

December 2020

Guidance note for Civil Society Organizations to engage with National authorities on the preparation of the EU National Recovery and Resilience Plans

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1. Introduction

This Guidance note has been written by Valentina Caimi and Fintan Farrell with the support of Civil Society Europe and the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law and funded by the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law.

2. What are the National Recovery and Resilience Plans?

The Commission proposed the Recovery and Resilience Facility on 27 May 2020 as the centrepiece of [NextGenerationEU](#), a temporary recovery instrument that allows the Commission to raise funds to help repair the immediate economic and social damage brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. The Facility is also closely aligned with the [Commission's priorities](#) ensuring in the long-term a sustainable and inclusive recovery that promotes the green and digital transitions.

On 17 December 2020, the Council of the EU decided to adopt the next long-term EU budget for the period 2021-2027, which is the final step in the adoption process. With this decision, all the conditions have now been fulfilled for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027 to be in place as of 1 January 2021. As a result, €1.074 trillion [in 2018 prices] will become available for beneficiaries of EU funding during the next seven years.¹

The main novelties compared to the 21 July agreement at European Council level are: a reinforcement of priority programmes of **€15 billion**; a clear commitment that **30% of the EU budget**, under both MFF and NextGenerationEU, will be spent to fight **climate change**; a specific attention to biodiversity protection and **gender related issues**; increased budget flexibility and protection mechanisms; and a roadmap towards **new own resources**.

The **Recovery and Resilience Facility** (RRF), which is a key element of the MFF, will make €672.5 billion in loans and grants available to support reforms and investments undertaken by Member States. The aim is to mitigate the economic and social impact of the coronavirus pandemic and make European economies and societies more sustainable, resilient and better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the green and digital transitions.

On 18 December 2020, the German Presidency of the Council of the EU and the European Parliament reached a provisional agreement on the RRF, confirming the financial envelope of 672.5 billion € proposed by the European Commission. The agreement set out that at least 37% of each Plan's allocation has to support the green transition and at least 20% the digital transformation. Support will be closely linked to the recommendations of the European Semester, which identify central challenges for each member state to address to strengthen competitiveness as well as social and economic cohesion. In addition, it was agreed that the

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2469

European Parliament will be more closely associated throughout the lifespan of the implementation of the facility, including through a Recovery and Resilience Dialogue.²

The Recovery and Resilience Facility (the Facility) will make €672.5 billion in loans and grants available to support reforms and investments undertaken by Member States. The aim is to mitigate the economic and social impact of the coronavirus pandemic and make European economies and societies more sustainable, resilient and better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the green and digital transitions.

Member States will prepare **National Recovery and Resilience Plans** that set out a coherent package of reforms and public investment projects³. To benefit from the support of the Facility, these reforms and investments should be implemented by 2026.

The [Recovery and Resilience Task Force](#) (RECOVER) was established on 16 August 2020 within the European Commission's Secretariat-General. RECOVER is responsible for steering the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and for coordinating the European Semester, in close cooperation with the Commission's [Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs](#). RECOVER reports to Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

The plans should effectively address challenges identified in the [European Semester](#), particularly the [country-specific recommendations](#) adopted by the Council. The plans should also include measures to address the challenges and reap the benefits of the green and digital transitions.

Each plan is expected to contribute to the four dimensions outlined in the [2021 Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy](#), which launched this year's European Semester cycle:

- Environmental sustainability
- Productivity
- Fairness
- Macroeconomic stability

On 15 December 2020, the **Technical Support Instrument** was adopted by the European Parliament's Budgets and Economic and Monetary committees with the Council. It will assist national authorities in preparing, amending, implementing and revising their national Plans. The text sets out a list of key actions to be carried out, such as digitalisation of administrative structures and public services, in particular healthcare, education or the judiciary, creating re-skilling policies for the labour market and building resilient care

² <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/12/18/recovery-and-resilience-facility-council-presidency-and-parliament-reach-provisional-agreement/#>

³ To fully grasp the difference between investments and reforms, please read the '[Commission staff working document - Guidance to Member States Recovery and Resilience Plans - Part 1](#)' pp. 11-16; see also [examples](#) of component of reforms and investments provided by the Commission

systems and coordinated response capabilities. In order to receive technical support, a member state should submit a request to the Commission by 31 October of a calendar year, identifying the policy areas they will focus on. For the purposes of democratic accountability and visibility, Parliament obtained to receive annual implementation reports from the Commission as the Council. A single online public repository will provide information on the actions under TSI.⁴

The agreement reached by the trialogue negotiators includes provisions that allow for a stronger stakeholder engagement. It enables the amendment of Plans by the means of exchange of good practices, appropriate processes and methodologies, and stakeholder involvement. Member States, when requesting for technical support, should be able to consult, where appropriate, relevant stakeholders, such as local and regional authorities, social partners and civil society in line with national laws and practices.⁵ The TSI can be used to finance consultations with stakeholders, too.

The text adopted by the trialogue negotiators will now have to be approved first by the two European Parliament's Committees, followed by a plenary vote. The Council will also have to approve the deal.

2. What is the timeline for Plans?

Member States should submit their recovery and resilience plans at the latest by 30 April 2021. They may wish to send a draft plan as from 15 October 2020. The deadline for final payment would be end 2026. This implies an end date of July 2026 by which all milestones and targets are to be achieved. However, some Member States have already indicated that they might not be able to comply with the 30 April deadline for the submission of the final plan.

3. What can Civil Society Do?

- Check to see which Government Ministry has lead responsibility for the preparation of National Recovery and Resilience Plans and which other Ministries are involved.
- Consult with other CSOs, including from other sectors, to exchange information, understand what is happening in the country, and if feasible coordinate input and effort.
- Prepare a short input to send to your National Government and your country desk in the European Commission outlining a limited number of key demands and proposals from the perspective of Environment, Social, Education and Culture that should be included in National Plans. Your proposals should be backed up by existing

⁴ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20201214IPR93930/step-closer-to-recovery-funds-technical-support-instrument-agreed>

⁵ Read whereas 9, articles 4, 7 and 8 of the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Technical Support Instrument - Confirmation of the final compromise text with a view to agreement, available at <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13996-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

commitments, reference to key EU and National Documents, such as the EU Green New Deal, the European Pillar of Social Rights, The Child and Youth Guarantee, the European Parliament’s Resolution on the “Cultural Recovery of Europe”, as well as to Country Specific Recommendations, where possible and the information contained in the partnership agreements and operational programmes of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), including those in preparation for the programming period 2021-2027.

- Insist that it should be ensured that Plans are compliant with key EU existing commitments, for example those included in the Green New Deal, in ESIF regulations (such as the commitment not to build Institutions but rather to support the shift to community-based care), or that employment and social security reforms and investments take into account the specificities of the cultural, creative and heritage workers. As well as respecting the specific earmarking of funds for climate and digital transformation and insist on social and cultural investment.
- Ensure that Civil Society Organisations are eligible for financial support for the agreed measures.
- Insist on a structured consultation and dialogue with Civil Society within the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Plans, taking inspiration by the European Code of Conduct on Partnership in ESIF, as suggested by the European Parliament. The Commission’s guidance provides: “Member States are invited to describe any consultation and contribution of social partners, civil society and any other relevant stakeholders, in the drafting and implementation of the recovery and resilience plans” (p. 33).
- Insist on transparency of allocation of funding/loans to beneficiaries through open data on an online tool.
- Once the Recovery and Resilience Plans are adopted and published, do a short assessment of whether your input has been reflected, and the overall impact on environmental protection, poverty, social exclusion and social rights, increasing access to culture. Communicate your inputs to the key Ministries, the country desk officials in the European Commission and through traditional and social media, involving people experiencing poverty and other relevant users’ groups highlighting the needs.
- Try to meet with the Government officers responsible and the European Semester Officer to discuss and engage, and join any official meetings/events (on-line or otherwise).
- Share your inputs/experiences and learning with your European Networks and with Civil Society Europe.

4. Information from the Guidance Note for preparation of Plans

The Commission has issued guidance to Member States on the preparation of Recovery and Resilience Plans⁶ and also a template for drafting the Recovery and Resilience Plans⁷. The

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/3_en_document_travail_service_part2_v3_en.pdf

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/3_en_document_travail_service_part2_v3_en_0.pdf

Guidance stresses that the recovery and resilience plans need to reflect a substantive reform and investment effort. The plans are expected to contribute to the following four general objectives:

1. Promoting the Union’s economic, social and territorial cohesion
2. Strengthening economic and social resilience
3. Mitigating the social and economic impact of the crisis
4. Supporting the green and digital transitions

Member States are invited to provide information on which components of their national recovery and resilience plan will contribute to the seven European Flagships identified in the Communication on the 2021 Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy: 1) Power up, 2) Renovate, 3) Recharge and Refuel, 4) Connect, 5) Modernise, 6) Scale-up and 7) Reskill and upskill.

In the guidance, examples are given of objectives that can underpin a component. Included are the most relevant examples for CSOs, as follows:

Labour market, education, health and social policies	Public finances and taxation	Sectoral policies	Green transition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upskilling and reskilling of the working age population - Reducing labour market segmentation - Improving coverage of short-time work schemes and unemployment benefits - Ensuring equality for all and inclusion of persons with disabilities in accordance with obligations under the UN Convention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving revenue collection - Reducing the tax burden on labour in a budget neutral way - Broadening tax bases / greening tax bases - Fighting against tax evasion - Improving tax administration - Tackling tax avoidance - Spending reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fostering research and innovation - Strengthening competition & regulatory framework - Improving access to finance - Measures to improve the resilience of key sectors of the economy - Developing local capital markets - Ensuring food safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions - Improving carbon pricing - Improving the energy and resource efficiency of public infrastructures - Improving energy performance of the building stock through a renovation wave - Supporting clean energy deployment, notably though renewable energy, smart grid and

<p>on the Rights of Persons with disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving labour market participation, including vulnerable groups - Improving the resilience, accessibility and effectiveness of health and care systems, their accessibility and their crisis preparedness - Strengthening social protection (including long-term care) - Strengthening the link between education and training and the labour market - Developing skills for green and digital transitions 			<p>storage infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting the development and deployment of innovative clean technologies - Promoting the circular economy, the sustainable blue economy and bioeconomy - Increasing the use of sustainable and environmentally friendly transport - Improving environmental infrastructure - Reducing waste, improving waste management systems and water management, and reducing pollution - Restoration of ecosystems, such as forests, wetlands, peatlands, protection of biodiversity and promoting nature-based solutions. - Promoting sustainable food production and consumption - Greening urban spaces
<p>Digital transition</p>	<p>Business environment</p>	<p>Public administration</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deploying very high capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving the business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving the quality and 	

<p>networks, including fibre and 5G and 6G</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring Gigabit connectivity for socioeconomic drivers - Digitalising public administration and public services - Strengthening digital skills, reducing digital divide - Digitalisation of businesses - Digitalising key sectors (e.g. energy, health, transport, education, media and training) - Improving the cyber resilience of key sectors and companies - Developing and deploying advanced digital technologies and secure connectivity 	<p>environment, especially for SMEs, and innovation ecosystems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing the effectiveness of the justice system - Strengthening the insolvency framework - Measures to reduce private indebtedness - Removing unnecessary and unjustified regulatory and non-regulatory barriers to the Single Market for goods and services - Strengthening administrative capacity for law enforcement 	<p>effectiveness of public administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing administrative burden - Making the public administration a facilitator for innovation - Ensuring high quality and modern management - Reducing risks of mismanagement and corruption - Improving the effective management of public funds - Ensuring that civil servants have the right skills to deal with the digital and green transition 	
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The Plans are expected to include Targets and Milestones by which the plans can be evaluated.

A target is defined as a quantitative result on an agreed indicator (number of investment projects, number of beneficiaries, etc.). The choice of targets should reflect the implementation of reforms and investments, and therefore be operational. Ex: a reform aiming to improve the accessibility of health care through improving the access to primary care and defining clear integrated care pathways might have a target such as “activating X new primary care practices across X municipalities and surrounding areas”.

A milestone does not reflect amounts but rather an objectively verifiable qualitative achievement (adopted legislation, realised investment project, full operationalisation of IT systems, etc.), and details desirable content and characteristics.

5. Information from the Regulation

The Regulation sets the main targets that will have to be achieved through the National Recovery and Resilience Plans:

- (a) Green transition;
- (b) Digital transformation;
- (c) Smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, including economic cohesion, jobs, productivity, competitiveness, research, development and innovation, and a well functioning single market with strong SMEs;
- (d) Social and territorial cohesion;
- (e) Health, and economic, social and institutional resilience, including with a view of increasing crisis reaction capacity and crisis preparedness; and
- (f) Policies for the next generation, children and youth, including education and skills

As key horizontal principles, *support from the RRF shall not, unless for duly justified cases, substitute recurring national budgetary expenditure and shall respect the principle of additionality of the Union funding as referred to in Article 8. **The RRF shall only support measures respecting the “do no significant harm” principle.***

The measures supported by the RRF and included in the individual Member State plans should **contribute to the green transition including biodiversity or to the challenges resulting from it, and they should account for an amount that represents at least 37% of the plan’s total allocation** based on the methodology for climate tracking set out in Annex IIA of the Regulation.

Article 14 in the regulation sets among the conditions for a plan to be eligible the inclusion of a *summary of the consultation process, conducted in accordance with the national and legal framework of local and regional authorities, social partners and **civil society organisations, youth organisations** and other relevant stakeholders for the preparation and, where available, for the implementation of the plan and how the inputs of the stakeholders are reflected in the plan.*

In Article 5 the regulation states that funding under the facility *may also cover expenses pertaining to the preparatory, monitoring, control, audit and evaluation activities, which are required for the management of the facility and the achievement of its objectives, in particular studies, meetings of experts, **consultation of stakeholders**, information and communication actions, including inclusive outreach actions, and corporate communication of the political priorities of the Union insofar as they are related to the objectives of this regulation....*

Article 4 in the draft regulation proposed by the Commission draws attention to the importance of social cohesion, in addition to the green transition and environmental and climate protection:

*The general objective of the Recovery and Resilience Facility shall be to promote the Union's economic, **social** and territorial **cohesion** by improving the resilience, crisis preparedness, adjustment capacity, and growth potential of the Member States, **mitigating the social and economic impact of the crisis, in particular on women, contributing to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights**, supporting the green transition, and contributing to the achievement of the Union's 2030 climate targets set out in Article 2 (11) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 amended by Article 10 of regulation European Climate Law and complying with the objective of EU climate neutrality by 2050 and the digital transition, **thereby contributing to the upward economic and social convergence to restoring and promoting sustainable growth and the integration of the economies of the Union, fostering high quality employment creation**, and contributing to the strategic autonomy of the Union alongside an open economy and generating European added value.*

A review report will have to be presented by the European Commission to the European Parliament and the Council by end of July 2022 with the state of implementation by the Member States and as part of the Recovery and Resilience Dialogue among the three institutions, which will also include a Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard among its transparency measures. The Scoreboard shall be operational by December 2021 at the latest and shall be updated by the Commission on a biannual basis; it shall be made publicly available on a website, or internet portal. The competent committees of the European Parliament may invite every two months, the Commission to discuss the Recovery and Resilience Plans of the Member States, and their assessment, as well as the main findings of the review report, the status of fulfilment of the milestones and targets of the plans of the Member States; payment, suspension and termination procedures, including any observation presented and remedial measures taken by the Member States to ensure a satisfactory fulfilment of the milestones and targets; or any other relevant information.;

Although civil society is not mentioned in the Recovery and Resilience Dialogue, this will be an opportunity for Civil Society to exercise its watchdog role.

6. Good Practice in Consultation of Civil Society

The Guidance issued on the preparation of National Recovery and Resilience Plans invites “Member States to publish their plans to enable the European Parliament, the other Member States, the Commission and the public at large to have an overview of what the recovery and resilience plan will achieve”. The Guidance also asks that “Member States should detail the processes and structures set up at national, regional and local levels to ensure complementarity and coordination of the management of various Union sources of funding”. Member States are also invited to “describe any consultation and contribution of social

partners, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, in the drafting and implementation of the recovery and resilience plan”.

For a meaningful engagement of civil society organisations throughout the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national Recovery and Resilience Plans, a suggested useful source is the review of the implementation of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership (ECCP), carried out by the ESF Transnational Platform. An effort was made to explain the principles enshrined in the ECCP providing clarity on what they mean and how they should be put into practice. For each principle, we provide one or two good practice cases.⁸

➤ **Representativeness**

- There should be greater diversity in partner selection with an indicative list and clearer procedures for including partners such as:
 - Social partners including small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) and social economy enterprises
 - Academic, research and other educational institutions
 - **Civil society organisations** representing youth, people with disabilities, migrants, environmental issues, and non-traditional partners representing vulnerable and marginalised groups and end users
 - Networks, coalitions and partnerships focusing on specific areas relevant to the investment priorities chosen, particularly at local level
 - Gender equality and non-discrimination bodies
- Fuller consideration should also be given to the relevance, timing and ‘fit’ of diverse inputs in different contexts and programme phases, with selection based on the most appropriate partners for particular themes and focus areas.

Good practice cases:

The T-model in Germany

In Germany, the system is set up to create links between project, programme and policy levels via a T-model that combines horizontal partnerships at federal level with vertical partnerships initiated at federal level but addressing regional and local levels. Two key federal level programmes support this: **Rückenwind** for personal and structural development of the social economy, including member organisations of the Federal Association of Non-statutory Welfare and other non-profit organisations (BAFGW) and **Fachkräfte sichern – Gleichstellen fördern** for social partners and representatives of equal opportunity organisations. Both have Steering Groups that operate formally and enhance the commitment of different stakeholders by incorporating their contributions and viewpoints. Stakeholders are actively involved in programme monitoring and decision-making procedures at horizontal level and participate in agreement on the wording of operations and procedures; as well as consultancy structures

⁸ To know more, please view ESF Transnational Platform, ‘Review of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership (ECCP) – Thematic Network on Partnership’, thematic dossier no. 7, June 2018

for applicants (Regiestellen), and establishment of Steering Committees for project selection, working rules, decision-making procedures and monitoring, etc.

Involving environmental organisations in Operational Programmes in Slovakia

In Slovakia, two working groups were created by the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme Quality of Environment (OPQoE) to involve environmental NGOs and other experts in the preparation of calls for proposals. The Central Coordination Authority developed rules for the implementation and preparation of Law No. 292/2014 where NGOs directly contributed to the drafting process via the ESIF Implementation Management/Financial Management System. Cooperation of NGO experts with Managing Authorities and the Office of Plenipotentiary for the development of civil society in the Operational Programme for Effective Public Administration (OPEVS) on preparation of calls for proposals was also carried out in a participative manner. This cooperation continues through high-quality information seminars and monitoring processes.

➤ **Transparency and accessibility**

- Greater transparency is needed in decision-making processes with clearer guidance around timeframes, expectations and opportunities for partner input.
- Managing Authorities should be able to demonstrate that diverse views have been carefully considered and the reasons why a particular decision or action has been taken can be fully explained.
- In addition to rules of procedure for the composition of Monitoring Committees, review processes should provide more clarity around rules of engagement and how partners can work better together.

Good practice cases:

Involving civil society organisations in Slovakia

In Slovakia, preparations for post-2020, including consultations with civil society organisations, have started early and working groups have been formed. There have also been improvements regarding the procedures and rules of the Monitoring Committees by offering more opportunities for NGOs to influence Operational Programmes through the new law for a more balanced voting system (Law 292/2014) in which, via an amendment promoted by NGOs, non-state actors can outvote state representatives on controversial issues. Each Monitoring Committee also involves more than one NGO representative with voting rights.

Using an operational platform in Greece

In Greece, decisions and conclusions are published on the operational platform *Diavlos*, an important tool for the implementation of consultation procedures ('written procedure' of Monitoring Committees). This tool ensures rapid compliance with information and communication demands so that partners are well-informed and able to express their opinion or 'vote' on the issues uploaded. The *Diavlos* platform is an intranet application through which members of Operational Programme Monitoring Committees are informed of all actions uploaded for consultation and specialisation, and are able to 'approve' these actions so that Managing Authorities can activate them. They may make comments and suggestions or give an opinion on any Operational Programme amendment proposed by the Managing Authority and

can make observations to the Managing Authority regarding implementation and evaluation of the Operational Programme.

➤ **Ongoing involvement**

- There should be fuller participation of partners in the preparation of the Partnership Agreements, Operational Programmes and calls for proposals, and in Monitoring Committees.
- Special attention should be given to the promotion of partner engagement during implementation.
- Participation of relevant partners and stakeholders should be foreseen when governments are designing specific strategies required to fulfil ex-ante conditionalities.
- It should be made clear that involvement of partners must go beyond consultation.
- Concerted efforts should be made to integrate the local voice in programme cycles through place-based, bottom-up and participative approaches such as Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) and co-production.

Good practice case:

Involving stakeholders in programmes and projects in Flanders (Belgium)

The principle of partnership is very important in Flanders. For the writing of the Operational Programme all important stakeholders in the Flemish labour market are involved. Using a range of participative methods, stakeholders are brought together to talk about the challenges of the Flemish labour market and how they can be included in the Operational Programme. Stakeholders are also involved during implementation of the calls. For instance, advance talks are held with technical staff before a call is launched in order to ensure clarity among project promoters and selected stakeholders, including umbrella organisations. The Flemish ESF Managing Authority organises visits with project promoters on a regular basis (*ESF stap af*). ESF Flanders sees itself as a partner in each project and believes that it is very important to know what project promoters think and what improvements they want to see. During the mid-term period, ESF Flanders organises 'captain tables' where they talk with all stakeholders in order to assess satisfaction with the Operational Programme and cooperation with the ESF. ESF Flanders also promotes partnership at project level. In several calls partnership is obligatory and partnership is encouraged among project promoters during thematic sessions and interventions among project promoters.

➤ **Strengthening institutional capacity**

- The ESIF should be used, through Technical Assistance and other relevant means, to strengthen institutional capacity by:
 - Improving the capacity to partner through partnership skills training for Managing Authorities, partners and stakeholders.

- Finding ways to support those partners who are unable to contribute effectively to ESIF programmes and projects due to lack of resources, skills, confidence or adequate time.
- Capacity building should be reinforced in the next programming period, especially if the thematic objective of enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders is not included in the new regulations.

Good practice cases:

Training on the partnership principle in Latvia

In Latvia training was offered in 2017 to increase knowledge and expertise on implementation of the partnership principle in ESIF programmes and projects in the period 2014-2020. The training of participants from Latvian public administration agencies and NGOs was undertaken as part of the 'Provision of training services to institutions of Latvia involved in the management of the European Union Funds' scheme and was developed as a series of lectures, discussions, workshops, interactive group and individual exercises, as well as analyses of relevant case studies and sessions aimed at exchange of experiences. The European Institute of Public Administration supervised the training, in liaison with DG EMPL.

Intermediate Body support for partnership in Ireland

In Ireland, Pobal provides partnerships with developmental and Technical Assistance as well as guidance on organisational management and governance and specialist training around specific issues. This can include provision of information material on programme target groups, feedback on performance and strategies, or training inputs and discussions designed to address specific areas of challenge within the work. A liaison system in which Pobal officers service partnerships by attending board and management meetings, also provides useful support to projects as they develop. In addition, events are organised as required at regional and national levels for key partnership staff and board members.

➤ **Review and assessment**

- More innovative involvement of stakeholders should be encouraged through different forms of partnership review and assessment.
- There should be full representation of the European Commission in Monitoring Committees.
- Annual implementation reports should be fully discussed with stakeholders in Monitoring Committees, published online and made available for comments.
- Information should be shared on how ex-ante conditionalities have been fulfilled and underpin programmes in implementation reports.
- Feedback on the learning from review processes should be more fully integrated into practice with better reporting on the added value of working in partnership in different contexts and at different levels.

Good practice case:

A live programme monitoring system in Ireland

A live IT, planning and monitoring system has been developed for the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) which is co-financed by the ESF and the Government of Ireland. The programme implementers and local government aligned contracting authorities (Local Community Development Committees) use the system. This requires them to input data on their progress at regular intervals. This system, coupled with oversight by case workers from the Intermediate Body, Pobal, which is responsible for administering the programme, ensures that problems are picked up early and addressed rapidly. It is also made clear that non-compliance will be sanctioned. Such a system offers an interesting model for ESF Operational Programmes.

➤ **Mutual exchange and learning**

- In addition to a commitment from the European Commission and Member States, the responsibility of all stakeholders to improve exchange and learning about the application of the partnership principle should be reinforced.
- More creative and proactive forms of information exchange should be promoted within, between and across multiple levels and funds with the establishment of a minimum set of requirements for the sharing of relevant practices.
- Beyond simply making good practices available, ways should be found to learn more strategically from partnership successes **and** failures through measures such as training and peer reviews, with a focus on using the knowledge obtained to inform and improve future developments.
- Efforts should be made to gather together, adapt and share useful partnership guidance, tools and learning materials from previous programming periods.

Good practice case:

Disability, partnership and active involvement in EU funding, Fundación ONCE in Spain

Established in Spain in 1988 by ONCE (National Organisation of the Blind), Fundación ONCE aims to improve the quality of life, inclusion and equal opportunities of people with disabilities, with a special focus on training, employment and accessibility of products, services and environments. It currently takes part in the Operational Programme on Social Inclusion and Social Economy, and the Operational Programme on Youth Employment, both as an Intermediate Body and as a beneficiary. Fundación ONCE has played a central role in ESF transnational cooperation. From 2009-15, it led **InNet16** (European Observatory for Structural Funds and Disability), the European Network on Inclusive Education and Disability (**incluD-ed**) and the European Network for Corporate Social Responsibility and Disability (**CSR+D**). These transnational initiatives involved 31 organisations from 13 countries, representing public authorities, companies and civil society. Fundación ONCE's current transnational activity is conducted under the **Disability4EU2020** umbrella strategy and involves leading initiatives on social economy and disability in the EU; the promotion of more inclusive job markets, and, as a continuation of the European Network on CSR and Disability, the **Disability Hub Europe for Sustainable Growth and Social Innovation** (DHub) which focuses on the disability:sustainability dimension in the UN 2030 agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.

See: <https://www.fundaciononce.es/en>

Appendix 1: List of Contacts in the European Commission

European Commission Recovery Task Force

Country	Name & role	Phone	Email
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Austria			
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Appendix 2: List of National Contacts

COUNTRY	MINISTRY	CONTACTS/DRAFTS
AUSTRIA		
BELGIUM	secrétaire d'État en charge de la Relance	Contact
BULGARIA		Draft Plan
CROATIA		
CYPRUS		
CZECH REPUBLIC		
DENMARK	Ministry of Finance	
ESTONIA		
FINLAND		
FRANCE	Ministère de l'économie, des finances et de la relance	Draft Plan
GERMANY		
GREECE	Finance Ministry	Presentation Draft Plan
HUNGARY		
IRELAND		
ITALY	Politiche europee, economia	Guidelines Draft Plan
LATVIA	Ministry of Finance	Information on draft plan
LITHUANIA		
LUXEMBOURG		
MALTA		
NETHERLANDS		
POLAND	Ministry of Finance	Information on Draft Plan
PORTUGAL	Prime Minister	Draft Plan

	Economia e Transição Digital Ambiente e Ação Climática, Planeamento	
ROMANIA		
SLOVAKIA		
SLOVENIA		
SPAIN	Presidencia del Gobierno	Draft Plan
SWEDEN		

Appendix 3: Resources

- [Communication on the annual growth strategy 2021](#)
- Commission staff working document addressed to member States with [guidelines](#) and a [template](#) for the preparation of the national resilience and recovery Plans.
- EU [country specific recommendations](#) (2019 and 2020 semester cycles)
- Other EU relevant documents: [EU Green Deal](#), [the European Pillar of Social Rights](#), [the Youth Guarantee](#), the [Child Guarantee](#)
- Resources from other CSOs: [EU Funds for a Green Recovery](#)
- CSE relevant documents: [model letter](#), letter to [Finance Ministers](#)/letter to [Decision-makers](#), [Europe's recovery after the pandemic and civil society](#)
- ESF Transnational Platform, 'Review of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership (ECCP) – Thematic Network on Partnership', thematic dossier no. 7, June 2018

Drafted by LinkinEurope SPRL, Valentina Caimi and Fintan Farrell