



EUROPEISKA UNIONEN
Europeiska socialfonden

Vi förändrar arbetsmarknaden

Date of decision
April 18, 2018

Reference number
2018/00208

European Social Fund in Sweden

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

A transnational call for proposals in the field of a sustainable workinglife and lifelong learning in the Baltic Sea Region

The Swedish ESF-Council, the managing authority of the ESF in Sweden, is launching this call to promote project cooperation and mutual learning among the member states in the Baltic Sea Region.

This call aims at creating a transnational platform that could be the start of a flagship within the EU Baltic Sea Strategy in the field of sustainable working life and lifelong learning. A platform will be created that can be used as an arena for actors working with sustainable working life with solidarity between the age groups. It is an attempt to practically use the funding from ESF specifically to meet joint targets within in the EUSBSR while considering the European Pillar of Social Rights. The platform should be set up with preferable two ESF-funded partners from another member state, but one is accepted. Non ESF-funded partners can be included if the eligibility criterium two ESF-funded partners is met.

The call is a part of the Swedish ESF-programme priority 1 Skills development, sub-theme 1.2 Develop and implement methods to strengthen the link between education and employment.

The amount launched is 8 million SEK. No co-financing is required. Eligible costs are: Swedish activities taking place in Sweden and abroad according to the transnational agreement. Covering costs for the other transnational partners are not approved.

This call opens today the 18th of April 2018 and ends at 16.00 hrs the 17th of September 2018. Starting date for the projects will be 1st of December 2018 and the latest finalizing date is the 30th of November 2021. Projects can last between 18-36 months.

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Aim

The Swedish ESF council has a government assignment to support the Baltic Sea Strategy and has been providing opportunities for financing projects through the common framework in specific areas, but not all areas have been able to support through this.

The eight EU countries that make up the Baltic Sea Region (Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland) face several common challenges which are reflected in the jointly-agreed Action Plan for the Strategy. It includes a number of policy areas/horizontal actions to save the sea, connect the region and increase prosperity – each accompanied by concrete flagships as well as by clearly identified targets and indicators.

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region's contribution to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy is of course also very relevant for the ESF. In the strategy it is identified that due to the demographic change the workforce is about to shrink. The employment rate of women and older workers are particularly low. About 80 million people have low or basic skills, but lifelong learning benefits mostly the more educated. By 2020, 16 million more jobs will require high qualifications, while the demand for low skills will drop by 12 million jobs. Achieving longer working lives will also require the possibility to acquire and develop new skills throughout a lifetime¹.

Sustainable working life in the ESF Programme is formulated as the importance of creating a long-term sustainable working life where people's potential is developed throughout the entire working life. Experiences from "The EU Thematic year of Age for solidarity between generations" shows the importance of structured transfer of skills from elderly to younger in the workplace. The results of the activities in the theme year points to the value of openness to realize the potential of mutual knowledge transfer, as it brings value to both affected people and the workplace. The goal of the elderly in working life is expressed both directly and indirectly through goals of a long and sustainable working life, for example in terms of the importance of the opportunity for lifelong learning.

With this background in EU Strategy 2020, the Swedish Operational programme and the EU Macro regional strategy for the Baltic Sea Region the Swedish ESF Council launches this call. The intention is to get closer to achieving a working life designed in such a way so that people can work longer than today, through a sustainable working life built on lifelong learning. By creating a transnational learning platform within the EU Baltic Sea Strategy good practices in the field of sustainable working life can be collected, developed, adjusted and implemented in order to achieve this goal.

¹ EUROPE 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth



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The objective of this call is:

- to contribute to the EU 2020 strategy and to deliver high levels of employment productivity and social cohesion in line with the principles of the European Social Pillar.
- to create content and knowledge within the field of sustainable working life that could develop into a flagship within the EUSBSR strategy.
- to support the development of a knowledge platform about how women and men can stay longer in the workforce based on the experiences from the countries within the EUSBSR strategy

Context and background

The average age for retirement in the EU is 58.8 years for women and 59.4 years for men respectively. In Sweden, the exit from working life according to Eurostat is equal to women and men, 63.6 years. In Denmark, Finland and Germany, it is also quite high and equal to women and men around 61-62 years. In Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, it is lower for women around 59 compared to 61 for men. In Poland, the average age is 56.1 for women and 58.5 for men.

Sweden is the country in the EU where women and men work the longest. The average retirement age from working life in Sweden is 64 years for both men and women. The proportion that remains in a profession at the age of 65 varies greatly across the Swedish labor market. The groups in Sweden where you see significant problems with staying in the labor market up to 65 are those with short education / unqualified professions, those with some form of disability and immigrants. Elderly with low skills are at risk of having long periods of unemployment that can result in early retirement.

While the population composition changes so that the elderly are increasing in proportion to the working-age part of the population, net labor is reduced. It is therefore important to create a more sustainable working life that causes less sick leave and early retirement, and that more people can work longer in their ages. There is also a need for more transfer of knowledge and sustainable learning between generations as well as continuing training throughout working life.

In order for the learning platform to be relevant it should be in line with the following principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights:

- **Education, training and life-long learning** Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market.
- **Gender equality** Equality of treatment and opportunities between women and men must be ensured and fostered in all areas, including regarding participation in the

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labour market, terms and conditions of employment and career progression.
Women and men have the right to equal pay for work of equal value.

- **Equal opportunities** Regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, everyone has the right to equal treatment and opportunities regarding employment, social protection, education, and access to goods and services available to the public. Equal opportunities of under-represented groups shall be fostered.
- **Work-life balance** Parents and people with caring responsibilities have the right to suitable leave, flexible working arrangements and access to care services. Women and men shall have equal access to special leaves of absence in order to fulfil their caring responsibilities and be encouraged to use them in a balanced way.
- **Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection** Workers have the right to a high level of protection of their health and safety at work. Workers have the right to a working environment adapted to their professional needs and which enables them to prolong their participation in the labour market.

A specific background paper for this call with a gender analysis can be found on our website: www.esf.se² The aspects addressed there should be taken into account when drafting the proposal and has to be developed during the projects first phase.

Expected results and effects of the projects

ESF-projects relevant to the EU Baltic Sea Strategy will be measured on implementation in cooperation between actors in several Baltic countries and being able to demonstrate added value through cooperation, i.e. better results can be achieved through greater critical mass, knowledge exchange or solutions to common problems. The platform should be in line with the EUSBSR and specifically target a sustainable working life in the area of lifelong learning.

The funding for this call is from the subtheme 1.2 Develop and implement methods to strengthen the link between education and employment. The call for proposals will aim at condensing experiences from the Baltic countries regarding methods that lead to a longer and more sustainable working life in intergenerational cooperation, such as social, organizational and technological innovations.

We expect a suitable transnational partnership should be established in order to achieve this

² Genderanalys inför en Östersjöutlysning kring ett längre och hållbart arbetsliv i solidaritet mellan generationer



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objective. It could consist of authorities, universities, companies (be aware of the rules regarding state aid, see below), social partners and NGO's. It needs to be a minimum of two partners that are ESF funded and preferable a good representation of other countries within the macro region. It is okay to adopt methods from other countries than the ones in the macro region, but they must have a relevance for the situation in the Baltic Sea region.

The expected results:

- The expected results need to include sharing and exchanging knowledge of methods, products and/or solutions to increase the possibilities for older people to stay in the labour market longer. It should be documented in such a way that it is transferable.
- Establishing well-functioning transnational partnerships with different types of actors where "innovative" solutions can be collected, developed and implemented.
- That knowledge platform is formed in such a way that it could eventually become a flagship in the field of sustainable working life and lifelong learning within the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy.

Some examples of possible actions

It is important to make it easier for older people to work more years than is the case at present. Different models can thus contribute individually or jointly to such a development. Changed, less physically stressful tasks of ascending age may be a model. Another model may be to facilitate a decline in working hours or a change in working time. A third model may be further education that can make older people better able to cope with changing tasks or to move on to new tasks or new jobs and workplaces.

There may be different ways of organizing the work or work organization that leads to fewer sick leave and occupational injuries. It can be a more flexible working place that is open to individual adjustments to compensate for functional variations. There may also be actions in the psychosocial work environment to reduce harassment and stress.

Skills development and leadership training to create learning processes for interaction between generations are other methods, where the knowledge of the elderly is used and transferred to younger, as well as where the younger's younger education can be shared with the elderly. Measures that positively affect the balance between employment and family life in order to reduce stress and allow for longer working life can also be included.

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

The project period is between 18-36 months. You need to divide the time allocated into an initial analysis and preparation phase as well as taking into account that it will take time to finalize the project. Therefore, project is divided into an initial analysis and preparation phase, an implementation phase and a finalisation phase. Individual phases and the project can be extended for a shorter period of time if agreed upon between the Swedish ESF-council and the project. These phases are also reflected in the budget and have its own allocations. There is one budget for initial analysis and preparation and one combined budget for the completion phase and the finalization phase.

Possible activities in the initial phase are meetings, analysis, mapping, establishing the organisation structure of the project on national and transnational level. The phase must be a minimum of three months and a maximum of nine months. The result of the analysis and preparation phase will be presented to the Swedish ESF-council in a report. The report has to problematize the issues the project will work with; defined target group for the project; include a plan for project implementation (including scheduled activities); address the plan for evaluation and for monitoring; include a final risk-assessment analysis and a specified final budget. If the report is not approved the project may be discontinued.

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

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

The application should contain a description of the underlying problems and needs that the project will tackle. The application should also include a description of a possible solution for these problems and how to project will provide this solution. The activities in the project will be stated in the Transnational Cooperation Agreement so each part has to agree on it. The targets and activities of the projects shall be based on gender statistics in order to provide for gender inclusive strategies. The labour market is highly gender-segregated, with men unevenly distributed between the public, private and civil society sectors, and women and men performing different tasks and a lasting wage gap.

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

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

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

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

In order to meet the criteria for gender equality you need to have internal expertise internally or through external support. An analysis of the core thematics from a gender equality and discrimination perspective should be under taken and the results included in the definition of the specific problem that the project addresses. The activities should also take into account gender mainstreaming in line with the analysis, and that the gender perspective should be included in the evaluation of the project.

You can find more information on: <http://standard.gendercop.com>

Please set aside some funding in the budget for these issues unless you have very good knowledge on the horizontal principles within the project staff.

Monitoring and evaluation

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

Monitoring differs from evaluation in that it is based on documentation and regular follow-ups. Baselines, indicators and status reports are important parts of monitoring. The projects are to describe how they will monitor and evaluate the results and actions taken.

Both the national and transnational parts of the project must be evaluated and therefore it is important to include transnational travels for the evaluators.

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

In the application form there should briefly be described:

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

The concrete evaluation plan for a project should be designed in consultation with the Swedish ESF Council. The project evaluation should be called off from the Swedish ESF Council's framework of procurement. The purpose of the framework agreement is to ensure the quality of evaluation and to simplify the procurement process for the projects.

See also www.esf.se for tutorials and more information on evaluation.

Selection criteria

The project must fulfil the Swedish selection criteria, please visit see www.esf.se. At the time of finalising the application a transnational agreement (in English) must be enclosed. The template (please visit www.esf.se) must be filled and signed by all parties. The Swedish ESF Council prefers to have the application in English to ensure it can be read by all transnational parties. The application should be in line with what is stated in the call and mainly cooperate in the geographical area that is covered by the strategy.

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

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Conditions for the implementation of the projects

Standardised costs

The Swedish ESF-Council acknowledges the flat rate and standardised costs according to the delegated act (EU) 2015/2195. For more information see: www.esf.se

When Swedish parties are budgeting they have to use these costs. If other parties are to be reimbursed, their costs are to be registered as “Services (externa tjänster)” in the Swedish budget.

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

State aid

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

Cost efficiency and procurement

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

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

Webb-based application in “Projektrummet” and the partnership database

If you are applying for the first time, you need to open an account in “Projektrummet”

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(www.esf.se). A database is set up in order to help finding partners. It can be found on this address: <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality> The partnership has to be established and a transnational partnership agreement (TCA) has to be drawn up before applying. A template for the TCA can be found on our website. You need to indicate your partners in the partnership database. The signed (by all partners) transnational cooperation agreement and other attachment are to send by e-mail to transnationalitet@esf.se or by post to Svenska ESF-rådet, Box 471 41, 100 74 Stockholm.

For more information please contact:

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