributed to increasing the capacity of beneficiaries to prepare and implement mature projects, and the need to step up efforts to increase project implementation management capacity has been identified.

The contribution of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme to the dissemination of information on the European Structural and Investment Funds I is less visible as projects are at a less advanced stage of implementation due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, administrative bottlenecks and a lack of clear vision on the implementation of the communication strategy of the European Structural and Investment Funds. The programme's contribution to the active involvement of the social partners can still be seen, by strengthening the partnership framework, providing logistical support, making the selection process more transparent and making communication with them more effective, but the need to increase the capacity of the partners to be actively involved remains valid. The programme has also contributed to raising public awareness and informing beneficiaries through the dissemination of general information, but there is still a need to adapt specific information dissemination interventions to the needs of each operational programme.

### **Existence of unintended effects**

The assessment of unintended effects is still limited by the fact that most of the projects are still under implementation, but the analysis carried out in the case studies has identified examples within each specific objective.

Training activities in projects aimed at strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries of projects financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds to prepare and implement mature projects have largely identified positive unintended effects, such as improved communication and collaboration within and between beneficiary institutions or the use of information in related areas.

In the case of projects aimed at ensuring the transparency and credibility of the European Structural and Investment Funds and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy, both positive and negative spill-over effects were identified. The Covid-19 pandemic has generated pressure to replace traditional methods of communication and information, which has led to a degree of dissatisfaction among beneficiaries who have signaled the need for better adaptation of activities to the hybrid way of working. In the dissemination and information actions and in those supporting the creation of partnership structures and supporting social partners, positive effects have been identified with regard to stimulating participation, exchange of ideas, and learning through cooperation and exchange of good practices.

### **Sustainability of effects**

Analyzing the sustainability of the expected and unexpected effects of interventions depends on the stage of implementation, which limits the formulation of robust conclusions at this stage. However, through the investigation carried out, conclusions could be drawn about the sustainability of the effects of some of the activities.

In the case of activities to strengthen the capacity of beneficiaries of projects financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds to prepare and implement mature projects, it was noted that the sustainability of the effects depends on the specifics of the activities carried out. For example, training activities have the potential to maintain their effects in the long term, although the degree of sustainability depends on the stability of the areas in which the training was carried out (e.g. legislative framework, public procurement procedures) and the nature of the activities carried out by the beneficiaries after completion of the activities. On the other hand, support to cover salary costs for contract staff has limited sustainability effects, as contract staff stop working after the intervention is completed due to lack of own funds.

The impact of the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic on the implementation of projects aimed at ensuring the transparency and credibility of the European Structural and Investment Funds and the role of the European Union Cohesion Policy has limited the possibility of analyzing the sustainability of their expected effects. The blocking of project activities did not allow the continued use of some of the products of previous projects, but the Structural Instruments Communication Service of the Ministry of European Investment and Projects provided some information and dissemination activities from its own resources to maintain awareness and information. It was also possible to identify a product with potential



for sustainability, namely the methodology for selecting social partners in the partnership structures of the European Structural and Investment Funds 2021-2027 could be the basis for coordination and support to social partners and the sustainable functioning of the structures created.

### **Mechanisms that facilitated/prevented the effects and their key contextual characteristics**

With regard to the factors influencing the observed effects, a wide range of internal and external mechanisms with both positive and negative impacts were identified.

In the activities to strengthen the capacity of beneficiaries of projects financed by European Structural and Investment Funds to prepare and implement mature projects, internal mechanisms, i.e. factors related to the implementation of interventions, had a rather positive influence, while external mechanisms, i.e. contextual factors, had a rather negative influence. Issues such as legislative and institutional instability and the complexity of procurement procedures were validated by all evaluation exercises as mechanisms with a key impact on implementation. In addition to these, the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 had an initial negative impact, but this evaluation exercise shows that some beneficiaries have successfully adapted to the changes imposed by the pandemic by moving activities online.

With regard to the mechanisms that have influenced the implementation of activities to ensure the transparency and credibility of the European Structural and Investment Funds and the role of the European Union Cohesion Policy, the implementation of interventions and the achievement of impacts have been affected by the loss of the initial strategic vision and the lack of clarity of the new vision, by some administrative bottlenecks and by the delay of some decisions to unblock the processes started, factors amplified by the Covid-19 pandemic. Among the specific factors with positive impact we identify good understanding of the needs of social partners and adaptation to their specific needs.

### **The best practices in Technical Assistance Operational Programme interventions and related implementation mechanisms**

Best practice examples of Technical Assistance Operational Programme interventions and related mechanisms have been identified based on the information collected in the case studies. These could be taken up and adapted to implement new interventions.

The best practices identified in the activities to strengthen the capacity of beneficiaries of projects financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds to prepare and implement mature projects contribute to the streamlining of project implementation procedures. Examples identified include project implementation procedures (e.g. design of flexible action plans, advance planning of activities, streamlining of the bureaucratic process) and coherence of project activities and objectives at the level of the beneficiary institution (e.g. subcontracting of experts, definition of a single team with an overview of all projects in a given area).

Within the activities to ensure the transparency and credibility of the European Structural and Investment Funds and the role of the EU Cohesion Policy, examples of best practice have been identified in three projects. Two of them concern information and dissemination campaigns, for example the publication on the MIP website of the materials resulting from the campaign "European money for Romanian ideas" which took place within the project Communication Campaigns to promote the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020. The experience of implementing the actions also reveals an example of good practice from a project aimed at developing a partnership culture for the coordination and management of the European Structural and Investment Funds, namely the use of the technical assistance offer available under the project to create a transparent partner selection procedure for the 2021-2027 partnership structures, a product with high sustainability potential.

### **Contribution to GDP formation and to employment**

The additional evaluation question proposed by the evaluation team complements the impact assessment process of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020 by quantifying the extent to which the investments made contribute to economic growth and employment.

The total contribution of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme to GDP cumulating direct, indirect and induced effects is estimated at 0.031%, a relatively limited value, but its impact is rather





related to the strengthening of the capacity of beneficiaries of European Structural and Investment Funds, which then generates a significant contribution to these indicators through the supported operational programmes. The largest direct contributions to GDP are in *Professional, scientific and technical activities* and *Real estate transactions*. The high contributions in these areas can be explained by the fact that 181 public procurement contracts for technical and economic documentation and design services and 73 contracts for the rental of premises and office space were concluded under the programme projects.

The total contribution of expenditure under the Technical Assistance Operational Programme to employment is 2,119 jobs (full-time equivalent), of which the direct contribution is 900 (full-time equivalent). The highest contributions can be observed in the economic sectors *Professional, scientific and technical activities*, as for the contribution to GDP formation, namely *Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles*.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

Following the analysis, the evidence identified indicates that the above-mentioned progress is consistent with the Specific Objectives of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme and is largely due to the funded interventions.

The main conclusion is that the Technical Assistance Operational Programme has contributed to the progress made in the 2014-2021 period in strengthening the capacity of beneficiaries of projects financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds to prepare and implement projects. Concrete results have been observed, such as improved project management issues as a result of training sessions, or increased quality and complexity of projects.

The contribution of the programme to ensuring the transparency and credibility of the European Structural and Investment Funds and the role of the European Union's Cohesion Policy is less visible, although some effects of the funded interventions have been observed, such as stimulating the active involvement of social partners. However, the progress observed is limited by the fact that the implementation of interventions has been affected by the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, but also by some lack of clarity on the vision for the implementation of the communication strategy. It was reviewed in October 2021 and its operationalisation has started.

Certain areas of intervention have been identified as requiring further support or where improvements can be made. For example, the need to increase partners' capacity for active involvement remains valid, and the need to step up efforts to increase project implementation management capacity has been signaled.

With regard to increasing the capacity of beneficiaries to prepare and implement projects, the main recommendations aim at increasing the Technical Assistance Operational Programme support to private sector beneficiaries and it is considered appropriate to carry out a study to analyse the needs and potential beneficiaries of the Technical Assistance Operational Programme in the private/non-governmental sector, especially in the context that the Technical Assistance Operational Programme will provide specific technical assistance to the Sustainable Development Operational Programme, Intelligent Growth, Digitization and Financial Instruments Operational Programme and the Health Operational Programme. It is also recommended to implement specific interventions to support capacity building in project management and resource management in beneficiary organizations. More specifically, it is advisable to analyze the degree of workload of employees and to make projections in this regard, anticipate periods of intense activity and prevent risks. In the case of hiring contractual staff, it is recommended to implement mechanisms to ensure knowledge transfer in order to build on their existing experience and ensure the sustainability of interventions.

With regard to ensuring the transparency and credibility of the European Structural and Investment Funds and the role of the European Union Cohesion Policy, the main strategic recommendations take into account the remaining implementation period. On the one hand, continue implementation of revised information and dissemination projects, with increased attention to factors that may affect the achievement of project targets, even if their cumulative value exceeds the revised programme indicator targets and the practical risks at programme level are minimal. On the other hand, it is recommended to start as soon as possible the vocational training component in a project concept that can be taken over



for the next programming period, including a hybrid physical-online approach and blended methods adapted to current learning preferences.

The previous recommendations for the next programming period on redesigning support activities for social partners are also maintained, and the following features should be included: use of a remote communication tool, continuity of communication by including asynchronous interactions, coherent combination of information, consultation, training actions.

It also maintains recommendations for more flexible approaches, for example adopting contracts that allow flexibility in process deployment, with milestones and deliverables, or avoiding process indicators for output indicators that leave flexibility on implementation modalities and focus on outputs and outcomes. In this respect it is recommended to avoid material indicators of information and publicity elaboration or information/work events. A series of alternative indicators are proposed as examples relevant to the context of the actions in this programming exercise, for the period 2021-2027 it is necessary to adapt them to the context of the intervention and define their characteristics relevant to the objectives.