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A ZAMĚSTNANOST

FINAL REPORT

Evaluation of the Implementation of the Principle of Innovation in the HREOP

PODPORUJEME VAŠI BUDOUCNOST

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Table of contents

1	ABBREVIATIONS	7
2	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	8
3	THE EVALUATION CONTEXT	12
4	COURSE OF THE INVESTIGATION AND THE METHODS USED	12
5	MAIN FINDINGS	15
5.1	TASK 2 EVALUATE THE CURRENT CONCEPT OF INNOVATION IN THE HREOP AND IN ESF ABROAD, AND SUGGEST SUITABLE DEFINITION OF INNOVATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HREOP	15
	<i>Evaluation question 2.1. What are the current concepts of innovation (incl. EC's concept) relevant for the implementation of the ESF and the interest of the contracting authority?</i>	15
	<i>Evaluation question 2.2. To what extent is the current HREOP's concept of innovation appropriate?</i>	27
	<i>Evaluation question 2.3 What foreign approaches to the concept and application of innovation in the ESF can be used in the Czech Republic?</i>	34
	<i>Evaluation question 2.4 What is the role of international cooperation in the application of innovation in the ESF, is it appropriate (necessary) to connect both principles?</i>	37
	<i>Evaluation question 2.5. What are the effects and the weight of related principles, such as partnerships, mainstreaming, etc.??</i>	40
	<i>Evaluation question 2.6. To what extent would it be possible and appropriate to align the approach to innovation within the ESF with the principles of the System of support of research, development and innovations in Czech Republic (see the Research, Development and Innovation Council (RDIC)- http://www.vyzkum.cz)?</i>	42
	<i>Evaluation question 2.7. Is the evaluation of project applications, reporting and monitoring of innovative products appropriately adjusted?</i>	43
5.2	TASK 1 EVALUATE THE RELEVANCE OF THE HREOP'S INNOVATION THEMES AND THEIR REFLECTION IN THE CALLS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS IN THE HREOP'S IMPLEMENTATION	45
	<i>Evaluation question 1.1. To what extent are the topics of the innovation activities within the HREOP and the HREOP's implementation document relevant?</i>	45
	<i>Evaluation question 1.2. Which needed topics are not included in the innovation activities identified?</i>	49
	<i>Evaluation question 1.3. To what extent are the topics of the innovation activities reflected in the calls published?</i>	49
	<i>Evaluation question 1.4. On what areas / topics should the innovation activities be focused within the next implementation of the HREOP?</i>	56
5.3	TASK 3 IDENTIFY INNOVATION PROJECTS AND THEIR PRODUCTS, DIVIDE THEM INTO THEMATIC AREAS AND ASSESS THE DEGREE OF INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION IN THE HREOP'S AREAS OF SUPPORT.	59
	<i>Evaluation question 3.1. What groundbreaking (pilot) innovative projects have been implemented?</i>	60
	<i>Evaluation question 3.2. How are the projects aimed at dissemination and promotion of innovative products (social innovation)?</i>	76
	<i>Evaluation question 3.3. What are the appropriate thematic areas of innovation activities and which projects and products belong to them?</i>	77
5.4	TASK 4 COMPILER THE METHODOLOGY FOR THE QUALITY EVALUATION OF INNOVATION PROJECTS AND PRODUCTS, AND PROCESS A CASE STUDY FOR EACH THEMATIC AREA ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INNOVATIVE PROJECT, WHICH REPRESENTS AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD / PROMISING PRACTICES.....	78
5.5	TASK 5 EVALUATE THE ESF PRODUCTS DATABASE AS A TOOL FOR THE DISSEMINATION AND PROMOTION OF INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS, AND SUGGEST ITS AMENDMENT (BOTH CONTENT AND FUNCTIONAL)	79
	<i>Evaluation question 5.1 To what extent does the ESF Products Database contribute to the dissemination and exploitation of innovations arising in ESF projects?</i>	79

	<i>Evaluation question 5.2. How are the ESF Products Database, the products included and their use and benefits evaluated by the registered database users and how is the database evaluated by other entities (potential or unregistered)?</i>	80
	<i>Evaluation question 5.3. To what extent do other tools or procedures contribute to the dissemination and exploitation of innovations resulting in projects and what is their impact in comparison with the ESF Products Database?</i>	82
5.6	TASK 6 PERFORM AN IMPACT EVALUATION OF THE CIP EQUAL	88
	<i>Evaluation question 6.1 What are the impacts of CIP EQUAL on policies and strategies?</i>	88
	<i>Evaluation question 6.2 What are the institutional and organizational impacts of CIP EQUAL</i>	89
	<i>Evaluation question 6.3 What are the impacts of CIP EQUAL on the implementation of projects under HREOP, ECOP and OPPA?</i>	90
5.7	TASK 7 ESTABLISH AN INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEM FOR THE NEXT PROGRAMMING PERIOD AND SET UP A METHODOLOGY (MANUAL) FOR IMPLEMENTERS OF INNOVATION PROJECTS	91
6	CONCLUSIONS AND PARTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS BY EVALUATION TASKS	92
6.1	TASK 1: EVALUATE THE RELEVANCE OF THE HREOP'S INNOVATION THEMES AND THEIR REFLECTION IN THE CALLS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS IN THE HREOP'S IMPLEMENTATION	92
	<i>Evaluation question 1.1: To what extent are the topics of the innovation activities within the HREOP and the HREOP's implementation document relevant?</i>	92
	<i>Evaluation question 1.2 Which needed topics are not included in the innovation activities identified?</i>	93
	<i>Conclusions</i>	93
	<i>Evaluation question 1.3 To what extent are the topics of the innovation activities reflected in the calls published?</i>	93
	<i>Conclusions</i>	93
	<i>Evaluation question 1.4. On what areas / topics should the innovation activities be focused within the next implementation of the HREOP?</i>	95
6.2	TASK 2 EVALUATE THE CURRENT CONCEPT OF INNOVATION IN THE HREOP AND IN ESF ABROAD, AND SUGGEST SUITABLE DEFINITION OF INNOVATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HREOP	97
	<i>Evaluation question 2.1. What are the current concepts of innovation (incl. EC's concept) relevant for the implementation of the ESF and the interest of the contracting authority?</i>	97
	<i>Evaluation question 2.2. To what extent is the current HREOP's concept of innovation appropriate?</i>	98
	<i>Evaluation question 2.3 What foreign approaches to the concept and application of innovation in the ESF can be used in the Czech Republic?</i>	100
	<i>Evaluation question 2.4 What is the role of international cooperation in the application of innovation in the ESF, is it appropriate (necessary) to connect both principles?</i>	101
	<i>Evaluation question 2.5. What are the effects and the weight of related principles, such as partnerships, mainstreaming, etc</i>	103
	<i>Evaluation question 2.6. To what extent would it be possible and appropriate to align the approach to innovation within the ESF with the principles of the System of support of research, development and innovations in Czech Republic (see the Research, Development and Innovation Council (RDIC)- http://www.vyzkum.cz)?</i>	104
	<i>Evaluation question 2.7. Is the evaluation of project applications, reporting and monitoring of innovative products appropriately adjusted?</i>	105
6.3	TASK 3 IDENTIFY INNOVATION PROJECTS AND THEIR PRODUCTS, DIVIDE THEM INTO THEMATIC AREAS AND ASSESS THE DEGREE OF INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION IN THE HREOP'S AREAS OF SUPPORT	107
	<i>Evaluation question 3.1. What groundbreaking (pilot) innovative projects have been implemented?</i>	107
	<i>Evaluation question 3.2. How are the projects aimed at dissemination and promotion of innovative products (social innovation)?</i>	107
	<i>Evaluation question 3.3. What are the appropriate thematic areas of innovation activities and which projects and products belong to them?</i>	108

	<i>Evaluation question 3.4: What are the differences in the application of innovation in projects in each priority axes or in the areas of support of the HREOP?</i>	108
6.4	TASK 4 COMPILER THE METHODOLOGY FOR THE QUALITY EVALUATION OF INNOVATION PROJECTS AND PRODUCTS, AND PROCESS A CASE STUDY FOR EACH THEMATIC AREA ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INNOVATIVE PROJECT, WHICH REPRESENTS AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD / PROMISING PRACTICES.....	109
	<i>Evaluation question 4.1 What is the appropriate methodology for evaluation of the quality of innovative projects (criteria, tools, processes, entities involved in the evaluation)?</i>	109
	<i>Evaluation question 4.2 What are examples of good / promising practice of innovation projects for each thematic area?</i>	110
	<i>Evaluation Question 4.3: What is the impact of partnerships, international cooperation and created innovation on the quality of innovative projects in the examples of good / promising practice?</i>	110
6.5	TASK 5 EVALUATE THE ESF PRODUCTS DATABASE AS A TOOL FOR THE DISSEMINATION AND PROMOTION OF INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS, AND SUGGEST ITS AMENDMENT (BOTH CONTENT AND FUNCTIONAL)	111
	<i>Evaluation question 5.1 To what extent does the ESF Products Database contribute to the dissemination and exploitation of innovations arising in ESF projects?</i>	111
	<i>Evaluation question 5.2. How are the ESF Products Database, the products included and their use and benefits evaluated by the registered database users and how is the database evaluated by other entities (potential or unregistered)?</i>	111
	<i>Evaluation question 5.3. To what extent do other tools or procedures contribute to the dissemination and exploitation of innovations resulting in projects and what is their impact in comparison with the ESF Products Database?</i>	112
6.6	TASK 6 PERFORM AN IMPACT EVALUATION OF THE CIP EQUAL	115
	<i>Evaluation question 6.1 What are the impacts of CIP EQUAL on policies and strategies?</i>	115
	<i>Evaluation question 6.2 What are the institutional and organizational impacts of CIP EQUAL</i>	115
	<i>Evaluation question 6.3 What are the impacts of CIP EQUAL on the implementation of projects under HREOP, ECOP and OPPA?</i>	116
6.7	TASK 7 ESTABLISH AN INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEM FOR THE NEXT PROGRAMMING PERIOD AND SET UP A METHODOLOGY (MANUAL) FOR IMPLEMENTERS OF INNOVATION PROJECTS.....	116
7	RECOMMENDATIONS	117
7.1	RECOMMENDATION 1: IDENTIFY THE OVERALL STRATEGY OF THE ORGANIZATION	117
7.2	RECOMMENDATION 2: DECIDE ON THE INNOVATION ROLES OF AN ORGANIZATION AND THE INNOVATION TEAM	117
7.3	RECOMMENDATION 3: PROVIDE FULL SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATION CAPACITY.....	118
7.4	RECOMMENDATION 4: PROVIDE FULL SUPPORT FOR BUILDING AN INNOVATION PLATFORM AND ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES TO THE CREATION OF AN INNOVATION CENTRE	118
7.5	RECOMMENDATION 5: FORMULATE INNOVATION DEMAND AND DEFINE PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS OF INNOVATION CALLS IN RELATION TO THE LIMITS OF THE HREOP'S PILOT CALL.....	118
7.6	RECOMMENDATION 6: ESTABLISH HELPDESK PROVIDING EXPERT ADVICE FOR THE PREPARATION OF INNOVATIVE PROPOSALS/PROJECTS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION	118
7.7	RECOMMENDATION 7: BUILD EXPERT CAPACITY WITH ADEQUATE COMPETENCE AT THE LEVEL OF (EXTERNAL) EVALUATORS 119	
7.8	RECOMMENDATION 8: TARGET INNOVATION SUPPORT AT INNOVATION AXIS THROUGH A CONTINUOUSLY OPEN CALL WITH CONTINUOUSLY UPDATED PRIORITIES.....	119
7.9	RECOMMENDATION 9: EXPLICITLY POINT OUT THE POSSIBILITY TO INVOLVE INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS AND ENABLE ITS FULL FUNDING	119
7.10	RECOMMENDATION 10: ENABLE ONGOING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE PROVIDER AND THE BENEFICIARY	119
7.11	RECOMMENDATION 11: UNBLOCK SOME RESOURCES FOR OPEN INNOVATION CALL.....	119
7.12	RECOMMENDATION 12: CONSIDER VOUCHER-TYPE SUPPORT.....	120
8	SOURCES.....	121

9	APPENDIXES	122
9.1	APPENDIX 1: TOPICS OF THE HREOP'S INNOVATION ACTIVITIES	122
9.2	APPENDIX 2: LIST OF STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS	122
9.3	APPENDIX 3: RELEVANT SOURCES	122
9.4	APPENDIX 4: CHANGES OF THE HREOP IN THE AREA OF METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION RULES (CHANGES IN THE MANUALS)	122
9.5	APPENDIX 6: PROPOSAL OF AN INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEM.....	122
9.6	APPENDIX 7: PROCEEDINGS OF INNOVATION PROJECTS GOOD PRACTICE	122
9.7	APPENDIX 8: GUIDE FOR IMPLEMENTERS OF INNOVATION PROJECTS.....	122

1 Abbreviations

CR	Czech Republic
CZSO	Czech Statistical Office
SUR	Survey
APW	Agreement to Perform Work
ACJ	Agreement to Complete a Job
ESF	European Social Fund
ESFPD	European Social Fund Product Database
EU	European Union
FG	Focus group(s)
HRD	Human Resources Development
ip	Innovation points
MONIT7+	Current HREOP's monitoring system
MoIT	Ministry of Industry and Trade
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
SME	Small and middle enterprises
MC	Monitoring Committee
NB	Navreme Boheme, s.r.o.
NNO	Non-governmental non-profit organizations
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OP	Operational Programme
HREOP	Human Resources and Employment Operational Programme
OPPA	Operational Programme Prague - Adaptability
ECOP	Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme
SEP	Self-employed persons
PA	Priority Axis
PR	Public relations
WGE	Working Group for Evaluation
PL	Parental leave
MA	Managing Authority
SI	Structured interview
SAS	Smart Administration Strategy
PC	Press conference
LO	Labour Office
IB	Intermediate Body

2 Executive summary

The objective of the contract *Evaluation of the Implementation of the Principle of Innovation in the HREOP* is a mid-term evaluation of the HREOP's innovative actions support and an ex-post evaluation of the CIP EQUAL's innovation support. The conclusions particularly answer the question, in what extent HREOP supports innovation potentially able to catalyse the positive changes, and evaluates the conditions of its origin and exploitation. The evaluation also provides recommendations for the next (resp. for the current one in case of a pilot call) programming period in terms of the HREOP's and ESF's innovative actions support.

The result of the **evaluation task 1** „Evaluate the relevance of the HREOP's innovation themes and their reflection in the calls in the context of socioeconomic development and progress in the HREOP's implementation“ is the finding that the themes of innovative actions (as defined in the HREOP's programming and implementation documents, see Annex 1) are relevant (the themes allow a sufficient reflection of the specific needs of an innovation demand), and the finding that they are always included in HREOP's calls for proposals, which is given by their latitude and generality of the definition of innovation as a horizontal principle. In summary, the most of calls do not specify innovation in more detail and do not define the default level (base-line). Clarification of innovation of the project is thus dependent on argumentation skills of the applicant and its assessment is dependent on the evaluator's knowledge capacity. In the case of grant projects, the only explicitly innovative call is no. 30, which targets the creation or development of social entrepreneurship. It is therefore appropriate to focus on the preparation of a strategy for the period 2014+ and the establishment of appropriate internal and external knowledge (expert) capacity in the field of social innovation, incl. active participation in transnational expert networks and international research activities, creating a Czech thematic network in the field of social innovation at the national, regional and local level, creating a methodical support for the implementation of an innovative support on both program and project level, using international experience.

Based on analysis of the themes of the Vienna Declaration¹ and on the organisation of the international expert panel, and the Czech national panel in the CR targeted at prioritizing themes of the Common Strategic Framework, ESF showed that the topic of social innovation, respectively innovation in the social field, is indeed very lively, but not established in the same time, i.e. approaches and concepts are varied between organisations and countries, even within organizations. Themes for ESF are considered traditional, but this does not preclude their innovative grip. However, examples of approaches, that experts consider to be innovative, are still not frequent within the ESF. Other issues are perceived as innovation, particularly on the border or in crossroad of different disciplines (which refer to the above mentioned suggestions of the Vienna Declaration). Themes of particular relevance for the planned pilot innovative call in the HREOP's area of support 3.1 were identified as follows: 1) Integrated practice for different forms of measures to increase employability, such as individual support, consulting services, access to education and vocational education and training, access to health and social services, child care services, access to ICT and the Internet, 2) Access to affordable, sustainable and quality social services, such as active policy for employment and training, services focused on the homeless, child care and long-term social care services, 3) Mobilization of financial resources to support the social economy and social enterprise initiatives, and 4) Capacity and infrastructure building for the development of social enterprises, especially through education on social entrepreneurship, networking, development of national or regional strategies in collaboration with key stakeholders, provision of business development services and easier access to

¹ Based on: „Vienna Declaration: The most relevant topics in social innovation research“; final document available at:

http://www.socialinnovation2011.eu/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Vienna-Declaration_final_10Nov2011.pdf

financing. Results for the social enterprise field at the same time correspond with the results of the international panel.

Within the **evaluation task 2** "Evaluate the current innovation concept in the HREOP and in ESF abroad, and suggest suitable definition of innovation in the context of the current state of implementation of the HREOP", it is emphasized that the essential characteristic of social innovation is **the importance of social interaction** that is itself an innovation result because it creates social capital. Interaction involves the participation and cooperation of various actors and stakeholders as well as an empowerment of beneficiaries, i.e. innovation is developed and distributed within their participation. The quality of interaction affects the sustainability of innovation and it's up scaling. Compared to the traditional concept of innovation in the Lisbon strategy, the emphasis on a direct link between economic and social dimensions of development appears, and the area of social innovation is becoming the sphere of innovation policy. In addition to other priorities, the Europe 2020 Strategy (and especially its pillar initiative Innovation Union) underlines this importance. It mobilises creativity while forming solutions and it better uses resources, promotes innovation and learning society. At the same time all types of actors can be innovative in creating their products and services; no obstacles in terms of the foreign approach transmission within the EU were identified, or these obstacles can be solved within the process of adaptation (localisation) of domestic needs and restrictions respectively. Due to the continuing lag of the Czech Republic behind advanced countries in field of the development of social innovation (on both innovation supply and demand sides), the current level of support of international cooperation and its importance are insufficient. A key element is the **evaluation of social innovation**, which can be divided to 1) identify the innovation characteristics of projects (and their groups), which is closely related to the evaluation process, 2) evaluation of the benefits (i.e. a social impact of the project, groups of projects or programme), where both perspectives are linked together. However, when social innovation is not an explicit goal, as is the case now in the HREOP, it is not specifically evaluated.

The selected **methodology** of the **evaluation task 3** "Identify innovation projects and their products, divide them into thematic areas and assess the degree of implementation of innovation in the HREOP's areas of support" refers to so called *characteristics of innovation projects*. For the purposes of the survey, the projects sample was selected in a way that it takes into account the programme type (CIP EQUAL HREOP), priority axes and areas of support, the results of factual evaluation, project statuses (especially adopted – not-adopted) and last but not least, the implementation phase, with regard to the continuity of the field research for the case studies. The expert team then studied all available background material and data, and assigned values of these characteristics to each of the projects , i.e. to assign 0-2 points in each of 12 monitored **characteristics** in total: necessity, complexity, novelty, improvement, process (the process and effects of the implementation), target groups (and their involvement), partnerships, sustainability, initiation (impact on other activities) and evaluation. Within the CIP EQUAL, six very innovative projects were identified; within the HREOP, 30 projects were selected from various areas of support, especially from 3.1 with regard to the special survey implemented within the call 30, focused on social entrepreneurship. The survey identified as the most innovative projects those under the call 30 (social entrepreneurship). This result, however, was predictable given as the very definition of social entrepreneurship assumes innovative approaches, incl. compliance with formal rules to further stimulate this approach. Another innovation projects were identified particularly in samples in the area of support 3.3 (Integration of Socially Excluded Groups in the Labour Market), 3.2 (Support of Social Integration of Members of Roma Localities) and 3.1 (Support of Social Integration and Social Services). In individual cases, it was found that the funded projects or practices fixed in the form of project proposals are very close to the activities of social entrepreneurship, with the only difference being that they use a different institutional form, i.e. they do not meet the formal rules for a social enterprise.

On the basis of a broader selection, 16 projects were subsequently selected representing good / promising practices for the processing of detailed case studies describing the project and the innovation cycle, in direct relation to the **evaluation task 4** „Compile the methodology for the quality evaluation of innovation projects and products, and process a case study for each thematic area about the implementation of an innovative project, which represents an example of good / promising practices “. The proceedings form a separate attachment to this report.

Within the **evaluation task 5** "Evaluate the ESF Products Database as a tool for the dissemination and promotion of innovative products, and suggest its amendment", an information audit was conducted, where the ESF Products Database achieved only average results. The user interface looks obsolete and suffers with partial errors in terms of smooth and clear navigation, incl. inconsistent use of graphic elements and a fairly structured navigation menu.

The current state of the ESF Products Database is then evaluated as unsatisfactory regarding its content (products made available) and use value, with an impact on the visitors' traffic. It is necessary to think through a new overall meaning and mission of this portal. The proposed measures include: to increase the portal's user friendliness (incl. removal of partial errors), simplifying the language, introduce a new system of selection and approval of products; to open the system not only for products, but also for projects; to extend the range of published information, and to add examples of good practice and stories.

Further development of the database must, however, take account of recommendations aimed at creating an **innovation platform** that should, in addition to increasing the knowledge intensity of innovative offers, i.e. awareness of social innovation, implemented approaches and experiences, be also linked to the actions of expertise and its dissemination (studies, analyses, conferences workshops, seminars, including their online forms and presentations). Finally, it should be noted that the content should be managed through a unit with sufficient expert capacity, the newly created Innovation Centre.

The final result of the **evaluation task 6** "Perform an impact evaluation of the CIP EQUAL" is a series of findings that although none of the identified innovation projects did not reach the stage of causing social change, a number of projects exceeded the implementation phase, i.e. that interventions enabled the spread of social innovation, resp. of partial products as outputs of the project. At the same time the projects led to a capacity building of the beneficiaries and had a direct impact on the organisation and human resources. There were identified impacts, especially on the level of cooperation and involvement of the local administration and local government, or local community, whether it takes the form of a formal group or an informal long-term cooperation. Within the expert capacity building and awareness raising in the field of social innovation, it should be built on the CIP EQUAL projects, trying to activate the project partnerships, at least through building an innovation platform.

In a separate technical annex, there are then presented all the sub-analyses together with the results of surveys and a detailed methodology for the assessment of the HREOP's and the CIP EQUAL's project innovation rate. **Evaluation task 7**, "Establish an innovation implementation system for the next programming period and design a methodology (manual) for implementers of innovation projects", is presented as the separate parts of the final report, which are:

Design of a system of innovation implementation (Appendix 6), which contains starting points for the implementation of social innovation support of a systemic and strategic nature with emphasis

on its competence and the importance of its principles, i.e. what and why it is important during implementation, and a recommended procedure for a system of the implementation for each of steps in the future programming period. The second part elaborates on possible approaches in order to fulfil the implementation principles and the recommended settings. The third section covers the key concepts of the topic of social innovation and its strategic and regulatory context in the time of creation of this document, i.e. August 2012.

Proceedings of good practice in innovation projects (Appendix 7) present 16 case studies of innovation projects identified in the framework of the evaluation task 4. Each study contains basic information about the project (objectives, activities, impacts, etc.), a description of innovation and further specification of the characteristics of innovation, a description of the cycle of innovation, mainstreaming and impact of innovation. Part of the case studies is also the diagram showing the theory of change, implementation of the project and its impacts.

Guide for implementers of innovation projects (Appendix 8), which aims to inform (potential) applicants for public support about basic concepts and possibilities of approach to the creation and implementation of projects in the field of social innovation. It explains the basic concepts of the concept of social innovation and project implementation and a wider (strategic and regulatory) context.

3 The Evaluation Context

The main goal of the contract *Evaluation of the Implementation of the Principle of Innovation in the HREOP* has been a mid-term evaluation of the HREOP's innovative actions support and an ex-post evaluation of the CIP EQUAL's innovation support. The conclusions particularly answer the question, in what extent HREOP supports innovation potentially able to catalyse the positive changes, and evaluates the conditions of its origin and exploitation. The evaluation also provides recommendations for the next (or for the current) programming period in terms of the HREOP's and ESF's innovative actions support.

The evaluation's specific goals are:

- relevance assessment of the HREOP's chosen topics of innovative actions,
- innovation concept assessment of the HREOP and an analysis of the foreign and EC's approach,
- identification of the HREOP's innovation projects and products and their thematic structure,
- processing of a methodology proposal for the quality assessment of innovative products,
- elaboration of 10 case studies – best/promising practices of innovation projects,
- evaluation of the ESF's Product Database as a tool for the dissemination and exploitation of innovations,
- impact assessment of the CIP EQUAL's projects and their use in the HREOP,
- proposal of the innovation support system in the ESF and
- processing of the methodical material for the purposes of the innovation projects executives.

4 Course of the investigation and the methods used

The engagement took place from November 25, 2011 to 24 September 24, 2012. Within each of the tasks this chapter briefly describes the main methods used and relevant sources of data and information. The full outputs of the partial surveys are presented in the technical part of the report.

Task 1 Evaluate the relevance of the HREOP's innovation themes and their reflection in the calls in the context of socioeconomic development and progress in the HREOP's implementation

To solve this task, the following analysis of documents was made: a metaevaluation of the reports assessing the HREOP's progress, socioeconomic context and related phenomena, a content analysis of all the HREOP's calls, and an analysis of the results of the evaluation process². In relation to the task 3 (identify innovation projects and assessing the level of application of innovation in the HREOP's areas of support), the results of foreign and Czech expert panel were used, together with the conclusions regarding the results of best / promising practices. Furthermore, the depth interviews and focus groups with representatives of the MA / IB, who participated in the call publishing and evaluation process (as a part of the evaluation), the total number of seven interviews with employees of the HREOP's MA / IB were made and four focus groups with employees of the HREOP's MA / IB were organised).³

² Partial results of the survey are given in the technical report (partial analyses 2 and 3).

³ The list of interviews and focus groups (incl. respondents) is given in the technical report.

Task 2 Evaluate the current concept of innovation in the HREOP and in ESF abroad, and suggest suitable definition of innovation in the context of the current state of implementation of the HREOP.

The basis for the task solution was the analysis of foreign practice and the analysis of related documents, particularly the definition of innovation and the identification of suitable foreign examples⁴. In addition, a foreign expert panel had been organised, widely mapping possible themes for social innovation with the active participation of 125 experts⁵. This panel was followed by an expert panel in the Czech Republic at a later stage, where the themes were presented to national experts for a review, when there were received 510 reviews (responses)⁶.

An integral part of the task was a metaevaluation of evaluation reports, dealing with effectiveness, efficiency and quality of innovative products, processes and environments, analysis of monitoring indicators, monitoring reports and other documents on outputs and results (with a focus on innovation projects and products and related indicators).

Following the activities of Task 1, information from the depth interviews and focus groups with representatives of the HREOP's MA / IB was also used and the electronic survey was focused on the evaluators of project proposals⁷.

Task 3 Identify innovation projects and their products, divide them into thematic areas and assess the degree of innovation implementation in the HREOP's areas of support.

An analysis was carried out together with the evaluation of a project sample for the solution of tasks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6. The analysis consisted of an analysis of data available, especially from the IS MONIT and an analysis of the HREOP in order to obtain an overview of the outputs and outcomes of the projects, identification of innovations in various areas of support and thematic areas and determination of sample. For the purposes of the survey, a project sample was created, taking into account: 1) the type of program (HREOP, CIP EQUAL), 2) the priority axes and areas of support, 3) type of project (grant, individual), 4) the results of material evaluation, 5) project statuses (especially accepted – not-accepted) and last but not least, 6) the implementation phase, with regard to the continuity with the case studies (see evaluation task 4). Altogether 562 projects were analysed. The expert team then studied all available background material and data, and assigned values of these characteristics to each of the projects, namely it was possible to assign 0-2 points of innovation in 12 monitored characteristics in total: Necessity, Complexity, Novelty, Improvement, Process, Target Groups, Partnerships, Practice, Dissemination, Sustainability, Initiation and Evaluation. So it was a quantified subjective expert evaluation, on the basis of a predetermined range and observed characteristics⁸.

Task 4 Compile the methodology for the quality evaluation of innovation projects and products, and process a case study for each thematic area about the implementation of an innovative project, which represents an example of good / promising practices

For selected projects of the task 3, an in-depth analysis was conducted, focused among other things on identification of a real impact of the project and on acquiring background documents for the creation of the logical framework of the project, incl. interviews with representatives of an implementer. On the basis of these investigations, case studies were prepared, which form a separate Appendix 7 of this report. When selecting projects, both the thematic area in which the project was selected classified and the HREOP's areas of support were taken into account. The most important

⁴ Partial output from the survey is presented in the technical part of the report (sub-analysis 4).

⁵ Partial output from the survey is presented in the technical part of the report (sub-analysis 5A).

⁶ Partial output from the survey is presented in the technical part of the report (sub-analysis 5B).

⁷ Partial output from the survey is presented in the technical part of the report (sub-analysis 6).

⁸ Details are given in the technical part of the report (sub-analysis 7).

parameter for selection was, however, the result of an expert evaluation of the project as part of the Task 3, i.e. the evaluation of innovation, which was further verified (validated) through a field research.

Task 5 Evaluate the ESF Products Database as a tool for the dissemination and promotion of innovative products, and suggest its amendment (both content and functional)

An information audit and an analysis of information and communication activities within the ESF Products Database formed the basis for the evaluation⁹. Moreover, a series of surveys on users of the ESF Products databases¹⁰ and interviews with the creators and database administrators were conducted. Following the partial final outputs (particularly a proposal of a system of innovation implementation system), a benchmarking and a comparison with similar databases in the Czech Republic and the EU were conducted, and the recommendations were prepared, based on the ways of diffusion of innovation.

Task 6 Perform an impact evaluation of the CIP EQUAL

An analysis of available information on the CIP EQUAL in order to obtain an overview of the outputs and outcomes of its projects and determining the sample took place alongside the development of Task 3 (Identify innovation projects¹¹), and we proceeded similarly to the HREOP projects analysis, with an emphasis on evaluating the impact of interventions. Further, an analysis of documents (especially reports evaluating the implementation of the CIP EQUAL and its partial aspects, the framework of CIP EQUAL) was conducted, the interviews and the focus groups were evaluated at the MA / IB levels, and the findings from investigations carried out on the HREOP projects as part of Task 3 were used, specifically the identification of the links between the projects evaluated as innovative and other projects under the CIP EQUAL.

Task 7 Establish an innovation implementation system for the next programming period and set up a methodology (manual) for implementers of innovation projects

Within preparations of a design of the implementation system, the findings and conclusions of previous tasks were taken into account and by the end of the evaluation process, a simulation of the processes of publishing, assessment, monitoring and reporting was conducted with a group of representatives of the MA / IB and potential applicants (their representatives). The aim of the simulation was to verify the design based on the reality and the customization of individual steps and recommendations given the level of current awareness and knowledge of the potential stakeholders, both at the MA / IB and applicants level and, if necessary, at the evaluators level. Design of the implementation system forms separate Appendix 6 of the final report and the Guide forms separate Appendix 8.

⁹ Partial output from the survey is presented in the technical part of the report (sub-analysis 8 and 9).

¹⁰ Partial output from the survey is presented in the technical part of the report (sub-analysis 10A and 10B).

¹¹ Details are given in the technical part of the report (sub-analysis 7).

5 Main findings

Note: Due to the efforts to maintain a logical sequence, Task 2 findings appear first in this chapter (the current concept of innovation in ESF abroad) and subsequently the findings of the Task 1 appear (relevance of the HREOP's innovation themes and their reflection in the calls of the HREOP). The main findings are further divided according to the evaluation questions.

5.1 Task 2 Evaluate the current concept of innovation in the HREOP and in ESF abroad, and suggest suitable definition of innovation in the context of the current state of implementation of the HREOP

The next chapter presents the findings of **Task 2: Evaluate the current concept of innovation in the HREOP and in ESF abroad, and suggest suitable definition on innovation in the context of the current state of implementation of the HREOP**

Evaluation questions:

1. What are the current concepts of innovation (incl. EC's concept) relevant for the implementation of the ESF and the interest of the contracting authority?
2. To what extent is the current HREOP's concept of innovation appropriate?
3. What foreign approaches to the concept and application of innovation in the ESF can be used in the Czech Republic?
4. What is the role of international cooperation in the application of innovation in the ESF, is it appropriate (necessary) to connect both principles?
5. What are the effect and the weight of related principles, such as partnerships, mainstreaming, etc.?
6. To what extent would it be possible and appropriate to align the approach to innovation within the ESF with the principles of the System of support of research, development and innovations in Czech Republic (see the Research, Development and Innovation Council <http://www.vyzkum.cz>)?
7. Is the evaluation of project applications, reporting and monitoring of innovative products appropriately adjusted?

Evaluation question 2.1. What are the current concepts of innovation (incl. EC's concept) relevant for the implementation of the ESF and the interest of the contracting authority?

Existing definitions of innovation always contain some element of novelty and improvements. OECD Oslo manual (in the third edition, 2005) states the traditional definition of technological and non-technological innovation in the business sector (industry and services) and in this form it is used in the Act on the Support of Research, Experimental Development and Innovation in the Czech Republic. Innovation is defined within the manual as implementation of a new or significantly improved product /service or process (technological innovation), marketing or organizational process (non-technological innovation) in corporate practice, work organisation or external relations. The novelty must be identified at least by the company. Innovation brings companies economic benefits from the application on the market. The **creation of knowledge** itself is changing, innovation process is less linear, more interactive, with a number of short-term and long-term feedbacks between different phases that reflect social needs (demand). It means development of new experimental collective approaches, which include various stakeholders, incl. users and interested parties - an example can be a user-initiated and community-based innovation (originally to be found especially in information technology area these innovative actions are spreading to other areas). Ability to integrate social needs in the innovation process adds value to products and services, both private and public actors and is considered a competitive advantage.

A universally valid definition of social innovation is not available, but based on the available resources¹² it is possible to formulate a definition for functional assessment of their support. Social innovation (i.e. innovation in social purpose and the means to achieve them) means, in the current concept, new (and, compared to available alternatives, more effective, more efficient, more sustainable, fairer) solutions (products, processes, services, organisational structures, technologies, ideas, regulations, institutional forms, functions and roles, social movements, interventions) that meet urgent social (or societal) needs while creating new social relations or cooperation. The process of social interactions, which aims to achieve a certain result, has the participatory nature. It involves diverse actors and stakeholders who have their own interest in the solution of a social problem, and strengthens the position of beneficiaries (empowerment) - innovation is developed and distributed with their participation. Empowerment is a prerequisite for sustainable innovation. The process of social interactions itself is the result of innovation because it creates a social capital. Nature of social interactions identifies three types of social innovation as a solution of social demand (needs), societal challenges and a system change.

Social innovation creates a social / societal benefit or yield, which belong primarily to society as a whole rather than to private individuals, as well as new social practices, relationships or partnerships, new institutional forms and procedures, encouraging a change of behaviour. Participation of end-users in partnerships as co-authors of a change increases the effectiveness of innovative actions (the change is implemented not only for citizens but also with their part). Social innovation can take place in all institutional sectors and within their interaction. Unlike corporate innovations, social innovations are not primarily motivated by business interests, commercial opportunities or profits, but they can include them. Definition of social innovation and access to them is further described in a separate Appendix 8, in the form of a guide for creating and implementation of innovation projects or within the design of implementation (separate Appendix 6).

The year 1996 is considered the beginning of the development of key topics in the field of innovation in the EU, when the First Action Plan on innovation was adapted. Although the supporting documents mentioned the importance of societal aspects of innovation (innovation and society), it is rather limited to their support role (innovation culture). A division of innovation in products and processes is mentioned, quoting the Oslo manual. Besides the technical characteristics of innovation and links to activities of research, development and technical development, other types of innovative actions and their factors (labour organization, the quality of human resources) are emphasized as well. The key segment of innovation are innovative firms (with an emphasis on small and medium enterprises), which, thanks to innovations, achieve economic yield (innovation may also bring social benefits).

The turning point for innovation policy in the EU represents a formulation of the **Lisbon strategy** in March 2000, and related documents, which provide a framework of actions until 2010 and are reflected in the regulation and organization of support programs, including the Structural Funds for the periods 2000-2006 and 2007-2013. Ongoing review of the Lisbon strategy, however, brings

¹² E.g. Basset, J. *Innovation Policy Workshop No. 6*, Brussels, PRO INNO Europe 2010. [accessed 19. 12. 2011]. Available at: http://grips-public.mediactive.fr/knowledge_base/dl/901/orig_doc_file/
BEPA, *Empowering people driving change: Social innovation in the European Union*, Bureau of European Policy Advisers 2010. [accessed 19. 12. 2011]. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/bepa/pdf/publications_pdf/social_innovation.pdf
Financing Social Impact. Funding social innovation in Europe – mapping the way forward. Social innovation Europe, 2011. [accessed 19. 12. 2011]. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf_getdocument.cfm?doc_id=7048
Murray, R., Caulier-Grice and Geoff Mulgan, *The Open Book of Social Innovation*. The Young Foundation and NESTA 2010. [accessed 19. 12. 2011]. Available at: www.youngfoundation.org/publications/reports/the-open-book-social-innovation-march-2010

disenchantment with current developments (particularly in terms of employment). Trying a new start for the Lisbon Strategy as the Partnership for Growth and Jobs in 2005 initiated the creation of the National Reform Programmes (2005-2008), updated for the period 2008-2010, in which, however, the economic crisis hit in parallel with the frustrations of failure of so-called Lisbon (and related) goals (structural indicators).

In the **previous programming period** (2000-2006), the ESF supported more than 20,000 Local Development and Employment Initiatives and Territorial Employment Pacts (EUR 1.2 billion) and thus contributed to capacity building and networking of local authorities, NGOs and social partners in order to implement active inclusion policies. The EQUAL Initiative (EUR 3.2 billion) linked nearly 20,000 partners in the development, testing and validation of innovative solutions that integrated disadvantaged groups into the labour market. It is the largest programme to support social innovation in the field of social inclusion and employment.

Evaluation of socially innovative outputs at EU level has shown a number of suggestions for the formulation of future support policies. The most important strategic tool was **partnerships** of a rather small scale, with an internal management of a good quality, a good mix of partners, with the participation of policy makers, and with a shared responsibility among the partners according to their qualifications. The ex-post evaluation of the EQUAL initiative involved 924 innovations, of which 35% supported the return to/ entering the labour market. An influence on the European employment strategy was evaluated positively, while mainstreaming capacities and long-term effects for the final recipients lagged behind expectations¹³.

Novelty and improvement (superiority) represented two main criteria for identifying innovations created within the EQUAL program. The novelty of innovation was defined according to two aspects: (1) **the way of innovation** – by an assumption of process or activity from another context with only a small adjustment, active adaptation from a different context, new developments, and (2) **the type of innovation** – i.e. innovation of goals, process or context. A missing market fulfilment as a criterion of economic (business) innovation represented the mainstreaming differentiated in vertical, horizontal (to the supranational level) and maintenance / continuing (see the Ex-post Evaluation of the EQUAL 2010). On average, Member States reported 30% of the results as validated innovation, but at significantly different levels of the national evaluation capacity¹⁴).

Based on the experience with the evaluation of EQUAL, it is necessary to take into account some specific aspects while measuring / evaluating social innovations. First, the social innovation has rather **sporadically an immediate impact**. Timeframe of assessment is therefore necessary to adapt individually. Another problem is the **evaluation of the anticipated innovations** that have not yet been implemented. In this case, it is necessary to consider the idea itself and its ability to fulfil the needs unmet (expected outcomes and impacts) or the novelty implied and a disruptivity of chosen procedure. When evaluating the outcomes of social innovation, it is appropriate to focus on the welfare aspect, i.e. beyond the concept of GDP (social and environmental indicators are considered as important as economic ones). Collecting information for the evaluation should include the entire process of innovation and the full spectrum of stakeholders (authors and recipients).

¹³ *Ex-post evaluation of the EQUAL Community Initiative (2000-2006)*. METIS. Vienna 2010.

¹⁴ The Portuguese “seven qualitative criteria” approach to the validation of innovative products is considered an example of a good practice. These criteria are: innovation (uniqueness, value added, support of new forms of learning and qualifications / skills, varied and complementary contributions from different partners), empowerment, suitability, usefulness, accessibility, equality and transferability (Validation of Innovative Product, Equal Managing Authority Portugal 2007), http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/0706-msf-pt-leaf_en.pdf

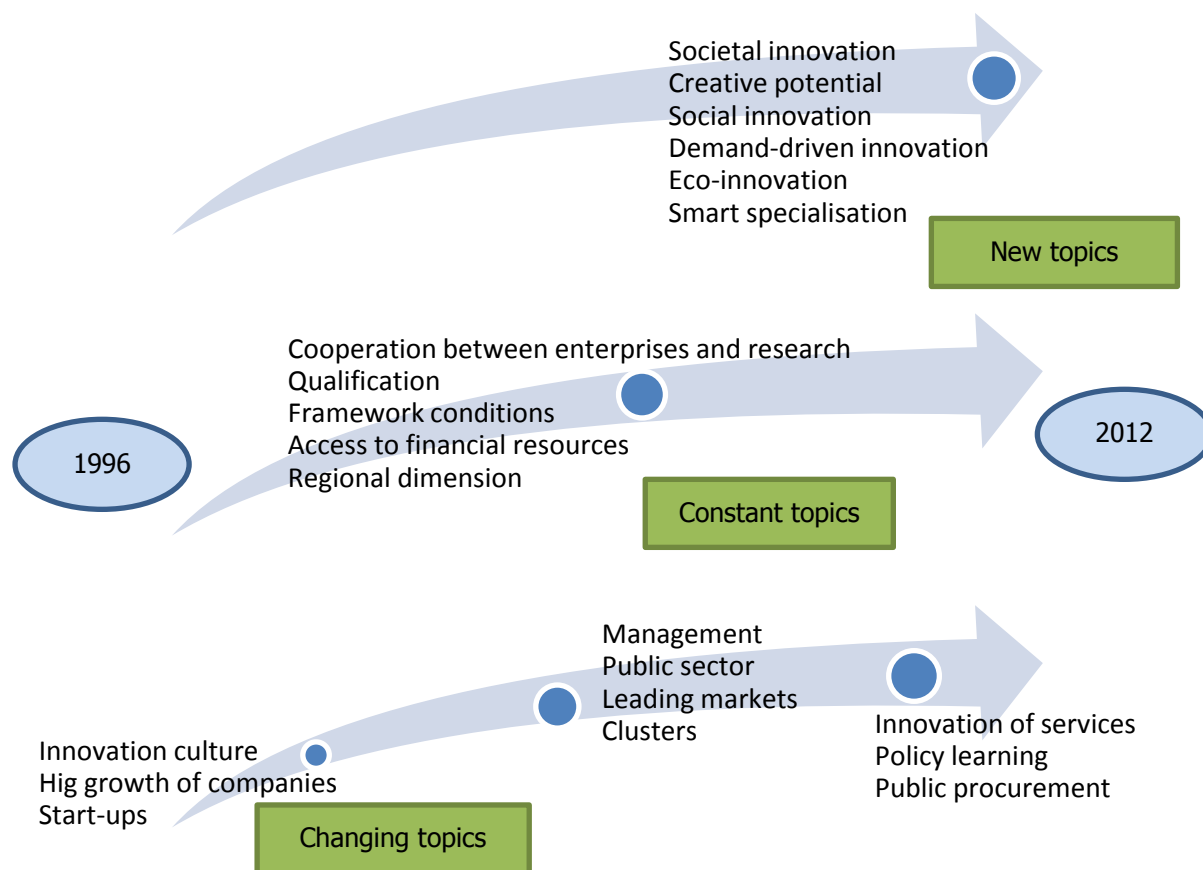
A diversity of activities and projects related to social innovation limits availability of information on the performance and costs of implemented policies and procedures. The impact of social innovation is difficult to assess quantitatively. E.g. the number of initiatives and participants or beneficiaries are only poor indicators of real benefits of social innovation contributing to solve a specific social problem (improving quality of a service) or social challenges and even more difficult to change behaviour. The benefits of effective social programs are rarely monetised. If it is difficult to evaluate the actual innovation policy, the more it applies to the impact and scope of innovation.

Another problem is the lack of culture (expertise) in the ex-post evaluation of the implementers of social innovation projects. So far the only program at EU level, where social innovation represented a specific output, has been the EQUAL. **However, if social innovation is not an explicit goal, it is either not specifically evaluated.** In addition, the evaluation is usually carried out through questionnaires or analysis of costs and benefits that are subject of the evaluator's subjectivity (and expertise). Measuring the impact is usually based on individual stories or examples of successful practice. There is a large amount of evaluation methodologies, but their use for social innovation is still limited and unsystematic.

The review of the Lisbon strategy (the Kok Report, 2004¹⁵) showed that growth (driven by knowledge and innovation in the traditional, i.e. mostly technological, respectively economical concepts) and job creation do not automatically guarantee **solutions to social needs and problems** (especially poverty reduction). The renewed Sustainable Development Strategy (2006) and the Renewed Social Agenda of the EU (2008) stress the need for answers to **new social reality and challenges**, such as climate change, an ageing population, a rising unemployment and exclusion (poverty), further the amplified effects of the economic crisis. New challenges require new solutions and new ways of their implementation.

¹⁵ Facing the challenge: The Lisbon strategy for growth and employment. Report from the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok, Luxembourg 2004: OOPEC.

Figure 1: Development of key topics in the field of innovation in Europe



Compared to the traditional concept of innovation within the Lisbon strategy, the emphasis appears to make a direct link between economic and social dimensions of innovation development and the area of social innovation is becoming the domain of innovation policy. Deteriorating fiscal conditions increase the importance of social innovation in solving social problems. Their significance is emphasised in (in addition to other priorities) the **Europe 2020 Strategy** (and especially in its pillar initiative **Innovation Union**). Social innovation mobilises creativity in creating solutions and better use of resources, promote innovation and learning society. All types of actors can be innovative in creating products and services they produce.

Other Europe 2020's pillar initiatives fall into the inclusive growth objective, i.e. the Agenda for new skills and jobs and the European platform against poverty and exclusion. The Youth Opportunities Initiative has specifically focused on unemployment of this group and, within its framework, on support for social entrepreneurs. For the period from 2014, the Programme of Social change and Innovation has been formulated, the Cohesion Policy 2014-2020.

Within the Innovation Union, there are three measures given in relation to social innovation:

- (1) Launch of European Social Innovation pilot providing expertise and a networked "virtual hub" for social entrepreneurs and the public and third sectors; promotion of social innovation throughout the innovation cycle through the ESF in connection with the investment in this area in the past decade, in parallel with the support of innovative social experiments developed within the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion; social innovation should become a mainstream accent in the next generation of ESF programs, Member States have been already invited to increase efforts to promote social innovation through the ESF,

- (2) A significant support for an extensive research programme on public sector and social innovation with a focus on measurement and evaluation, financing and other barriers to the development and expansion (scaling up), an immediate (since 2012) implementation of the European Public Sector Innovation Scoreboard (to benchmark public sector innovation in the future), a discussion of the appropriateness of new learning and networking experiences for public sector leaders at European level
- (3) Consultation of the social partners on the possibility of the spread of the knowledge economy to all occupational levels and all sectors and create a labour market strategy for the health and social care sector.

Coordinated actions at EU level are considered to be very important for a cross-border dimension of social innovation, and for the multi-level governance of their agenda. Coordination also facilitates the dissemination of good practice between Member States. The Lisbon Strategy has highlighted the Open Method of Coordination as a catalyst for change of national policies for the employment strategy and poverty reduction, and subsequently for the modernization of social protection as well. Shared learning, expert evaluations are combined with the evaluation and validation tools and the results are presented to the social partners and other representatives of civil society. Development and coordination of EU policy in the field of **employment, social affairs and inclusion** are supported by the PROGRESS programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013). For 2014-2020, the EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation is formulated, interconnecting the PROGRESS programme, EURES and the European Progress Microfinance Facility.

Development of innovation and knowledge society is referred to within the objectives of the Structural funds (both national and regional levels). The list of priority topics reflects traditional approach, i.e. the business, technological and R&D-based (Research and technological development, innovation and entrepreneurship) innovation and related areas as one of the characteristics of the ICT (Information Society). The topics of human resources and employment include support of entrepreneurship and innovation (rather re-active approach to improve the adaptability of the workforce and firms) and of explicit organisational innovation (the creation and dissemination of innovation and more productive forms of work organisation). Improving human capital refers to updating skills of training personnel reflecting innovation and the knowledge-based economy and the development of skills and cross-sector networking for research and innovation (targeted at R&D workforce, incl. potential).

In **the current programming period** (2007-2013), the ESF funds are directed to (1) building institutional capacity, mostly in public sector, through training, reorganisation of functions, roles and competencies, strengthening regional and local government, modernizing and improving the quality of processes of public services, policy and programme development, strengthening cooperation and coordination, promoting social dialogue, support for partners, NGOs and e-government, (2) international learning and cooperation through the experience sharing, self-learning mobility, joint development, testing, validation, and application of solutions implemented successfully in other countries, (3) innovative actions for growth: (a) smart - new forms of work organisation and better use of employees' skills and resources to increase productivity, new approaches to lifelong learning, the development of human resources in research and innovation sector, cooperation between the research and the business sector, harmonisation of professional and personal life), (b) sustainable - new qualifications for the climate change and sustainable development, eco-innovation in the third sector activities, (c) inclusive - new ways to tackle with unemployment by inclusive entrepreneurship, creation employment for young people, age management, social inclusion of vulnerable groups.

The ESF regulation for 2007-2013 refers to the experience of the EQUAL initiative, to be integrated into the support provided, particularly participation of target groups, identification of policy issues and their subsequent mainstreaming, innovative and experimental procedures, access to projects and their

management by NGOs organisations (other highlighted experience included the integration of migrants, especially refugees; the methodologies of international cooperation; the care for marginalised groups in the labour market; the impact of social problems on the internal market). An important aspect of the ESF are considered innovative international and inter-regional activities to promote cooperation, notably through sharing of information, experience, results and good practices through development of complementary approaches and coordinated or joint action (Article 3, paragraph 6). At the end of 2007, the Learning for Change initiative was launched in order to support the learning culture and development of infrastructure for social innovation and shared learning, in particular through the learning networks of ESF managing authorities, implementation bodies and strategic stakeholders, using the help of ESF managers during implementation of international activities in regional and national programmes, through creating a database of good practice success stories, and through shared tools using and capacity building in the bodies of the ESF.

The ESF's focus on innovative actions (on their support and mainstreaming) is mentioned as a common characteristic of the implementation of the goals and priorities of the operational programmes (Article 3, paragraph 5). Specifically, the managing body is required to choose the themes for the funding of innovation in the context of partnership and to define appropriate implementation arrangements. Selected themes are communicated to a Monitoring Committee (Article 7). Annual and final implementation reports shall contain the synthesis of implementation of innovative actions, including the presentation of the themes and their results, dissemination and mainstreaming (Article 10, paragraph e)

Innovative actions are thus mentioned in the related regulations, but a concrete specification is not available. Only **basic types of innovation** are distinguished, i.e. the process, objective and context innovation. The monitoring, evaluation and measuring results, outcomes and impacts themselves remain problematic. The experience from the EQUAL programme with applying **the principle of innovation** was the basis for its update in ESF programs for 2007-2013 and for the formulation of the implementation rules¹⁶ (proposal to the system of implementation is described in detail in a separate Appendix 6 and is a part of the recommendations of the evaluation report).

Effective promotion of innovation as an integral part of all operational programmes requires a focus on the real policy needs, sufficient resources, credibility of change resulting benefits, integration into the policy cycle at a high level (i.e. not only the perception of support for innovation as a side activity), modulation from the aid granted using standard tools, testing the feasibility and accuracy, bi-directional mechanisms to address key challenges and priorities (bottom-up, top-down), improvements or new approaches to mainstream policy and practice (i.e. current approaches are no longer adequate, the proposed innovation is feasible in terms of resources and the interests of stakeholders and are acceptable in terms of political and public support and understanding of the need for change). Member Countries have the space for innovative approaches in operational programmes according to their needs, including resource allocation, for example by promoting innovative activities in each priority axis or only in selected ones. The rules for implementation of the principle of innovation in the ESF operational programmes for the period 2007-2013 are divided into five areas following the pillars of quality programming (strategic orientation and coherence, participation of stakeholders, monitoring and evaluation, delivery planning).

Support and management of innovation requires, in comparison with standard (routine) activities, more **resources** for planning, management, evaluation and mainstreaming, which must be taken into account at the national level in allocating adequate technical assistance. The quality of innovative

¹⁶ The Principle of Innovation in the New ESF programmes (2007-2013), EQUAL Managing Authorities of Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and United Kingdom 2006 (June), http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/data/document/200606-reflection-note-inno_en.pdf

actions and their results is significantly affected by the availability of a programme's professional support services. The implementation of benefits of an innovation activity and transfer of results requires an effective **coordination** at different levels: (a) at the level of a member state, the innovation themes identified must correspond to policy needs and a wider reform agenda based on an interdepartmental coordination. Ensuring support for reform requires the inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders at all levels. (b) at the level of the operational priorities of the program, e.g. in the form of political steering group for innovative actions representing the principal users, common selection criteria and mechanisms, common support services for projects, coherent validation methods and transfer mechanisms. (c) at EU level, especially among member countries to share good practices and other experiences. (d) at EU level, strengthening the strategic dimension of cohesion policy to a better integration of the Europe-wide priorities into regional and national development programmes. To evaluate the **quality of integration** of innovative actions in the ESF programme 2007-2013, a (self-) evaluation of related information contained in the documents of ex-ante evaluation of the NSRF and operational programmes has been conducted.

At the level of EU Member States, there are presented **examples of approaches in the technical part of the final report** (sub-analysis no. 4), as well as below as the findings for the evaluation question 2.3 What foreign approaches to the concept and application of innovation in the ESF can be used in the Czech Republic. Here we would only summarize that most countries report only very general and therefore similar innovation themes usually within the selected axes. Exceptionally, a specific axis for innovation projects with a separate budget and specific implementation arrangements has been designed.

Based on the basic division of the approaches to social innovation, we can identify their (1) sector types, (2) phases, (3) barriers and solutions, (4) future priorities (paragraphs 3 and 4 are discussed in the answer to question 1.1.7.2):

(1) Sector types of social innovation

The public sector (public administration) is inherently averse to risk-taking and innovative actions. The reasons for this type of obstacles are cost-based budgeting, inflexible organisational structure (a union hierarchy), rigid administrative and supervisory rules, lack of career motivation etc. These conditions often inhibit new approaches and prefer a standardised solution. The innovation process in the public sector tends to a centralisation and inconsistency (spasmodicness) and its impact is further limited by the manner and form provided to the service user. An alternative is to outsource activities by market vendors or third sector. In order to increase innovation of public sector itself, a systemic change of the way of production and allocation of resources and their management requires is required.

Household as an informal economic unit is an important source of social innovation, which can subsequently grow into the third and public or market sector. As an example we can mention the new forms of interaction between individuals in the form of open source software and social networking around the websites on specific issues originally generated beyond market and state structures. Through such types of cooperation, the disperse systems of innovation and mutual support arise, with the vague possibility of involvement of other sectors for their development. Another more and more acute example, e.g. in connection with ageing populations, is the time and any other costs devoted to volunteering or helping in the family or neighbourhood and possible (monetary/non-monetary) compensation.

- *Social movements*: our space, grassroots campaigns for social change
- *Informal reciprocity*: user groups, networks for collaborative production, mutual assistance, new models of care and support
- *Creating a family as a place of innovation*: co-operative housing for mutual support, bulk services for networks of households, home extensions
- *Prosumption*: cooperation of producers and consumers, users as producers
- *Public spaces for social innovation*: neighbourhood web sites, community centres, expansion of public spaces for domestic production, protests through activities, occupying streets, street mobilisation as an innovative unit
- *Informal trading systems and currencies*: currencies for social care, informal currencies, time banking
- *Online platforms for collective action*: co-production platforms, platforms for gifts, platform for bulk shopping, platform for aggregating negotiations
- *Valorisation of volunteering*: training for volunteers, flexible conditions for a formal employment, receiving recognition of household's time for the social production
- *Specification of ownership (propertising)*: open licensing, creating information sources, new forms of ownership

The market sector is increasingly penetrated with the social sector for several reasons. In general, a business is developing in the social sectors - health, education and social care. Within social innovation, companies are looking for the source of new business opportunities, including human capital and social reputation. Social enterprises (or their clusters) represent the most important segment, i.e. those with profit, but focused on social objectives. In this case, keeping of the market position may be a problem with the unavailability of a diversified equity or support legislation or regulation that would offset the disadvantage compared to mainstream businesses.

- *Markets for social goods*: social indexes, social stock exchanges, markets for positive and negative social goods, social markets
- *Training and development of human resources*: networks of mutual support, lectures on social entrepreneurship, education for non-profit managers, social economy requalification for business managers, specialised educational institutions for social economy
- *Cards and currencies*: for the local social economy
- *Information*: social movement campaigns for corporate meetings, consumer guide and assessment, highlighting a premium for social innovation (fair trade), and evaluation systems for social goods
- *Institutions of a social financing*: electronic market for social investment, social wholesale banks, angels for social venture capital, bank financing for social enterprises, providers of private capital for social projects (projects combining social and financial yields), co-operatives for financial guarantees, loan companies, co-operative banks, ethical banks
- *Social financing*: funding associated with the expert consultancy before starting a business; pro-growth philanthropic investments; investment readiness support; charitable loans, bonds and capital; individual loans; micro loans for micro production; social venture funds; targeted investment; ethical investment
- *Partnerships in social entrepreneurship*: the participation of enterprises in the evaluation of services; social use of commercial technologies; voluntary social commitments of companies; partnerships of corporations and social enterprises; hybrid business models combining entrepreneurial capacity with social objectives; corporate social responsibility, corporate non-profit management of a social provision

- *Models of social entrepreneurship:* foundations as owners of corporations, expanding of a co-operative economy in production; pro-profit development of new social models; hybrid enterprises with social objectives; consumer cooperatives; mutual social enterprises; social enterprises

The third sector (grant economy) is the most common source for social innovation, but it rather produces new approaches (ideas) than to change the whole system. The biggest challenge is the stability (reliability) of financial resources and the appropriateness of their type. The development of new support tools and the regulatory, administrative and evaluation framework for the creation and application of innovation are therefore desirable.

- *Networking:* Networks for inspiration and links; national and global networks
- *Legislation and regulation:* change in the property and its yield (annuity) for social purposes, territorial planning and tax allowance for creative locations
- *Training and formation:* internships, training for future leaders, training for social entrepreneurs, tools of personal evaluation, development of qualification and skills in the third sector
- *Targeted investments:* venture capital for philanthropy, strategic investments to transform the social outcomes of the sector, the philanthropic mutual funds
- *Improving the grant relationship:* platforms for donors, philanthropic electronic auctions, intermediaries for non-financial contributions
- *Support packages:* support for the capacity building and support services for innovation
- *Providing grants:* new forms of grants, their different purposes, new financial instruments and their impact on drawing from funds

Innovation intermediaries are individuals, organisations, networks or spaces which connect people, ideas and resources, e.g. while incubating innovations, connecting innovative entrepreneurs and the possibilities of their support or dissemination of innovation through networks and collaboration. Examples include platforms, networks, institutions, hubs, teams, champions.

(2) Phases

The process of social innovation can be divided into phases since the inception of the idea to the impact of innovation. Phases do not always proceed sequentially, e.g. innovation can start directly on the ground, and they can overlap. Identification of the phases of social innovation enables customisation of a desirable support for the development of innovative actions.

Suggestions and inspiration: Identification of the problem and its cause (diagnosis) is the first step to the solution, the implementation of innovation requires getting the attention of influential actors, the visibility of problems and their manifestation, the application of new perspectives, the data collection, assessment and accessibility (information flow), the using of research and mapping to identify hidden needs and unused assets, openness to such triggers which induce demand for action / intervention:

- *From symptom to cause:* models of system thinking, diagnostic professions, diagnostic process
- *Attracting attention:* campaigns, the user and public pressure, complainant groups
- *Problem visibility and materialisation:* the attention of media (media spotlight), banners for visibility
- *New perspectives:* thinkers and artists on-site, changing roles, generative scripts, generative paradigms
- *Circulation of information:* tools for the transfer of knowledge within the system, data observed by citizens, integrated data centred on the user, feedback systems

- *Research and mapping:* a literature overview, ethnographic research techniques, self-exploring communities; mapping the flows, systems, physical assets, the identification of different needs and capacities, mapping the needs
- *Starters and inspiration:* symbolic changes, new technologies, new evidence, poor performance, savings and improving efficiency, crisis

Suggestions and ideas: Specialized institutions, such as animators of innovation (design labs, think and do tanks), are focused at the development of promising ideas; a wide range of techniques includes facilitation of an engaged participation of stakeholders, thereby increasing its efficiency; new communications technologies has gained ground in addition to personal meetings. Governmental efforts at all levels to increase civic participation can also take place in various forms. Open innovation is the process of obtaining diffuse and collective intelligence of large number of subjects (crowd sourcing). Different or new ways of thinking and formulating ideas on solutions are formed using special creative techniques.

- *Institutions:* lab design, do tanks, think tanks
- *Facilitating participation:* seating arrangements, participatory workshops, open air events, the dialog cafes, webinars, virtual meetings, seed camps, conferences and workshops for networking and learning
- *Participation:* a legislative theatre, citizens' panels, juries, petitions, parliamentary structures for the development of civic initiatives, participatory planning processes for engagement of children, platforms for engagement of citizens, government-initiated extensive surveys, participatory development of ideas, the development of methods for
- *Open innovation:* banks of ideas, competitions, calls for ideas
- *Different thinking:* a space for a new approach to the problem or making use of opportunities, positive deviations, user as a starting point of solution, perception of extremes
- *Presenting solutions:* engaging citizens through media, circles of quality, continuous improvement methods, theatre forums, methods of creative thinking, re-designing services with the participation of users and producers, user-driven design

Prototyping and pilots: A promising idea should be tested in practice, often by trial and error method and continuous improvement. Social innovation usually tends to a quick application and subsequent learning early in the course of implementation of the idea. Besides keeping costs down, a feedback is important from users and experts. The initial phases of the implementation of new ideas often require specific funding instruments.

- *Financing new ideas:* the creation of new markets through public procurement, tendering the results, direct commissions, financing public and private social partnerships, collective crediting, vouchers, payment for the time spent, domestic financial capacity, financing incubation, financing networks, awards and public competitions, providing small grants and grants for initial ideas
- *Prototypes, pilots and experiments:* open testing, demonstrations of integrated pilot systems, beta testing, proof of concept, slow or rapid prototyping

Sustainability: Only a small part of the ideas survives testing and pilots. Provision of a service or product on a sustainable basis, however, also requires the development of an economic model to secure a future financing. Public feedback may be essential, but more objective evaluation methods can reduce the risk of distorted assessment. The supply side, i.e. functional and cost-effective product or service, must be in accordance with demand, so someone has to be willing to pay for them.

- *Sustaining innovations through the public sector:* public regulation, programmes, policies, cooperation of business with the public sector
- *Risk financing:* social impact bonds, crowd funding, public share issues, equity, loans and grants financing

- *Relationship capital:* mobilizing consumers as producers, ranking volunteer work, the development of qualifications and cultures for development, open forms of intellectual property, open events, interactive museums, marketing and branding, web presentation, user feedback systems, sustaining openness
- *Organizational and management models:* a system and structure management for sustaining innovation, dimensions of management, distributed organisations, user orientation and autonomous working groups
- *Management:* gold standards and shares, participation of consumers, open leadership, management of shareholders, membership involvement, innovation councils
- *Ownership and organisation:* companies of community interest, charities, partnerships, mutual funds, cooperatives, limited liability partnerships, customised private companies, informal structures
- *Operations:* collaborative technologies, shared backroom economy, socially oriented demand and supply chains

Development and dissemination: The range of social innovation can grow in different ways, some innovation retains the original form in the new scale, others grow rather organically and evolve continuously or spread through imitation. Innovation in the market sector is motivated by the private taking of the revenue over, while the social economy favours the rapid spread of innovation. Rather than the social innovation sharing uses collaborative networking rather than an organisational growth.

- *Organisation and extent:* fusions and acquisitions, social franchising, licensing, consortium model, the growth based on cooperation, organisational growth
- *Transferring agents:* dissemination through web, handbooks, manuals, personal consultants; growth through middlemen, associations and quasi-professional bodies, through media; discussions at events, fairs and platforms
- *Suppliers of innovation:* open brands, adaptation models, ensuring adequate supply chain for extended production, support structures, mobilisation of existing organisational capacity, growth through human beings, development of organisational capacity
- *Awarding and contracts:* personalised budgets, share on savings contracts, joint procurement, contractors' commitment, framework contracts, e-auction, e-procurement procedures, contracts for exploratory services, payment by results, awarding by practice, result defensibility, the development of new markets, awarding by the results, awarding innovative services
- *Development and dissemination in the public sector:* the change through standards, transnational dissemination and promotion, dissemination of best practice, creating intermediate demand, regulatory requirements, public policy supported dissemination
- *Spread of demand:* social objectives, financial or other incentives, brands and trademarks, promotion and marketing of innovative services and programs, information for consumers, user groups and their campaigns
- *Inspiration:* dispensing through provision as a social movement, inspiration

System change: Systemic innovation includes not only changes in economic flows, but also a change of concepts and ways of thinking, a change of the power structure, and usually all four institutional sectors. The ideas that inspire systemic change and practices that contribute to their realisation are identified.

- *System funding:* funding for systemic prevention, creating new investment flows, the public support for system change
- *Progressive coalitions and social movements:* organizing formal coalitions for change, social movements focused on innovation and lifestyle transformation, creating self-organising social movements

- *Information, accounting and statistics:* measurement of social progress, restructuring of public accounting, information systems to support system change
- *Regulatory and fiscal changes:* tax and fiscal structures, regulatory requirements, goals with penalties, formal classification, rules enforcement, legislative prohibitions, new forms of ownership, new responsibilities, new rights
- *Strategic movements that accelerate system change:* frameworks for change, blocking of technology, complex pilots, platforms for design and attempts to run the system innovation, creating functional prototypes of the new system, the creation of new evidences
- *Creating users and producers:* support new ways of decision-making and responsibility, engaging citizens in the process of system change, users' mutual assistance and mentoring, Innovation Academy
- *Infrastructures and interstructures to support new systems:* technical innovation in the chain key areas, rewiring the economy, platform infrastructures, data infrastructures, the creation of a new infrastructure
- *Ideas stimulating system innovation:* tools create confidence, radical democratisation, post-chronologism, system agents for activation and empowerment of marginalised groups, support models for the mobilisation of citizens' activities, individualised support services, new models for the supportive economy

Evaluation question 2.2. To what extent is the current HREOP's concept of innovation appropriate?

Within the HREOP's implementation document (and a briefer version in the manuals for the evaluators and applicants / beneficiaries), innovation, as a horizontal principle of the IS EQUAL, is presented as an emphasis on supporting social innovations aimed at modernisation and reforms in the field of employment and social inclusion policy (subject of change), respectively at persons at risk of social exclusion or at persons already excluded from the society and the labour market (beneficiary of change). Supported activities include processing of innovative practices proposals, their verification in pilot projects, developing appropriate promotional tools for already developed and proven innovative procedures or possibly the implementation of new procedures proven in practice (if they make better results or impacts compared to the current process). The aim is to reduce the intervention costs and a significant change of policies and strategies on the given issue. For each axis, the list of themes for the matter-of-fact focus of innovation projects is determined (the innovative themes).

In the **Area of Support 1.1** Increasing Employee Adaptability and Enterprise Competitiveness, the innovative actions are defined quite narrowly as well as vaguely while focusing on the emergence of systems of continuing professional education and motivating their use. It is not stated on what aspects is innovation based on, or how these actions should contribute to an increased innovation of implementers. Only that system ambition can be assessed positively. The perspectives of novelty and improvement are completely missing. At the same time it is not clear whether a project innovation has been somehow evaluated or otherwise taken into account.

The Call 23 defines the specific criterion for three types of innovation: 1) innovation in the product: the organisation wants to introduce a new large scale educational product or their modifications and development are the part of the project, 2) innovation in the process: modification of the delivery method of training activities – e.g. the use of the e-Learning and b-Learning methods, the use of videoconferencing for education, ways of measuring results in education, innovation in providing and evaluation of participants' feedback, etc., 3) innovation in context: current activities are provided in a new way - the introduction of a workplace training, internal trainers etc. A generally valid definition of the individual evaluation categories has not been provided, a definition through examples can be restrictive for the applicant, misleading respectively. The Call 35 states some minor adjustments of the methodology for the innovation criteria, declaring that the purpose is not to subsidize the standard educational activities, but to support a change of the basic approach to external and internal

educational sources in organizations, e.g. by changing the ratio of external versus internal sources (usually 2:1 in the Czech Republic) gradually to the European standard 1:2, towards the learning organisations characterised by effective use of internal resources, towards the mutual learning and self-learning, to develop professional, social and personal competences of employees, to put them into effect in the increasing of value-added to manufactured products and services. The Call 35, next to a specific criterion of innovation, also includes a criterion of complexity, which is a positive step because of the declared preference of complex projects.

Other Calls in the area of support do not state specific criterion of innovation. The calls (39/2.6.2009, 60/14.4.2010) announced for the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic represent a special case that include specific education (EDUCA). The calls do not declare innovation as a specific criterion; however, they significantly limit the applicability of the training product, which should be used only within the institution where it was developed. In this respect, the outputs have always been innovative (resp. exclusively customised), but with a priori limited transferability. The fundamental problem is that the support has been limited to the specific training only, whose definition is very narrow.

In the **Area of Support 1.2** Increasing Adaptability of Employees from Restructured Enterprises, innovation in the projects of the Call 36 focuses e.g. on the objective of promoting new methods, forms and content of education. In summary, the principle of innovation can be seen in targeting people at risk of unemployment before they become unemployed (albeit a commonly used approach, even in the Czech Republic).

In the **Area of Support 2.1** Reinforcement of Active Employment Policies, the majority of support is carried out through individual national (MoLSA) and regional (Labour Office) projects, the remaining part through the global grant by individual grant projects to support innovation projects based on local initiatives.

From the total number of seven calls, only the Call 70 states that projects should also offer innovative features, precisely targeted at the specific needs of a specific target group, and not only innovative motivationally-educational activities to meet the needs of a specific target group in a particular place and time, but also the provision of accompanying activities. This characteristic of so-called innovative features corresponds to the text of VZ and approaches (although very carefully) also a complex concept of social innovation (if innovative features are adequately specified within the projects). Most of supported activities mentioned in calls, however, are focused on the standard forms of employment services.

In the **Area of Support 2.2** Modernization of Institutions and Implementation of a System of Employment Service Quality and their Development, the principle of innovation is rather directed to standard activities only complemented with novelty aspect, while the type and form of support in the Call 11 (15th of April 2008) for individual projects promote innovation: support is implemented through projects of a system nature (Department 82 of the MoLSA, the State Labour Inspection Office), which, by definition, focus on the design of new systems or an update and streamlining of existing systems and their implementation in practice. Exactness of the system change implementation is also reflected in a possibility to extend the time for implementation up to 8 years, e.g. in case of demanding analytical preparation and pilot testing (implementation of the project would in this case take place in stages).

The Area of Support 3.1 Social Integration and Equal Opportunities is the only area which develops in the implementation document supported innovative actions and tools, which distinguishes it from the rest of the operational programme. Within this area of support, innovative actions should be developed mainly through support for new approaches or new combinations of existing parallel approaches in the social economy, enabling socially excluded persons and persons at risk of social

exclusion an access into the labour market and business environment, eventually an access to public services. Innovative tools are explicitly included in the two groups of supported activities: the integration of target groups in the labour market and the social economy (more precisely social entrepreneurship). To define the **support for the social economy**, the outputs from the Comparative analysis of social-economic models in the EU and the recommendations for their implementation in the Czech Republic in the framework of European Social Fund programmes 2007-2013 should be used. A comprehensive analysis formulated recommendations for the support of social economy and represents, within the HREOP, a unique approach to the knowledge capacity preparation for implementation of innovative actions (another example is the Smart Administration Strategy - SAS). Attention is also paid to support activities such as increasing availability of education in methods of the social economy, training potential applicants in the principles of social economy which resulted from projects implemented in the Czech Republic (e.g. under the EQUAL initiative in connection with the activities of the National Thematic Network C - Strengthening the social economy, especially community services). It also provided support to applicants for processing requests for financial support. Another positive specific aspect is activity of the Thematic Network for the Development of Social Economy - TESSEA (its institutional affiliation changed on 30th of November 2011).

The ongoing Call 30 is therefore focused on innovative social enterprise activities targeted on supporting access of (potentially) socially excluded persons into the labour market. Apart from the social point of view, the newly formed business activities should become economically viable and competitive. The call also mentions ambitions for applying lessons learned in the development of a system approach to the social economy at the national level, for finding the optimal model of social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic, thus creating conditions for the integration of the social economy as a standard tool of social policy and business support policy. These ambitions are obviously desirable and constitute the essential part of a contributive social innovation.

In the **Area of Support 3.2** Support of Social Integration of Members of Roma Localities, it is necessary to mention a pilot project to create the Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities (approved by the Government Resolution 74/23.1.2008) containing (potentially) innovative actions including participation of stakeholders and creating local partnerships, developing local strategies for social inclusion and their implementation, increasing knowledge capacity (situation analysis, conception, training the consultants and methodology support), piloting (verifying) inclusion policies in localities, evaluation of the benefits of intervention (comparing the initial and subsequent state), the championing of knowledge in the methodology of social inclusion policy in Roma localities. The grant projects have not specifically stressed proposed innovative actions of the call; however the potential of an innovative characteristic is represented by the support for partnerships at local and regional level and the controlling mechanism.

In the **Area of Support 3.3** Integration of Socially Excluded Groups on the Labour Market, innovative actions should be developed in particular by supporting new, non-traditional approaches and solutions in complex employment programmes for socially excluded persons or at risk of social exclusion on the basis of broad cooperation of stakeholders. However, the calls do not directly target innovation. In summary, an emphasis is placed on the complexity of the implementation of actions and on an individual approach to clients, which is also one of the specific criteria for grant projects.

In the **Area of Support 3.4** Equal Opportunities of Women and Men on the Labour Market and Reconciliation of Family and Working Life, supported activities explicitly involve the development of innovative programmes and measures aimed at reconciliation of working and family life, especially support for innovative policies in enterprises at local and regional level (e.g. through so-called family audits, competitions, etc.), resp. implementation of other innovative forms of programmes and measures in HR sector at local and regional level.

The Call 10 (25th of April 2008) for an individual project for the Department of Family and Social Welfare of the MoLSA emphasizes innovation and is focused on the development of national policies and programmes and on modernisation, capacity expansion and quality of public services in the area of social integration, on the design of new systems or on adaptation and streamlining of existing systems and their implementation in practice. The Call 54 (11th of January, 2010) includes an innovativeness of the products developed as a specific criterion, it particularly mentions the development and testing of innovative programmes and measures for reconciliation, the use of innovative methods when developing and implementing of complex programmes for support of employment or self-employment. The criterion of innovativeness of the products developed means that the applicant must demonstrate that the product will have a significant added value compared to already existing products on the Czech market. The added value is demonstrated by the fact that a product with the same results has not existed on the market as yet, transferability in time and location.

In the **Area of Support 4.1** Reinforcement of Institutional Capacity and Effectiveness of Public Administration, the calls are largely related to the implementation of the Effective Public Administration and Friendly Public Services strategy (this link is possibly a specific criterion). The definition of themes and base-line represents, in principle, a link to the Smart Administration strategy that defines specific objectives and activities to achieve them in a complex whole at all levels of state and local governments, to evaluate and update them regularly. Space for innovation beyond this framework is rather limited, but this is largely due to the requirements for a system change of a unique range.

In the **Area of Support 5.1** Transnational Cooperation, a special attention, according to the programming document, should have been paid to the promotion and mainstreaming of innovative actions which include e.g. proposals for innovative procedures and their verification through the implementation of pilot projects or development of appropriate promotional tools for already designed and tested innovative approaches. Innovative actions should be developed: (1) horizontally as part of projects being implemented, (2) in the form of projects directly aimed at the creation and dissemination of innovation in policy areas supported by the HREOP and in the area of management of the programmes co-financed from the ESF. Innovative actions are thus defined very broadly in terms of the content and are just copied in the identical form to the calls on a given axis. Thematic focus (e.g. reflection of new social needs) has not been applied in any of the calls. On the one hand, it is of course a favourable characteristic, if the capacity of the provider's knowledge is limited. On the other hand, it diminishes the possibility of concentration of design capacity of the current or prospective problem areas. Another problem is a channelling of the international cooperation as a separate axis. The findings of surveys carried out shows that the element of international cooperation was emphasized by applicants primarily in this axis, respectively that the involvement of international expert capacities within other thematic axes was often (incorrectly) perceived as inappropriate. This approach is relatively rare among the EU member states - it was only applied in several regional ESF programmes - in Italy, Spain, Germany, Bulgaria and Belgium.

The first call (12) included a specific innovation criterion (the second criterion was the justification of necessity / added value of international cooperation, which, however, only broadly evaluates the contribution of the foreign partner without specific information requirements; the scoring is also only vaguely justified). The definition of innovation is based on the experience of EQUAL: a specific criterion evaluates a subject in which is the proposed project innovative (thus having a horizontal character). This evaluation is quite complex in terms of the definition (but not in terms of the scoring), which is, compared to other priority axes, rather exceptional. The applicant should make an analysis in the area he wants to address and articulate where the project, on the one hand, introduces new, innovative methods or tools due to the needs of the target groups and on the other hand, how the disseminate and promote innovative outputs in the national policy and practice or abroad. The

criterion differentiates three types of innovations: 1) Goal-oriented innovation (new target groups, new skills, new profile), 2) Process-oriented innovation (new methods, new tools), 3) Context-oriented innovation (changes in policies or institutional structures).

Besides the horizontal principle represented with specific innovation criterion in some calls, innovation projects are also reported as one of the three supported activities (in addition to the development of partnerships and thematic networks and mobility). Thematically, innovation projects are not specified, only the type of supported activities. Innovation projects include: 1) the exchange of experience and transfer of good practice between Member States in matters relating to the substantive focus of the ESF (adaptability, active employment policy, tackling social inclusion of specific population groups, continuous professional education, modernisation of public administration, etc.); 2) collaboration between projects in different Member States in order to improve the own project results or achieving joint results. Innovative type of project represents takeover of the foreign experience. In this respect, all projects include (borrowed) innovation. It is not clear whether and to what extent is the foreign content adapted to the domestic specifics.

The Call 77 repeats the support for joint development or transfer of innovation and its implementation in the Czech Republic. Unlike the Call 51, innovation is defined more modern and more broadly than in previous calls: Innovation can be represented with a completely new approach to problem solving, as well as use of certain tools or methods known only from other areas so far. It is an unused, new procedure or approach which represents an added value to existing products and services on today's market. Innovation can be achieved as the project activities focus on the development of new working methods, tools and approaches, or an application of existing methods, tools and approaches in new areas; the focus of project on promoting changes in the systems established in the labour market.

At the project level, in general, an application of the horizontal principle of innovation is reflected in particular in the use of output indicator "number of new / innovative products" (see below for its definition) in all areas of the HREOP (except the area 2.1). There are also specific criteria for the definition of innovation at disposal in a small number of calls for grant projects (Call 12 in the area of support 5.1, Calls 23 and 35 in 1.1, Call 37 in 1.2, Call 54 in 3.4). Criterion innovation in the Call 12 standardly differentiates goal-oriented, process-oriented and context-oriented innovation based on the EQUAL's approach; in Calls 23 and 35 the division is specified according to the context of corporate training. The Call 54 defines criteria of innovation of new products by demonstrating their value added on the Czech market¹⁷.

The innovation rate of projects is not measured by any indicator¹⁸ in the HREOP. This feature, however, was substituted by output indicator 075700 - Number of new / innovated products, applied horizontally, with the exception of the area of support 2.1. In the system of indicators, the following definition of the indicator is used (quoted from the original Czech document):

A product is a collective term referring to all forms and tools through which the support is provided to target groups, such as training programme, course, methodology, curriculum, educational programme, e-learning product, web portal, retraining module, integration procedures, learning aid, etc.

A product must be usable separately to provide support to target groups. Set of several objects or materials that must be used together is thus considered a single product. (e.g. if a methodology is

¹⁷ Details of the findings are developed in the technical part of the final report, partial analysis No. 3

¹⁸ Here is necessary to draw the attention to the monitoring indicator 430700 - Improved efficiency of strategies and policies (PA 5.1), which is an evaluation-based indicator with a purpose to identify the impact of innovation on policies (support provided and its results). However, its value is expressed numerically as a percentage (change) and uses an algorithm using numbers representing people affected within the target groups, which makes this indicator inappropriate for a comprehensive evaluation of innovative activities (and their impact).

useless without the curriculum and the textbooks, it cannot be considered a product itself, but the course as a whole).

The number of different products count in; not the number of pieces, copies or identical repetition.

Only the products generated within the main key activities of the project count in; not e.g. promotional material (with the exception of Priority Axis 6, where publicity can be main activity).

An innovative product means such a product, where the changes in its objectives, content, methods or forms significantly increased its quality and efficiency on the provision of support to target groups.

The values of indicator 075700 as per 29th of January 2012 on the basis of data from MONIT7 + are listed in the following table¹⁹. Particularly relevant is the sum of the target values of the indicator for the projects in the positive state, due to the fact that in many cases the resulting value of the indicator will be acquired at the time of completion of all project activities. Estimated value achieved was even then equal to 23,179, which far exceeds (more than 8 times) the aggregate value (2770) of the target values for individual areas of support²⁰.

Table 1: The values of indicator 075700 as per 29th of January 2012

Priority Axis/HREOP's area of support	Number of projects in a positive state with 075700	Number of all projects in a positive state	Difference	Sum of target values of 075700 for the projects in a positive state	Target value of the area of support	The ratio of target value of projects and the operational programme
--	A	B	B-A	C	D	C/D
1 Adaptability	1 700	1 702	2	16 507		
1.1	1 676	1 678	2	16 463	1 980	831%
1.2	24	24	0	44	20	220%
2 Active Labour Market Policy	10	264	254	188		
2.1	0	254	254	0	0	N/A
2.2	10	10	0	188	50	376%
3 Social Integration and Equal Opportunities	937	977	40	3 476		
3.1	364	364	0	1 636	100	1 636%
3.2	89	89	0	464	40	1 160%
3.3	311	349	38	744	100	744%
3.4	173	175	2	632	100	632%
4 Public Administration and Public Services	495	495	0	2 211	200	1 106%
5 Transnational Cooperation	140	141	1	680	100	680%
6 Technical Assistance	32	32	0	117	80	146%
Total	3 314	3 611	297	23 179	2 770	837%

¹⁹ With regard to multiple target values, these were not further updated.

²⁰ Target values are taken from the Implementation Document (version 2.0, revision number 11, 10th of January 2012)

Criticism of the **explanatory power of the indicator** 075700 has already appeared in the evaluation of the indicator system from 2009. As reservations reported here could be positively supported, much more it is not clear why they were not handled. This indicator is problematic due to its definition and the possibility of different interpretations of its content. Clarifications of terms "new", "innovated" and "a product" are missing. Interpretation of the definition of the indicator is therefore dependent on individual interpretation of the managing authority or intermediate body providing consultation. As noted in the 2009 evaluation, the interpretations of definitions often varied, thus making an applicant confused.

The diversity of possible interpretations leads to an aggregation of disparate outputs and an inclusion of irrelevant outcomes. Innovation of outputs cannot be objectively validated (or contested) and its reporting actually depends on the argumentation skills of beneficiaries. It is no doubt that with regard to the number of project applications, limited time on their evaluation, the lack of methodology, as well as professional level of reviewers, a qualified assessment of targeted or reported outputs cannot be expected. The evaluation notes that the performance control of indicator 075700 is difficult or even impossible. Objectivity of input data is discredited and the explanatory power of the indicator is very low or rather misleading.

It is not clear whether, in relation to the evaluation mentioned, any action was taken or not. An amendment of existing definition was only created, probably to help applicants to better understand the indicator and its use in the project documentation. It rather underlines the problems of the default definition. One of the product innovation criteria is a possibility of copyrights, but these always arise to protect the result of authors' activities (as individuals), which means that it's not any objective criterion of innovation or even novelty. Let's recall two minimal innovation perspectives applied in the evaluation of EQUAL - novelty and improvement. Neither one of them is objectively (verifiably) applied in the current method of reporting of project outputs (so-called product outputs) in the HREOP. Furthermore, most of the developed products are external supplies for beneficiaries (in many cases the same shipment for multiple beneficiaries), who does not participate in their creation. The element of participation is thus completely missing or it's passive only. In the end, this indicator serves only to identify the products and projects with individual products, allowing the MA to get, evaluate and disseminate these products, or use them for an additional support from the ESF.

However, problems with **the definition of innovation** are mentioned continuously in the wider context in all evaluation documents and other types of feedback during the implementation of the HREOP, i.e. in annual reports, annual operational evaluations and records of focus groups of evaluators, and these problems are related to the application of specific criteria in the evaluation of innovation projects. Then, when specific criteria were no longer applicable, the criticism of definition of innovation has, of course, weakened and it's now limited only to the problem with reporting outputs for indicator 075700.

Regarding the Call 12, the annual operational evaluation (AOP) 2009 states that the group of specific criteria is incorrectly set, namely the criterion of innovation is very vaguely defined. The annual report for 2009 states as a problem in PA 5 a low innovation level of the projects submitted and a little added value of international cooperation (many projects proposed in the call 12 fell rather to other priority axes by their focus). This assessment, which has not been however justified, suggests that the initial formulation of the innovation was not adequately reflected in projects themselves, i.e. the problem with the implementation of innovation. An evaluator does not justify, why exactly is the innovation level low – is a borrowed foreign practice too little innovative or does the use of innovation in the Czech Republic not represent innovation? It is not clear whether an evaluator realised that such projects are based on the transfer of innovations developed elsewhere, for which there are other important characteristics of innovative actions. Similarly, it is not clear what the low added value of

international cooperation means and whether is not affected by the budget rules, when foreign partners can participate in the project for travel reimbursement only.

Summary evaluation of innovation at the project level for Calls 23 and 35 mentions AOP 2009 (systematic evaluation of individual projects is not available), which also evaluates the specific criteria 25 and 32 as poorly set (without further explanation). Another argument is the duplicity of the information presented in the specific criteria containing information in the criterion A1 (innovation and complexity). For the Priority Axis – Adaptability, AOP indicates that a significant part of all projects does not have the necessary quality, does not bring innovative approaches or in a limited extent only. However, AOP does not specify the methodology used for this evaluation. The selection of main activities is not supported by adequate analysis (too brief, no objectively measurable data or without a usual methodical apparatus, or not supported by any analysis at all). AOP recommends a greater pressure on the quality of projects using the definition of standards for the project necessity analysis (in the form of a brief guide on methodology). A broader problem is the proclaimed complexity of criterion A1, which rather causes its disparity.

Overall, the application of the principle of horizontal innovation has led in practice to a mere complementarity and vague definition of this term. Selection of priorities for innovative actions is not justified and its implementation at the project level is inappropriate (see 075700 values), even though these problems were continuously and repeatedly reported during the implementation. The exception is the explicit focus on the social economy and the specific procedure for the call in question.

Evaluation question 2.3 What foreign approaches to the concept and application of innovation in the ESF can be used in the Czech Republic?

At the level of EU member states, we introduce details and individual findings in a separate Appendix 4 in the form of a partial analysis. The overview includes EU Members States' approaches to promote innovation in the ESF Operational Programmes set in the context of a national **approach to social innovation** and its concept. This entry appears to be important for understanding the actual approach to social innovation in ESF. The problem represents non-established actual definitions which are nationally specific. Another factor is the tradition of social innovation reflecting specifics of related social institutional arrangements. In summary, in most of the observed countries, support for social innovation is only very slowly adopted in a political agenda and their development depends primarily on local initiatives. The social innovation marginalisation in the political agenda undermines not only the use of potentially available support, but also the dissemination and mainstreaming of results. The following summary includes the details on the implementation of supporting innovative actions under the ESF. Selected countries work with the social innovation concept or innovation activities of the ESF in the social and labour areas, create specific supporting approaches, and present practices consistently. The sample of national approaches also includes various concepts of social innovation and implementation of their support.

England and Gibraltar. Strategies for innovative, international and interregional activities assumes innovation as a **characteristic of all projects**, innovation activities are, however, supported also **specifically**. According to previous experience, it is required a precise innovation targeting and its drive by demand. The topics of specific innovation activities are chosen on the basis of a consultation of senior policy-makers (for employment and competences), who reflect the views of broader partnerships. Innovation activities are prioritized in the **context of policy implementation** rather than its development. All specific innovation projects should be implemented on an international or inter-regional level (based on relations with Member States) in order to promote learning and exchange of ideas. Innovation and international / interregional activities can be supported in all axes except the technical assistance. No separate programme or priority axis is determined for these activities, with the exception of ITM programme (see below). All innovation projects must have **own evaluation strategy**, which allows an independent evaluation of the project procedures and results.

Innovation projects must also enable the dissemination and mainstreaming of their results. The results of innovation projects which failed must be published as well. The ITM programme implementation (Innovation, Transnationality, Mainstreaming Strand) specifically targeted innovation in the call for proposals for innovative and international projects, which included six innovation themes: **Active Inclusion, Engaging with Employers, ICT and the Digital Divide**, Meeting New Challenges - **Demographic Change** (Older Workers and Migration), Meeting New Challenges - **Skills for Climate Change and Sustainable Development** and **Social Enterprise**. In total, 32 strategic regional projects have been funded and are currently being prepared for evaluation.

Netherlands: The concept of social innovation in the Netherlands is relatively narrow and includes innovations in **work organisation and maximising the use of skills** in order to improve economic performance and talent development. The specifications of social innovation support are based on the recommendations of the Social and Economic Council on the participation of the social partners. Innovation projects are aimed at improving the work process, working conditions and entrepreneurship training. Another aspect includes the concept of social innovation as a complement to technical innovations. Only 5% of total operational programme (€ 41.5 million) is allocated to support social innovation in the Adaptability axis. The reason for this limited is uncertain absorption capacity and implementation procedures. ESF support is directed at **creating and testing implementation plans for social innovation**. The choice of topics and activities is based on the above mentioned strategic documents. Governmental Expert Group presents examples of possible initiatives that are structured into three areas: **smarter work** - smarter organisation of work processes and conditions for achieving better results with existing inputs, **creating a more flexible and better work organisation, new relationships in work organisations** - optimal use of talent, work resources rotation, new forms of counselling. Funding rules expressly provide activities that are not eligible for targeting social innovation, to avoid overlapping with other ESF support. No target coverage is specified for social innovation support, because the novelty of the concept makes it difficult to predict the effects. However, a qualitative research in the field of social innovation will be conducted. It is expected to open about 40 projects a year, while 90% of them will create one or more implementation plans.

Sweden: Innovation and collaboration represent the **implementation criteria** of the Operational Programme and regional ESF plans, two other criteria include the learning environment and a strategic approach to influencing. The criteria are designed to ensure the added value, while all projects must meet at least one of four criteria. Innovation itself is not a goal but a **tool** to achieve a better quality and a higher productivity. The concept of innovation is **context specific** and it is based partly on the EQUAL definition, i.e. innovation contributes to the specific problem of discrimination. Innovative approaches are sustainable and cost-effective means of initiation of change. The differences as well as similarities between social and technical innovations are emphasized. Social innovation is a **broad concept**, which is reflected in the range of eligible costs from the process of identifying and evaluating the needs of various initiatives to offer qualifications and increased job supply, through implementation, management and education of target groups, to the activities contributing to the development of follow-up activities and their evaluation.

Flanders: The importance of innovation corresponds to the Flemish Reform Programme for sustainable growth and job creation. Innovations are one of the **programme's goals** and represent an important lever for the implementation of policies. Flemish programme builds on social innovation in the use of labour market development. Innovations with their specific budget pass **horizontally** across policy, focusing on the programme's topics. This approach prevents innovation coverage and related resources from fragmenting. Flemish ESF programme provides an innovation framework that enables and supports the growth and recovery. The emphasis on innovation, using the experience of previous years, is supported by a number of measures. The budget allocations ensure continuing efforts to research and innovation, including its international dimension. These resources are also

linked to the thematic areas of the program. Working Group on innovation and international cooperation within the Commission for horizontal operation involves diverse political actors, formulates annual thematic focus of the development of innovative actions and monitors the results. The **system of open calls** with fixed annual periods specified for the evaluation of applications is used for innovation projects. All relevant actors of the ESF programme pass the training and have the opportunity for professional development in the area of evaluation of innovation and quality in the form of project cycle management, self-assessment tools and educational capacities. The actions of each innovation project are tracked and reflected in learning networks, innovation platforms and expert evaluations. The results of each innovation project are monitored in terms of their value. The validation process monitors the development itself and its effectiveness. The Flemish ESF Agency collects all the relevant knowledge and initiates its sharing in a wide range of media. The biggest challenge is the transferability and mainstreaming of innovative actions and their use in existing policies.

Poland: The Working Group on Horizontal Issues of the Operational Programme proposes general rules for selection of innovation projects that are approved by the Monitoring Committee, and also formulates some detailed selection criteria for innovation projects. An innovation project with a goal to develop, disseminate and mainstream new solutions (so-called innovation test project) is implemented in **two phases**, which include **preparation and implementation**. Projects undergo two additional evaluation procedures - **evaluation of the implementation strategy** and **validation of developed products** (conceived as a model or a tool) that correspond to the real needs of the target group in accordance with the views of different stakeholders and experts in the relevant field. An implementation strategy of innovation test project is evaluated by a thematic network on the basis of information received from the implementer within eight months from the start of the implementation. The aim of the evaluation is to obtain the opinion of experts, practitioners and other stakeholders about the processes of an innovation project. Evaluation allows verification of procedures in terms of output utility for policy needs. A thematic network recommends, with an appropriate justification, an acceptance, a conditional acceptance or a rejection of a given strategy. This recommendation may be accepted or rejected by the managing authority. A conditional acceptance requires revision of the required documents by the project implementer. The product validation if innovation test project builds on the test phase of the product and the analysis of its results, taking into account an external evaluation. After the test phase follows the development of the final version of the product and its description is presented to the thematic network for validation. Submission of a product for validation must take place within two months before the final implementation phase of the project, which involves the dissemination of results and their mainstreaming into policy. If the implementer fails to validate the product, support is discontinued or reduced.

France: Priority areas for innovation include activities such as **lifelong access to education, specifically for the disadvantaged, the promotion of diversity and mobility of different target groups**. Support for innovation projects and experiments involves the exchange of best practices, experiences and tools to battle against all forms of discrimination in access to sustainable employment, solving territorially specific problems of employment (mobility, rural areas), development of education throughout life with the use of individualised forms of education and its organisation, taking into account practical limitations of access to education, improving the coordination of social time with regard to specific areas or groups (e.g. elder people, men and women in isolated areas), an innovative and experimental development of human resources and training in specific contexts and situations. An important aspect of innovation projects is a **partnership and cooperation on inter-regional or international level**. The contribution of international cooperation is primarily the deploying of solutions not previously available at the national level, specifically a support for transferability and recognition of qualifications in Europe, as forms of expertise validation to facilitate labour mobility. Partnership allows synergy of actors and to interconnect their skills, expertise and

resources available. Partnership is a key source of innovation and enables policy makers and national stakeholders and regional networks to achieve economies of scale and to use benefits of mutual learning. Priority topics of innovative partnerships include the development entrepreneurship among youth through convergence of schools and businesses, new projects between business and education sectors and bodies responsible for the support of long-term unemployed, the implementation of experiments for balancing supply and demand in the labour market. The corresponding setting of priorities for support of innovation, partnership and inter / international cooperation, their combination and their implementation procedures are specified by the governing bodies.

A diversity of national approaches in the field of social innovation within the EU is reflected in the division between groups of countries, and can be summarized as follows: The Nordic countries are most open to social innovation as a tool to restore their social model and promoting social and economic performance. In Anglo-Saxon countries actors are also very proactive in succession to intense deregulation in the 80s and the need for transformation of the system of social services. Continental countries are characterised by more rigid institutional traditions and social innovation is rather an addition, which cannot enter the system. In Mediterranean countries, persistence of strong informal systems of solidarity has slowed the process of social innovation. In Eastern countries, the absence of civil society with an autonomous organisation or capacity represents a serious handicap.

The support of innovation in the ESF is institutionalised or formalised in varying degrees respectively. Most of countries, however, present only very general (and therefore similar) innovation topics usually within the selected axes. Only exceptionally is a specific axis with a separate budget and specific implementation arrangements designed for innovative projects. Innovation aspects of the ESF operational programmes are not even mentioned in the list of priority axes or areas of support across EU countries (the lists were published in 2010-2011). There are usually available only selected examples of innovation projects in some countries. The reason for this is the need for the gradual establishment (or very existence) of a sufficient expert knowledge capacity, both at the MA and beneficiary sides. This further leads to the emergence of specialised institutions (agencies) and to a number of local initiatives and groups, often linked to the non-profit sector, with support from other sources, incl. business. The reason is the creative, highly dynamic, difficult to predict and therefore risky nature of innovation actions that are not funded under the ESF²¹. Knowledge about the implementation of innovation support in the EU is generally very poor (e.g. compared with the implementation of the partnership principle) and only now is its overview study being prepared.

Evaluation question 2.4 What is the role of international cooperation in the application of innovation in the ESF, is it appropriate (necessary) to connect both principles?

In 2009, the working group on innovation and international cooperation in the ESF has been launched, responding to the weaknesses of its implementation in the current programming period at the national level, to new initiatives of the EU strategic framework, to impacts of the crisis and the related challenges for the new programming period. Compared to existing experience, support for innovation in the ESF should be **more concentrated** and (1) should more effectively respond to major problems (ageing population, globalisation, climate change, migration, new forms of work, and lifestyle) and promote new and better jobs, (2) address long-term social impact of the crisis through the business restructuring and updating of qualifications according to labour market needs, (3) improve the management of the ESF through citizen participation, overcoming institutional barriers and the development of knowledge-based policies.

Identified **weaknesses in innovation activities** of the ESF (in relation to the **activities of international cooperation**) mainly include their limited diversity, insufficient use of programming

²¹ An example of a suitable financial source for innovative activities in the Czech Republic can be e.g. Vodafone Foundation.

opportunities for international cooperation, weak synergy between innovation actions and international cooperation, spending lagging behind expectations, low awareness of the added value of innovative approaches, insufficient elaboration of the implementation rules, insufficient interconnection of international networks and activities with national and regional activities, underdeveloped supporting capacities and services, the absence of a strategy for international or innovation activities (with the exception of a few operational programmes). In summary, it is clear that the period 2007-2013 lacked a clearly defined arrangement of implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as budget allocation, leading to only a limited range of innovation actions (despite its provisions in the form of regulatory obligations ESF).

For the period 2014+, the group proposes three complementary elements of a **possible new framework**. The first two in the ESF operational programmes at the level of member states include support for social innovation and implementation of international and interregional cooperation, the third at EU level in the form of Community Programme to promote social innovation through international and interregional cooperation.

Recommended **measures to support social innovation** provided by the Commission should include the following areas: (1) information on suitable, viable and acceptable tools for promoting social innovation in the future ESF theme, including a clear definition and conceptual framework of innovation, (2) rules for monitoring and evaluation of social innovation including definitions of related indicators and benchmarks for cost-benefit analysis (CBA), (3) rules for good practice in innovation validation, including the general definition of the validation process, (4) the inclusion of mainstreaming and up scaling in the project and the development of innovations, (5) support for innovation through international cooperation.

Specifically emphasised is the implementation of **pilot projects and social experiments** defined as a test of innovation intervention on a small scale before any up scaling. Social experimentation should be encouraged in all areas of the ESF and the **EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation**. The program will support policy coordination, sharing of best practices, capacity building and testing of innovation policies. The most successful measures will be developed with the support of the ESF. Article 4 of the proposed regulation contains general objectives of the programme, which include support for the development of appropriate, accessible and efficient social protection systems and labour markets, promoting political reform through good governance, mutual learning and social innovation. The specific objectives of the programme (Article 15) include provision of the financial support to policy makers for testing reforms of social policy and labour market policy, capacity building of key stakeholders for the planning and implementation of social experiments and making related knowledge and expertise accessible.

Draft ESF regulation for 2014-2020 includes four thematic objectives: promoting employment and labour mobility; investment in education, skills and lifelong learning; promoting social inclusion and combating poverty; enhancing institutional capacity and efficiency public administration. Article 9 is devoted to social innovation (Article 10 to international cooperation) and determines their support in all areas of the ESF in particular to test and upscale innovative solutions for social needs. Member countries should identify **themes for social innovation** according to their specific needs in the operational programmes. The Commission will support capacity building for social innovation in particular through mutual learning, networking and dissemination of good practices and methodologies.

Article 10, dedicated to international cooperation, states that Member States promote cooperation for the development of mutual learning and thereby increase the effectiveness of related policies. Cooperation shall include partners from at least two Member States. The member countries can choose topics for international cooperation. Commission's support for cooperation runs through mutual learning and coordinated or joint activities. In particular, it stressed the importance of platform

at EU level to promote the exchange of experiences, capacity building, networking and dissemination of recent results. Furthermore, the Commission will develop a coordinated implementation framework that incorporates common eligibility criteria, types and timing of actions, common methodical approaches for monitoring and evaluation to promote international cooperation.

The innovation actions should be promoted throughout the innovation cycle from experimentation to mainstreaming. Their themes must be selected within the partnership. Theme sharing between Member States may encourage international cooperation. Article 11 stipulates that operational programmes can dedicate priority axes for the implementation of social innovation and international cooperation (or its combination). In this case, the co-financing rate will be increased to 100%. Operational programmes should specify, in addition to the benefit of the priority axes of the four ESF thematic objectives, the contribution of the ESF-supported actions to social innovation and international cooperation, if not included in a specific priority axis.

The evaluation focused on the partnership principle in the HREOP in 2011²² brought partial information about the focus of innovation in the HREOP and their evaluation by beneficiaries. The quantitative survey showed that innovation has usually a form of introduction of new methods of organising business processes and cooperation with companies and public institutions (19 respondents out of 42), placing of new or innovative products on the market (17 respondents) and the introduction of new or innovative processes in manufacturing or services (12 respondents). Respondents also rated the success of innovations, and by 22 out of 24 respondents innovations helped to improve the situation of a target group, based on 6 respondents also helped to improve competitiveness. In terms of assessment of the regional impact of innovation, most respondents (19 of 37) thinks that innovation had an impact on the Czech market, according to two respondents had an impact on the European market, according to 16 respondents had no impact on the market.

The problem within the HREOP is the budget for international cooperation, specifically the limited possibility of financing the activities of foreign experts in the projects. It is clear from previous experience, e.g. from the EQUAL, that a well-planned and controlled transfer of methodologies, knowledge, good practices, etc. may significantly contribute to the success of the project and to the establishment a long-term international cooperation. Together with recommendations for an increased focus on the evaluation process of international cooperation, this fact was articulated for example in the "Evaluation of the principle of international cooperation of the Community Initiative EQUAL"²³ or newly in output of the Learning Network on Transnational Cooperation in ESF. A significant added value in some identified projects was then also confirmed in this evaluation report (during interviews with beneficiaries in connection with the preparation of case studies).

The Czech Republic is lagging behind the development of social innovation in more advanced countries. It can thus take advantage of catch-up (using the experience and knowledge developed elsewhere). At least some implementers of projects in the Czech Republic have adequate knowledge capacity to adopt foreign experience or strive to its further increase (capacity building). They have professional expertise in the field, practical (field) experience and foreign partnerships are often based on previous cooperation. In this respect, the advantage of a narrow angle is a longer practical and professional experience of the proposers in the problem area, a participation in the existing network of thematically close domestic (and foreign) partners and a long-term institutional perspective, which is the basis for the continuing benefit of a transfer. Rather passive participation of foreign partners is then necessarily affected by budgetary limitations.

²² HREOP's Partnership Principle Evaluation. Final evaluation report. IREAS. Praha, 2011.

²³ Available at: http://reports.navreme.cz/CSS/Downloads/equal_cs.pdf

In the Czech Republic there undoubtedly exist solid capacities for a high-quality transfer of foreign experience, which should be the best and most extensively used, preferably with equal emphasis on the dissemination and promotion, and possibly with increasing emphasis on the ability of modification. With regard to the current practice of the HREOP, it is unclear whether and to what extent is the foreign content adapted according to domestic content specifics. Projects declare such an adaptation, but only some of them explain it. Typical products reported are therefore methodical manuals that describe the foreign practice, and that focus on narrowly defined target groups, in which emphasise the need for a specific approach. The problem requiring solution therefore is that the current practice in the Czech Republic does not pay adequate attention to these specifics. Dissemination and exploitation of the delegated experience is usually not incorporated into the project with equal prominence and it's rather complementary, which is the main drawback of projects. However, innovation activities are currently defined very broadly in terms of the content and are just copied in the identical form to the calls on a given axis. Thematic focus (e.g. reflection of new social needs) is not applied in any of them. On the one hand, it is of course a favourable characteristic, if the capacity of the provider's knowledge is limited. On the other hand, it diminishes the possibility of concentration of design capacity of the current or prospective problem areas. Another problem is a channelling of the international cooperation as a separate axis, which in the course of implementation led, on the applicants' side, to narrowing the inclusion of international cooperation almost exclusively in this priority axis, where it was stated explicitly in the call as possible. This approach is relatively rare among the EU member states

In summary there is rather a decrease of the projects' quality level²⁴, especially in terms of the knowledge capacity. From the project descriptions it is not clear that implementers have adequate expertise and practical experience in the issues presented. Outputs are generally proposed in the form of guidelines or training materials. Innovations are mostly transferred only. The perspective of innovation dissemination is again passive and standard (rather the project publicity type), the concept of exploitation in practice is missing (the question however is, how was the fulfilment of this requirement feasible with reasonable quality). A requirement of a pilot testing and implementation of innovation being transferred is pursued only through carrying out training courses (whose methodology was adapted from abroad), or seminars, workshops and conferences. Projects give a unified impression like created through a template. Unlike the previous call it lacks diversity, or originality, at least when looking for a foreign experience. While an increased quality of the call's text can be noted, the quality of projects has rather an opposite tendency (more accurate evaluation would require familiarity with the complete project documentation).

Evaluation question 2.5. What are the effects and the weight of related principles, such as partnerships, mainstreaming, etc.??

The study *Evaluation of the partnership principle implementation in the HREOP* (2011) evaluated the role of partnership in the HREOP's framework as a positive element in meaning of the overall project implementation. At the project level, the partnership principle brings a synergistic effect for the target groups, because there come to a mutual use of knowledge, skills and potential partner organizations. At the same time the partnership has a supportive effect on the sustainability of project results. According to the study's findings, in the case of missing partnership there would be no planned outputs in 17% of projects and only some individual activities in 71% of projects. In 81% of projects the existing partnerships were considered irreplaceable.

The role mainstreaming in the HREOP is seen as particularly important in the context of the priority axis 5, where quite often appears the implementation activities that focus on mainstreaming of project

²⁴ This trend is not specific only for PA5, but here is manifested more significantly, due to the weak link on the thematic definition. More information on the quality of the applications is described in connection with the evaluation question 1.1.

results, including influencing the legislative process. The HREOP Annual Report 2010²⁵ implies that this may greatly help to increase the impact of this axis. The mainstreaming topic seems to be essential also in the area of support 3.4 (gender mainstreaming).

The study *Evaluation of the partnership principle implementation in the HREOP* (2011) reviewed the project innovative in the context of the partnership. The study addressed the question to what extent the principle of partnership strengthens and complements the effectiveness of the principle of innovation. The analysis was performed both on the basis of survey ("self-assessment" of the project implementers on the innovation appearance within their projects), including also data from the database MONIT 7 + (number of partners and innovations). The conclusion of the analysis is that project innovation is independent of the number of project partners. This conclusion, however, must be viewed in the context that the definition of innovation in the HREOP's context is ambiguous and that the project implementers often understand it (only) in the context of the monitoring indicator 075770 *Number of new / innovated products*. Then the concept of innovation can be different, as some implementers describe as innovation products / services normally existing in the market, but newly established within the organisation.

The aforementioned study also shows that most of the applicants can be considered as rather conservative when choosing project partners. The advantage is the risk reduction of the "problem" project implementation, but at the same time it also limits innovation project activities.

Relation between partnership and the commitment to the principle of innovation has been evaluated in the context of ongoing evaluation of the CIP EQUAL²⁶. According to the conclusions of this study, the partnership principle greatly influenced the implementation of projects and the creation of products, the development partnerships in particular "(...) *appreciate the share of national partners while implementing this principle in relation to the creation of innovative products. The added value of the „partnership principle“ may be seen in the mutual recognition of the abilities of individual organisations to solve urgent project tasks in relation to the needs of the target groups.*" (Second Phase ... 2006: pp. 12)

Some partial conclusions on innovation projects in relation to the gender mainstreaming were brought by the evaluation focused on assessment of development partnerships of the CIP EQUAL in the application of the horizontal theme of gender mainstreaming in 2008²⁷. According to this study, an innovation potential remained untapped in number of projects implemented under the topic of gender mainstreaming in terms of tackling the topic. According to the findings of the study, a higher level of innovation and sophistication of projects and products activities was achieved by those organisations that directly focused on issues of gender equality and gender mainstreaming. According to the findings of the study *Evaluation of the partnership principle implementation in the HREOP* (2011), it's been failed to demonstrate the project partnership contributes to the fulfilment of individual priority axes of the OP. However, it has been demonstrated the benefits of the partnership principle to the understanding of horizontal issues at the project level, e.g. representatives of organisations implementing projects with partners understood as needy topic of gender equality in the labour market compared to representatives of organisations without a partner.

From the perspective of draft system of innovation implementation (see separate Appendix 6), the promotion of development of capacity for social innovation in a cross-sectional approach consists mainly of five types of activities: (1) mapping and analysis of the remaining challenges and open

²⁵ HREOP's 2010 Annual Report on Implementation. Version as approved by the HREOP Monitoring Committee on 26th of May 2011.

²⁶ See *Second Phase Evaluation of Community Initiative Programme EQUAL, 2006* and *Third Phase of Ongoing Evaluation of Community Initiative Programme EQUAL, 2007*

²⁷ *Evaluation of Czech and foreign development partnerships' approach in CIP EQUAL in the application of horizontal theme of gender mainstreaming*. Final report. RegioPartner, 2008.

opportunities for innovative solutions, (2) the performance evaluation of innovation supply and demand (3) a combination of new and existing expertise for innovative solutions of problems and taking the opportunities, (4) education and advice to innovators, and creators and implementers of their support, and (5) the involvement of key stakeholders and **partnerships**.

Within the surveys carried out the partnership seems to be a key aspect, for example in relation to the innovative HREOP's Call 30 (social enterprise). Specifically, it is in particular about the adoption of a voluntary social commitment of a company and partnerships of social enterprises with non-profit sector in order to deal with the local situation of the target groups, resp. involvement in the community planning. At the same time, there were identified specific cases, where partnerships with public administration (particularly at the local level) led to the final push from the implementation phase (maintenance phase) to the development and dissemination phase (up scaling)²⁸.

A high potential for expert capacity building of the managing authority can have the existing initiatives, such as the Community of Practice on Transnational Cooperation²⁹, which was established as a network of learning for the period 2007-2013 in order to stimulate creative thinking about the partnership and its implementation within the Structural Funds to increase political results of the operational programmes. Partnership is defined as a dynamic and complementary relationship between the different actors, where the common approach brings added value (compared with an independent approach). Members of the network are exchanging experiences with the partnership implementation, with special attention devoted to the processes and management activities, including international cooperation and innovation (without further specification). At the level of member states there were published findings on partnership practice, effects on policies and target groups and opportunities to improve the planning and implementation of policies.

Evaluation question 2.6. To what extent would it be possible and appropriate to align the approach to innovation within the ESF with the principles of the System of support of research, development and innovations in Czech Republic (see the Research, Development and Innovation Council (RDIC) - <http://www.vyzkum.cz>)?

The system of support research, development and innovation (SSRDI) from public funds in the Czech Republic is defined by the Act 130/2002 Coll., which was significantly revised in 2009 (see 211/2009 Coll.). Support is provided as a special-purpose (typically so-called projects of grant) or institutional (for entities that meet the definition of research organizations) aid. The Act defines the **types of supported activities** (research, development, innovation) and their **results**. In *basic research* these are theoretical or experimental work carried out with the aim of acquiring new knowledge of the basic principles of phenomena or observed facts, which does not primarily focus on their practical use. In *applied research*, new knowledge and skills to develop products, processes or services, knowledge and skills applied as results that are protected by copyright laws protecting results, inventive or similar activities, or used by professional public or other users, or the knowledge and skills based on the needs of the provider, used in his business if incurred within the public contract, in *development* proposals for new or substantially improved products, processes or services, in *innovation* new or substantially improved products, processes or services, introduced into practice. The division is of course only general; in the reality it is always a combination of different types of activities.

The R&D Information System (RDIS), or more precisely its Information Register of R&D Results (IRRDR) classifies the **following results of public research institutions** (PRI), (1) publications: article in a journal, a monograph, chapter in a monograph, an article in the proceedings, (2) the results of applied research: patent, pilot plant, verified technology, variety, breed, utility model, industrial design, functional sample, results applied in the regulations (legal and others) and in

²⁸ Details are included in Appendix 7 (Proceedings of case studies).

²⁹ www.transnationality.eu

strategic R&D documents, certified methodology applied, medical procedure, cultural heritage procedure, a specialized map with an expert content, software, research report (only in the case of classified information), (3) the other results of applied research: audio-visual production, arrangement of a conference, organizing a workshop, organizing exhibitions etc.

Individual types of results in RDIS are explicitly defined in relation to the activities of original research, or research and development (except for so-called other results).

Definition of results is essential for their recognition and subsequent points awarding, on which basis is defined the institutional funding of research organizations for the future. If the result does not match the definition, points will not be allocated (any other results of the applied research are not included in the score at all). All entities that have received public support are required to submit information on the results to RDIS. Motivation to produce these results is of a fundamental importance for research organizations, as on their basis they gain institutional support for the long-term development (a list of these organizations is published by RDIC). For these purposes, research organizations reports all results, regardless of the funding source.

The support programmes for PRIs are usually, but not always focused on creating the type of eligible results (scored) according to the RDIS evaluation methodology. In the period since 2007 the total number of the 56 programmes has been registered, of which 5 includes programmes financed under the Structural Funds, the ERDF (OP Enterprise and Innovation, axes 4.2 and 5.1, OP Research and Development for Innovation) and ESF (OP Education for Competitiveness, axes 2.3 and 2.4). The Act explicitly defines a provider of supported OPs (the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic). Another large group is represented by programmes for the promotion of international cooperation and infrastructure, or small regional programs, which usually show no results in RDIS (about 20 programmes). In the case of these **operational programmes**, for the selected areas of support it is provided 15% of co-financing from public funds for research, development and innovation. If some R&D&I results occur under these projects, organizations are required to report it to the RDIS (as defined above). However, there is no link between these results and the monitoring indicators reported for the needs of the OP. The supported projects do not contain own research and development (only the capacity building for its implementation, i.e. the creation or development of infrastructure). The RDIS reportable results are therefore not expected (it is similar to the support programmes for international cooperation and other infrastructure activities).

The differences between R&D&I principles in the Czech Republic and the approach to innovation within the ESF is essential, particularly in the scope of support. The European Social Fund does not support research, development and innovation in the concept of the Act 130/2002 Coll. These activities are primarily funded from national resources on research and development (the largest providers in the Czech Republic are the Academy of Sciences, the Grant Agency, the Technology Agency, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Industry and Trade) and eventually co-financed from EU funds in the Research Framework Programme, but its importance is negligible in the Czech Republic. **The promotion of innovation in the existing legal R&D&I concept is actually only mediated, in relation to its own (internal) activity in the corporate research and development.**

Evaluation question 2.7. Is the evaluation of project applications, reporting and monitoring of innovative products appropriately adjusted?

The manuals for applicants and beneficiaries repeat a general definition of innovation from the implementing document. There is mentioned a publication "Principles of EQUAL and their transfer to HREOP", to help to take into account innovation while creating / implementing the project. This manual has not been created yet. The guide for evaluators do not define innovation (it is only mentioned as a part of the evaluation criterion A1, in which the applicant describes in what aspect is a

project innovative, how does it develop new methods, services, processes, or new approaches to the target group). Innovation was also evaluated as a specific criterion in some of the Calls. The manual for evaluation and selection of projects, or the operating manual of the programme, does not mention innovation at all.

Based on the survey³⁰, conducted interviews and focus groups, it was found that the topic of innovation is mentioned during the training of reviewers, however, without enough space given. The reason is a partial nature of innovation as a principle that should be taken into account at all times (and specifically in the A1 rating), but it is never evaluated separately. Within the training it was one of the many mentioned aspects of reviews, but without a significant time allocation. There were some exceptional cases where innovation was a specific criterion, but here it was necessary to follow a brief methodology for allocating points under a single key. This procedure was stopped after its criticism. The reviewers themselves evaluate the innovation level of projects assessed from average to below average in a long-term, with stable to declining trend. The reason for this is undoubtedly the inflation of the term, when the evaluators agree that the applicants often use the concept of innovation, even when it comes to ordinary, familiar solution that is "only" adopted. It is of course necessary to repeatedly mention that the definition of innovation in this direction is not accurate and that it is not a failure on the side of applicants, they are obviously trying to tie their intention with the objectives of the call and the programme and to clearly articulate this fact, incl. ties to the principle of innovation. Conversely, the cases where the applicant proposed an innovative solution within the project, but did not identify it as innovative, were reported rarely, i.e. in exceptional cases only. Innovation is still considered an important aspect from the side of reviewers, but not the main / key aspect, of course, taking into account the specific focus of the call.

In parallel, it is also necessary to take into account the fact that the evaluators, according to their expressions and in addition to the application and their expertise and experience, use other sources as well, including websites of applicants and the other Internet resources available. It is therefore appropriate to consider the possibility that the evaluators assessing the novelty of the project (in relation to innovative solutions) may be subject to a sense that "everything was already here." Or they get into a situation when they evaluate several projects (up to 15) within one call, so they de facto evaluate similar project proposals, with minimal differences in case of very narrowly specified calls. Here it is worth mentioning the existence of the so-called "rating" of evaluators, i.e. their quality assessment on the basis of experience with them, or the different quality of evaluators as such. Potential problems with the quality of evaluation, and also with regard to the high number of applications that must be processed by the evaluator in a relatively short time, are repeatedly mentioned in the evaluation reports incl. *Organization of the evaluation focus groups* (2009). The evaluation conducted by two assessors solves the problem only partially, because it is able to identify the difference between evaluations, but not mistakes of a system nature (e.g. the lack of training of all evaluators in a particular area).

The evaluation study *Evaluation in relation to monitoring – the indicator system assessment* (2010) evaluated the indicator *075700 Number of new / innovated products* as very problematic from the perspective of the implementers as they doubted, what they can and cannot include in the indicator, so as to the objectivity of the collected data, which is low and the explanatory power of the indicator is small (*Evaluation in relation to the monitoring ... 2010: pp. 8*).

These problems relate to the ambiguous definition of innovation and the indicator itself. The survey and interviews with beneficiaries and applicants carried out under the above-mentioned study showed that more than a quarter of respondents (28.3%) consider this indicator as mostly or very obscure and ambiguous. Because of the broad definition of the indicator it covers very different outputs. The consequence of non-specificity of the indicator is the fact that applicants may include in its values very

³⁰ Details are included in the technical part of this report (partial analysis no. 6).

different outcomes and it mostly dependent on the quality of their arguments. The indicator therefore includes very disparate values and the check of its performance is impossible, the objectivity of input data is therefore called into question and the explanatory power of the indicator itself is very small (*Evaluation in relation to the monitoring ... 2010: pp. 54-55*).

Problems with understanding the concept of innovation among applicants and beneficiaries are clearly evidenced by the *Organization of the evaluation focus groups* final report (2009). Based on the analysis of the focus group with project implementers it also became clear that, according to the project implementers, innovation in projects is partially excluded because of the time delay in the project implementation, because it is not impossible to predict "what will be considered innovation after two years," when the situation may change and any changes in the project can be problematic (*Organization of the evaluation focus groups* 2009: pp. 26).

Based on these findings, the *Organization of the evaluation focus groups* final report (2009) formulated recommendations for innovation in the HREOP and its evaluation. In particular, it is about the deeper and more detailed definition of innovation in the context of the HREOP and the shift from (currently) the formal nature of the indicator into a practical, dynamic and inspiring concept in terms of projects (*Organization of the evaluation focus groups* 2009: pp. 33).

5.2 Task 1 Evaluate the relevance of the HREOP's innovation themes and their reflection in the calls in the context of socioeconomic development and progress in the HREOP's implementation

The following chapter presents the findings of Task 1: Evaluate the relevance of the HREOP's innovation themes and their reflection in the calls in the context of socioeconomic development and progress in the HREOP's implementation

Evaluation questions:

- 1. To what extent are the topics of the innovation activities within the HREOP and the HREOP's implementation document relevant?³¹*
- 2. Which needed topics are not included in the innovation activities identified?*
- 3. To what extent are the topics of the innovation activities reflected in the calls published?*
- 4. On what areas / topics should the innovation activities be focused within the next implementation of the HREOP?*

Evaluation question 1.1. To what extent are the topics of the innovation activities within the HREOP and the HREOP's implementation document relevant?

The socioeconomic changes in the last five-year period have been essential, especially when compared with the situation before and after the start of the programming period 2007-2013. It is appropriate to distinguish two aspects of these changes. The first presents the development of macroeconomic indicators, critically affected by the impact of the economic crisis and the ensuing economic downturn. The second aspect involves qualitative sources and results of international competitiveness. Both aspects are interrelated and the position of the Czech Republic in the period 2008-2011 worsened in both aspects and their further development is also associated with considerable uncertainty. High openness of the Czech economy means a crucial importance of the external demand for domestic performance, persistent fiscal restraint and a low institutional quality, limiting the room for manoeuvre or the capacity for effective economic policy.

³¹ The topics are listed in Appendix 1.

A sustainable, i.e. qualitatively based economic performance is decisively affected with the competitiveness of the domestic corporate sector, which is increasing in an aggregated long-term perspective, despite consistently very negatively rated institutional quality. Competitiveness of the Czech economy is gradually changing, thanks to the technological catching-up, from cost to quality-based, and this process will continue. An unknown is a rate of such convergence and also its social context (see the discussion about the sustainability of the European model of the welfare state, including environmental requirements, or when economic performance of the EU is long-term low or even declining).

The economic crisis that hit the Czech Republic at the end of 2008 has ended a period of favourable macroeconomic developments, whose return cannot be foreseen as yet. It must be emphasised that the impact on the Czech economy is relatively mild in comparison with a number of EU countries and that emergency measures are not truly needed. Mildness of this impact is largely due to a strong link to the German economy and especially its export performance and solid basis of domestic financial sector. Despite the unclear prospects for global development (on which the Czech economy depends crucially) it is clear that the period of high growth before 2008 is hardly repeatable without a significant recovery in external demand. The pressure on sustainable macroeconomic parity, which requires strong fiscal austerity due to inefficient settings of the public expenditure system (any positive effects of the reforms on the expenditure side of budgets are difficult to estimate). The development after 2011 is still subject to uncertainty and it is not clear what impacts will affect the qualitative competitiveness or cause long-lasting structural changes, whose impacts rather go away with the end of the economic downturn.

In terms of **economic performance**, the average annual real GDP growth of 6.1% in the previous period decreased to 0.7% during the crisis (more optimistic prediction is projected to increase to 2.0%). The most significant annual drop occurred in 2009, after which the growth performance returned to pre-crisis trajectory, but continues its long term downward trend (from the previous peak of 7.0% in 2006). It is of course the question whether, when and to what extent it will be possible to reverse this trend, or at least weaken, the MoF assumes that the growth performance from the 2003 level will be back in 2015 (by then should slightly gradually increase). Development of employment has been less volatile compared to GDP, in both directions. However, even in the case of GDP it is possible to see the return to the pre-crisis downward trajectory and the predicted increase in the growth rate is very low and significantly less than the increase in GDP growth.

Comprehensive view of the position of the Czech Republic in the agenda of **Labour and Social Affairs** presents the development of key indicators monitored within the application of the Europe 2020 strategy. Total employment and the employment of men in the group 20-64 are higher than the EU-27 average, but since the peak in 2008, it has declined to 70.4% in 2010, respectively to 79.6%. The women employment has also declined (to 60.9%), which is less than the average EU-27. On the contrary, the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion has developed positively, as it has dropped from almost two million in 2005 to 1.5 million in 2010 (which however represents a slight increase compared to 2009) and in relative terms from 19.6% to 14.4% of total population. Although the decline has slowed considerably after 2007, the resulting value is still significantly better than the average EU-27 (23.5%).

A broader concept of competitiveness evaluate the position of the Czech Republic in the reports of the World Economic Forum, which are largely based on a survey of opinions of entrepreneurs (soft data), which is suitable for qualitative characteristics and usually the only way of surveys. The advantage of the survey is its immediate perception of reality at the individual level in the broader context of socio-economic development. Although the data are not fully comparable over time, it accurately characterises trends, which in the case of the Czech Republic are certainly not favourable. In a report covering the year 2007, the CR is included in the group of innovation-driven economies

and occupies a total 33rd place (as in the previous year). In a report covering the year 2010 it fell to the 38th place (this fall had already been recorded in the 2009 report). The deterioration of the value of the index occurred in all pillars of competitiveness apart from the infrastructure and technology readiness

Within an alternative approach to the assessment of innovation performance at the level of **national innovation systems** (Innovation Union Scoreboard), the Czech Republic has continued to belong to the group of so-called moderate innovators with a gradual improvement of the summary innovation index values. This improvement has thus far not been projected into a major qualitative change (i.e. in the transition to a group of "innovation followers"). In comparison with 2007 the values in sub-segments have improved the most in finance and promotion of research, the resulting value in 2010 is still only half of the EU-27, slightly higher in openness / research system performance and slightly lower for mental assets. Below the EU-27 and with a deterioration compared to 2007 are relations (inter-company) and entrepreneurship, and also below average but improving are the human resources. In other segments is the Czech Republic's position better than the EU-27 (business investment and innovators), comparable respectively (economic effects). A view on the specific characteristics of each dimension shows their dependence on economic development (in the case of financing research systems from public funds, venture capital and business expenditure on R&D) and on the type of competitive advantage with a predominance of modifying innovator with a below-average role of the corporate research and vice versa an above-average importance of other innovation expenditure.

The current adverse economic development affects employment in combination with long-acting pressure on the growth of wages and productivity, which is accompanied by the real and price convergence. In this constellation is the position of disadvantaged groups in the labour market (excluded respectively) getting disproportionately worse while pressures on public expenditure savings are growing, on which are these groups dependent (or the subjects of so-called grant economy). At the same time, also due to the continuing uncertainty regarding future recovery, there has shown the weakened link between the (potential) economic growth and employment growth. The gradual depletion of the cost advantage and strengthening the competitiveness of emerging economies in qualitatively more demanding processing segments will further reduce the demand for low-skilled jobs and their attractiveness as a source of earned income. The demand for medium-and even high-skilled domestic resources will also decrease especially in knowledge-intensive services in favour of developing countries. Long-term or even permanent challenge is therefore the ability of the Czech economy to keep good jobs and to create new jobs, and to minimize the share of persons dependent on not-earned income.

In this context, it is appropriate to evaluate the effect of socioeconomic changes on the innovativeness of the HREOP in terms of innovation supply and demand. Existing **innovation demand** comes from national, (sectorial) strategy documents, which are a combination of the EU and domestic development priorities. These documents are continuously updated, but the problems and opportunities that seek to reflect are the long-term ones. Short-term socioeconomic changes only emphasise their urgency. At EU level, such a long-term challenge is the sustainability of the European model of the welfare state, where a large part of the population depends on not-earned income, and its share is inevitably increasing (i.e. the use of human resources is low) and the productivity of the working population is low (in terms of quality or dynamics). The Lisbon strategy (formulated in 2000 with efforts to restart in 2005) saw as a solution increasing knowledge-based economic performance, which is undoubtedly correct and the only possible approach, given the limited resources available. The new strategy Europe 2020 (published in 2010) does not represent a qualitative change. At the national level it is possible to see the persistence of key reform issues in the documents of the National Reform Programme (2005-2008, 2008-2010, 2011+) and their sectorial or thematic specifications.

In the HREOP, innovation demand is materialised (or should be) in individual national projects which target system change of the employment policy (PA 2.2) and social inclusion (PA 3.1) (modernisation and reform) at the departmental level and change of the institutional quality at multi-departmental level (priority axes 4). Intermediate level for implementation of these system changes is represented by individual projects for public administration bodies and local authorities with territorial competence (where they can reflect their own innovation demand). This system approach to HREOP's innovation agenda can be considered as a long-term and generally applicable in the wider international context and undoubtedly also in excess to the period 2014+ regardless of short-term variable (cyclic) socioeconomic development. As more important, therefore, appears political changes and the political demand derived from them, which will accentuate an ideological shift of system changes (although the emphasis on austerity in public spending will always be inevitable), as well as changes in influence level of different interest groups (entrepreneurs / employers vs. the non-profit sector), changes in the quality of the development and implementation of policies towards the application of modern methods of social innovation (not yet imaginable in domestic conditions). Immediate adverse effects, however, can amplify the urgency of addressing long-term system problems, especially in combination with the effects of fiscal retrenchment. They can also stimulate radical innovation approaches or increase the pressure on their implementation and dissemination. They can also fortify the resistance to changes, or make changes slower or reduced.

In terms of the impact of socioeconomic changes on the **innovation supply** (materialised in grant projects that respond to the content of the calls), it should be noted that innovation is not in any of the HREOP's areas primary or even a significant goal or a tangible condition for implementation and for success of grant projects, with the exception of social entrepreneurship. Innovation outputs were explicitly determined as a specific criterion in four Calls only, and its failure is only a slight point loss and does not prevent project approval. At the project level is innovation therefore only an additional factor which is defined broadly and vaguely at the same time in the methodology. To fulfil it is more a question of argumentation skills of applicants or project implementers. Although innovation demand is almost always emphasised within the calls in varying degrees (see question 1.3.1), project innovation supply in the HREOP is, according to the available resources, assessed as low or even declining over time by external evaluators, managing authorities and available evaluation reports. In this context the influence of socioeconomic changes on innovation can be speculated only hypothetically without empirical validation.

In general, the sector of the grant economy is more resilient to the effects of cyclical developments and business sector implements rather complementary projects under the HREOP (in relation to the main activity, which is, of course, business). A more immediate impact can be expected only in social entrepreneurship, which is linking social and economic aspects closely. Social enterprise is the HREOP's only truly innovative output at the project level, whose implementation (albeit unevenly in individual cases) also depends on the overall economic conditions. The number of social economy projects is low and their potential failure could rather weaken the perception of their importance as an innovative approach in the next programming period. Mediated effects may occur when moving the resources to the benefit (due to the crisis and budget cuts) of larger target groups (unemployed, socially excluded), or when favouring routine solutions, as in the case of massive (in terms of number of projects) support for business education.

Following the findings in relation to the Task 2, we must conclude that (1) due to the definition of innovation in the HREOP as a horizontal principle and (2) the mechanism of measurement of innovation (levels) using a sole indicator whose value is informative but repeatedly criticised, it is due to non-specific capture of innovation subsequently de facto impossible for the changes to take effect directly in the implementation. The surveys did not identify reactions to these criticisms, except e.g. the above-mentioned elimination of specific innovation criterion and the change in the guide for applicants (with more detailed definition of innovation and innovative product). Topics of innovation

activities, as reported in the programming and implementation documents (see Appendix 1), are then defined broadly enough to be possible to find (and support) the innovative solutions including topics that were identified as a priority for the next programming period within this report³². However, the process of implementation seems to be problematic, in direct relation to the inadequate (de facto absent) evaluation of project and social impact.

On the project implementers' side a trend can be traced to formulate project applications in order to closely match the focus and content of the calls, without redundant activities, and also to leave the space for alternative solutions in the implementation (i.e. they are not describing some activities too closely, which could interfere with the real situation at the moment of actual implementation). Overall, the projects often look very similar. The surveys carried out on a sample of projects can state that some innovative solutions were proposed, but projects of this type were often not recommended for implementation, mainly due to shortcomings in the project application and the proposed risk (innovative) solutions. Relation to the risk factor (or the required project risk minimum) has not changed during the HREOP's implementation.

Evaluation question 1.2. Which needed topics are not included in the innovation activities identified?

Based on current information (on the side of MoLSA) no innovation theme has been observed to be missing in the HREOP. Within its framework are the themes in the HREOP's Implementation Document very broadly defined and in general it allows the ability to tailor it to the actual innovative demand. Such adaptation has been reflected in individual calls for individual and grant projects. While the calls for individual projects specified the content according to the national innovation demand for a limited number of larger projects of a system nature, calls for grant projects only mentioned the general innovation characteristics to be contained in an innovation supply of applicants (except for the desired innovation output of social enterprise).

Evaluation question 1.3. To what extent are the topics of the innovation activities reflected in the calls published?

The themes of innovation actions (as defined in the HREOP's programming and implementation documents) are always included in HREOP's calls for proposals, which is given by their latitude and generality. The HREOP's annual reports for 2009 and 2010 present a summary of calls by priority axes and areas of support taking into account the innovation themes. Mentioned are calls where innovation is a specific evaluation criterion (12, 23, 35, 36, 54), and several others without a real justification – they are marked as innovative based on aspects selected ad hoc. In summary the innovativeness of calls can be divided according to the project type i.e. individual and grant projects. In the case of grant projects is explicitly innovative only the Call 30, which targets the creation or development of social entrepreneurship. In the case of individual national projects innovation targets the system reform and transformation. A comprehensive approach across the axis for all the calls in this regard represents only the priority axis 4. For other projects, innovation is emphasised differently and it depends entirely on the project implementers, in what particular form it will be implemented. Below are the innovation activities and a summary for each area of support, based on the metaevaluation and work with the information sources available.

1.1 Increasing Employee Adaptability and Enterprise³³: (1) support of enterprise systems of continuing professional education; (2) the enterprise adaptation programmes focused in particular at activation and motivation of employers and employees to further professional education and improving access to it. List of supported activities in the calls (for enterprises 23, 35, for associations 33, 52, for

³² The topics are listed below within the evaluation question 1.4.

³³ The HREOP Annual Report mentions only calls 23 and 35 in the area of support 1.1.

enterprises in the MIT's programme 39, 60) also includes innovation actions defined for the area of support, which also concerns the global grant "Strengthening social dialogue and social partners capacity building" (Call 2).

1.2 Increasing Adaptability of Employees from Restructured Enterprises: (1) the use of local initiatives and their involvement in the creation of social innovation to support specific programmes; (2) their direct focus on support of the creation of positive social environment. However, these innovation activities, however, are not specifically targeted in calls (36, 37). According to the Annual Report 2009/2010, the area of support 1.2 includes innovative tools aimed at employees at risk of redundancy in order to prepare them for the new labour market and return them there as soon as possible.

2.1 Reinforcement of Active Employment Policies³⁴: (1) close interconnection between the area of support activities and government support programmes for Agencies for Supported Employment (ASE), (2) development of preventive measures, (3) more efficient use of ASE tools and implementation of new and innovative ASE tools. The definition of innovation activities is so broad and vague at the same time that they may include any activities implemented under the ASE. Innovation activities are not specifically specified either in the individual calls. The call 70 as the only one in the area of support explicitly states the importance of innovative elements in the submitted projects; however, the activities supported are the same as in the first regional call 13.

2.2 Modernization of Institutions and Implementation of a System of Employment Service Quality and their Development³⁵: (1) creation and development of new working methods, (2) creation and development of new information systems, (3) development of educational programmes for employees of employment services and partner organizations, (4) finding new areas and possibilities of collaboration between labour market institutions. The call 11 is focused on the structural changes, the design of new systems or the modification of existing systems and introducing them into practice.

3.1 Support of Social Integration and Social Services³⁶: The call 30 explicitly includes support of new approaches or new combinations of existing approaches as yet parallel in the social economy, enabling socially excluded persons and persons at risk of social exclusion to enter into the labour market and business environment, or the access of these groups to public services. The innovation activities do not accurately specify system projects, whose aim actually go beyond the social economy (see individual projects in calls 4, 5) and in fact covers whole system transformation, including other areas of support of the priority axis 3. A wider thematic choice also have grant projects in 3.1, where some of included activities can be evaluated as innovative, in particular in case of supporting the processes of social services provision. Innovation support is explicitly mentioned in calls 67 and 86, other calls include actions with a proinnovative effect (22, 45, 65, 78). Individual calls create continuity particularly in the promotion of the processes of social service quality development and planning of service development. Supported activities create conditions for the implementation of innovation actions, especially when properly planned.

3.2 Support of Social Integration of Members of Roma Localities³⁷: Innovation is focused towards promoting and expanding the tools of social economy for the social integration of target groups,

³⁴ The HREOP Annual Report does not explicitly mention any in the area of support 2.1.

³⁵ The HREOP Annual Report mentions in the area of support 2.1. the start of implementation of the individual project "Development of National System of Occupations and Sectorial Councils as instruments for employers to influence HRD in the Czech Republic", then continuation of implementation of individual projects „Increasing system efficiency to support the employment of people with disabilities in the Czech Republic“ and „Development of services and collaboration between the labour offices and employers in the changing labour market conditions“.

³⁶ The HREOP Annual Report mentions only call 30 in the area of support 3.1.

³⁷ The HREOP Annual Report does not explicitly mention any in the area of support 3.2

however the social economy is not included in the list of supported activities. Calls 8 and 47 primarily include a pilot project to create the Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities. Other calls (15, 19, 55) do not explicitly include innovation activities, however, some of their supporting characteristics are included.

3.3 Integration of Socially Excluded Groups on the Labour Market: Innovation activity should be, in particular, developed by supporting new, innovation approaches and solutions in complex employment programmes for the socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion on the basis of broad cooperation of stakeholders. The calls are not directly targeting innovation (or even mentioned). Individual projects in the call 61 include innovative elements to create a new methodology, a comprehensive care for specific target groups (disabled, war veterans).

3.4 Equal Opportunities of Women and Men on the Labour Market and Reconciliation of Family and Working Life³⁸: (1) development of new programmes to promote equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market, (2) development of other innovative methods (new forms of employment) to improve equal opportunities, (3) support of the implementation of innovative programmes and measures to reconcile work and family life (in the employment sphere and the local and regional level, and the introduction of innovative forms of partnerships of entities that are involved in improving the conditions of reconciling working and family life). The fulfilment of the principle of innovation should be taken into account when selecting projects for financial support from the HREOP and is accentuated in all calls (10, 26, 54, 76).

4.1 Reinforcement of Institutional Capacity and Effectiveness of Public Administration³⁹: streamlining of activities carried out at the level of public administrative offices and organizational units established by these authorities and at the level of local governments. The calls are mostly related to the implementation of the Smart Administration Strategy - Effective Public Administration and Friendly Public Services (relation to the strategy is a specific criterion). Support is provided through individual projects of a system nature and global grants (funding of related IOP's infrastructure investments). A system nature of the priority axes 4 differentiates it from other HREOP's axes. The innovation levels of calls are different; however, they represent an innovative whole and therefore cannot be evaluated alone well enough.

5.1 Transnational cooperation⁴⁰: Innovation activities should be developed: (1) horizontally as part of the projects being implemented, (2) in the form of projects directly aimed at the creation and diffusion of innovation in policy areas supported by the HREOP and in the area of the programme management co-financed by the ESF. Innovation actions are thus defined very broadly in terms of the content and are just copied in the identical form to the calls on a given axis. The first call (12) out of four published only included a specific innovation criterion.

Some calls explicitly emphasise **innovative tools and approaches**, but without further clarification. An emphasis has therefore rather declarative character. A very small number of calls directly involves a specific innovation criterion (which was later abandoned), but without an apparent impact on innovation projects. However, the majority of calls include some innovative or even proinnovative characteristics, even though they are not directly mentioned in the text. Part of each project application is to explain the innovation criterion A1 (an applicant describes why the project is innovative, how it develops new methods, services, processes, or new approaches to the target group). Below - broken down by individual areas – it is summarized which innovation characteristics are declared. The analysis is based on metaevaluation and work with the available information

³⁸ The HREOP Annual Report mentions only calls 26 and 54 in the area of support 3.4

³⁹ The HREOP Annual Report explicitly mentions calls 48,69,53,57 and 58 in the area of support 4.1

⁴⁰ The HREOP Annual Report explicitly mentions calls 12 and 51 in the area of support 5.1

resources⁴¹, taking into account the findings in relation to the evaluation task 3 (identifying HREOP's innovative projects).

1.1 Increasing Employee Adaptability and Enterprise: The calls for grant projects of enterprise training programmes declare the preference of support for projects with a complex character, however, the complexity is not concretized (only the call 35 includes specific criterion of complexity, but the definition is vague). Two calls (23, 35) include a specific criterion of innovation (23/21.8.2008, 35/23.3.2009). It relates to the objective of supporting of new methods, forms and content of education in companies. It declares that the purpose is not to compensate expenditures on educational activities carried out in the present, but to expand their portfolio, quality and to introduce new methods, etc. The concept of innovation is in this specific criterion very narrowly focused, compared to the definition of innovation actions. Innovativeness of the project activities is distinguished by three aspects, i.e. product, process and context (with slight differences between both calls), and it emphasises the novelty and complexity (but its assessment is not defined), while the improvement aspect is omitted.

The calls for educational programmes 39, 60 do not declare innovation as a specific criterion; however, they significantly limit the applicability of the training product, which should be used only within the institution where it was developed. In this respect, the outputs have always been innovative (resp. exclusively customised), but with a priori limited transferability.

Call (2) for the global grant for the implementation of supported activities requires paying of attention to the introduction of innovative and modern forms of work organization, but without further specification. Thematically wide range of supported activities and the high average range of project support (at the level of grant projects) allow applicants to apply the system innovation approach. This aspect is not emphasised in the call's text, and its use is therefore dependent on the applicants themselves. At the same time it is not clear whether a project innovation has been somehow evaluated or otherwise taken into account.

1.2 Increasing Adaptability of Employees from Restructured Enterprises: Call 36 includes specific innovation criterion in the same form as in the call 23, call 37 not. In the text of the call innovation is not mentioned.

2.1 Reinforcement of Active Employment Policies: Innovation is not specifically taken into account in the calls. The area of support does not include the indicator 075700, as the only area of support. Most projects fulfil the role of direct support for needy target groups (i.e. it substitutes standardized services that are not covered by the state budget).

2.2 Modernization of Institutions and Implementation of a System of Employment Service Quality and their Development: Innovation is not specifically taken into account in the call 11, but it rather results from the system nature of the projects implemented.

3.1 Support of Social Integration and Social Services: This area of support, as the only one, develops supported innovation actions and tools in the implementation document, which differentiates it from the rest of the operational programme. It also corresponds to the default characteristic of the principle of innovation used in the introduction to the implementing document. Innovative tools are explicitly included in the two groups of supported activities: the integration of target groups in the labour market and the social economy (specifically social entrepreneurship). The concept of innovation in the call 30 is fully extraordinary in the HREOP and certainly advisable to follow when proposing the concept of innovation in the next programming period (the so-called targeted innovation). Other calls for grant projects include innovation approaches such as partnerships, planning of service

⁴¹ All relevant documents relating to the programme and calls (including evaluation) were analyzed.

development with intensive involvement of stakeholders, creation of new information systems and other resources and assessment of the performance and effectiveness of the plan.

3.2 Support of Social Integration of Members of Roma Localities: Activities of individual projects are (potentially) innovative thanks to the inclusion of stakeholder participation and the creation of local partnerships, the creation of local social inclusion strategies and their implementation, increasing knowledge capacity (situational analyses, concepts, training of consultants and methodical support), piloting (proving) inclusion policies in localities, evaluation of the benefits of intervention (comparing the initial state-of-art and subsequent state), the enforcement of the knowledge gain in the state methodology of social inclusion policy in Roma localities. Grant projects include some innovation elements such as partnerships at local and regional level or the quality and provision control.

3.3 Integration of Socially Excluded Groups on the Labour Market: The emphasis is placed on the complexity of the implementation of activities and individual approach to clients, which is also one of the specific criteria for grant projects. These qualitative characteristics can be considered as a potentially innovative, assuming their more concrete definition. A broad cooperation of stakeholders is not a specific criterion and it is not emphasised in the calls for grant projects. Grant projects are included in calls 31, 56, 68 and 75 with the same types of activities supported and the specific criterion of complexity, the individual projects of Call 61 focus on specific target groups and build on projects already completed.

The problem with specific criterion of complexity in call 31 lies in the fact that the complexity itself is not defined. The following calls 56 and 68 gave a try to make such definition, but not very successfully: complexity and coherence of activities is evaluated according to the perspective to what extent they form a complex whole (which is rather a circular definition). The aspect of an individual approach to the client has been added, but again without further clarification. The call 75 added to a specific criterion of complexity and individual approach an aspect of the experience of the applicant. This, however, makes the specific criterion a fairly disparate group of indicators. In addition, the project includes a mandatory attachment "target group analysis and description of the experience of the applicant", which is undoubtedly essential for the project quality. On the other hand the complexity remains a vague concept.

3.4 Equal Opportunities of Women and Men on the Labour Market and Reconciliation of Family and Working Life: Innovation activities are generally specified in the calls, but it is left on the applicants, how they would interpret innovation in specific projects. The call 26 contains the above mentioned support of the development of innovation programmes and measures to reconcile working and family life. The call 54 includes innovation of the products developed as a specific criterion, it particularly mentions the development and testing of innovation programmes and measures to reconcile, the use of innovative methods in the development and implementation of comprehensive programs to promote employment or self-employment. The criterion of developed project innovation means that the applicant must demonstrate that the product will have significant added value compared to already existing solutions on the Czech market. The evaluation is divided into sub-criteria. The added value is demonstrated by an analysis that a product with the same results is not present on the market, the in time and place is illustrated by a way of using the product in other conditions, the possibilities of further spread describe the idea about its capabilities during and after the project, economic analysis of transferability includes further use of the products after the end of their support from public sources. The call 76 contains, in addition to the above areas, also a requirement to drive changes (innovation) caused by the project implementer's own activities. But it does not contain a specific criterion of innovation.

4.1 Reinforcement of Institutional Capacity and Effectiveness of Public Administration: First call (27) of the priority axis 4 includes an extensive list of supported activities, all of which have proinnovation importance and targets increasing the efficiency of public administration. Other calls focus on partial

aspects of these activities in the coordination and implementation of SAS and its sub-segments and to create the preconditions for its implementation at various levels of government (increasing the quality of management, training for the use of new tools). Compared to other priority axes, a great attention is paid to increasing the knowledge capacity of all phases and the level of implementation of SAS and its stakeholders.

5.1 Transnational cooperation: The definition of innovation as a specific criterion is, in the call 12, based on the EQUAL experience: the applicant should carry out an analysis in the area he would like to address and articulate what innovative methods or tools due to the needs of the target groups the project brings on the one hand, and in which way the innovative outputs can be disseminated and promoted in the national policy and in practice or abroad on the other hand. Criterion standardly distinguishes three types of innovation (objective, process and context). Besides the horizontal principle, represented by the specific criterion of innovation, innovative projects are also reported as one of the three supported activities. Instead of a specific innovation criterion, the calls 51 and 77 require an initial analysis (which is specific criterion apart from the quality and composition of international partnership). It mentions some aspects relevant to the assessment of innovation of the project, even though it is not clear what criteria are selected and evaluated (evaluation methodology is not available). Besides a proposal of innovative solutions in the CR project must clarify innovativeness of a foreign partner to demonstrate the demand for innovation (again, it is not clear how) and describe the method of dissemination of outputs.

Defining themes and the base-line proceeds in individual reform and transformation projects and in grant projects through the reference to the related legislation and strategic documents (these references, however, do not relate directly to innovation, but sometimes only to the definition of the conditions for providing the support). The priority axis 4 in this regard represents a complex approach, in relation to the Smart Administration Strategy. In grant projects a specific definition of the topic and its base-line (including a specific evaluation methodology) is made in the call 30 only, i.e. the promotion of social entrepreneurship. Another group of calls lists the types of supported innovation activities, but their specific thematic focus and innovation itself are subject to individual projects (the priority axis 5 can be an example where the first call also included a specific criterion for the evaluation of innovation, but it was omitted in later calls). Most of the calls, in general, do not specify innovation topics and do not use base-line. Clarification of innovation of the project is dependent on argumentation skills of the applicant and its assessment on the evaluator's knowledge capacity. It can be observed through the time that the projects being implemented tend to certain unification, which may be due to the weakening of supply innovation capacity and the measured adaptation to the type of already approved projects and the type of evaluator knowledge capacity (its conservativeness, narrow-mindedness).

1.1 Increasing Employee Adaptability and Enterprise: Innovativeness of themes is not defined. Only within the specific criteria of innovativeness (calls 23, 35) the criteria of its evaluation in case of educational programmes are defined and supplemented by a number of examples. Definition of the criterion of innovation was indeed extended in the call 35, but problems with its application have not been removed. In the case of specific training (call 60) the previous experience (call 39) forced their specification which the evaluator must proceed in terms of assessing specificity.

1.2 Increasing Adaptability of Employees from Restructured Enterprises: Innovativeness of themes is not defined. The used specific criterion focuses on the innovative concept of educational programmes in terms of the area of support 1.1. In general, the innovation is seen as targeting people at risk of unemployment before they become unemployed. The problem in the fulfilment of this innovative concept, however, is a difficulty to reach the defined target group.

2.1 Reinforcement of Active Employment Policies: Due to the type of supported activities is the definition of the themes and base-line determined by current legislation, to which the calls reference without taking innovation into account.

2.2 Modernization of Institutions and Implementation of a System of Employment Service Quality and their Development: Neither topics nor base-line are specified, but it can be assumed that they were the starting point of each of projects, which were also partly linked to the previous projects.

3.1 Support of Social Integration and Social Services: To define social economy support we used the output of the Comparative analysis of social-economic models in the EU and the recommendations for their implementation in the Czech Republic in the framework of European Social Fund programmes 2007-2013. A comprehensive analysis formulated recommendations for the support of social economy and represents, within the HREOP, a unique approach to the knowledge capacity preparation for implementation of innovative actions (another example is the Smart Administration Strategy - SAS). Attention is also paid to support activities such as increasing availability of education in methods of the social economy, training potential applicants in the principles of social economy which resulted from projects implemented in the Czech Republic (e.g. under the EQUAL initiative in connection with the activities of the National Thematic Network C - Strengthening the social economy, especially community services). It also provided support to applicants for processing requests for financial support. Another positive specific aspect is activity of the Thematic Network for the Development of Social Economy – TESSEA. At the same time an intense cooperation in the international community for the social economy has been developed.

System projects include creating or development of the knowledge capacity in order to transform social services and social integration, which is used to specify the topics of individual and grant projects and their base-line. An example of this capacity, in addition to the MoLSA own resources, is the National Support Centre for Transformation of Social Services.

3.2 Support of Social Integration of Members of Roma Localities: The theme of innovation is quite a special case in this area of support, because favoured are the applicants with long-term experience with the target group and in-depth knowledge of the locality. This experience may be considered necessary for the specification of activities and their base-line. It is hardly directly transferable to the text of calls and evaluation criteria. The project applicant must have a clear understanding of the needs of the target group and innovates project activities only to a limited extent also due to their potential high risk.

3.3 Integration of Socially Excluded Groups on the Labour Market: Calls do not include a direct link to innovation activities or their specification. Base-line in individual projects is represented by a continuation of previously implemented activities (it is not clear whether the call was targeted directly to them).

3.4 Equal Opportunities of Women and Men on the Labour Market and Reconciliation of Family and Working Life: As innovative are considered activities that use a different approach to the target group than is usual, are embedded in the site, highlight the cooperation between different actors in the area and the region, combine appropriately various activities that contribute to gender equality. As innovative can be considered instruments commonly used elsewhere, but are new within the organization.

4.1 Reinforcement of Institutional Capacity and Effectiveness of Public Administration: In principle the definition of topics and base-line represent a reference to the Smart Administration Strategy that defines specific objectives and activities in a complex whole on all levels of state and local governments, and evaluates and updates them regularly. Space for innovation beyond this framework is rather limited, but this is largely due to the requirements for system change of a unique range.

5.1 Transnational cooperation: Thematically, innovative projects are not specified, only the type of activities supported. Innovative projects in this concept include within the call 12: exchange of experience and transfer of good practice between Member States in issues relating to the substantive focus of the ESF (adaptability, active employment policy, tackling social inclusion of specific groups of the population, continuing professional education, modernization of public administration, etc.); collaboration between projects in different Member States in order to improve the results of their own projects or to achieve joint results.

The other calls only slightly modify contents of innovative activities. Compared to the previous call, supported innovation activities in the call 51 are better specified and more demanding, especially the requirement for employability (testing, evaluation, realization) is an asset. The call 77 repeats support for joint development or transfer of innovation and its implementation in the Czech Republic. Innovation is more freely defined than in previous calls and in a more modern way: it may represent a completely new approach to solving problems, as well as use of certain tools or methods known so far only from another areas. It is a yet unused, new procedure or approach, an added value to existing products and services on the market today. Innovation can be achieved e.g. by focusing on the development of new working methods, tools and approaches or by application of existing methods, tools and approaches in a new area; the project focus on promoting changes in established systems in the labour market.

Evaluation question 1.4. On what areas / topics should the innovation activities be focused within the next implementation of the HREOP?

Ideologically, the Vienna Declaration (10/XI/2011) identified priority research topics in the field of social innovation (without an ambition for completeness), which suggest the current focus of technical discussions with potential practical overlaps (the theme of social innovation is strongly associated with the experience, it is based directly on the practice that surpasses theoretical definition): (1) the potential of social innovation in the social economy, civil society, the business sector and the state, (2) multi-level governance and receptiveness of governments towards social innovation, (3) the role of social processes in various forms of cooperation and organizational structures in enterprise innovation, (4) the relationship between innovation in services and social innovation, (5) job innovation for smarter and better work, (6) value creation from social innovation and measurement of various types of values, (7) monitoring, evaluation and measurement of social resources for innovation and social impact of technology, (8) the approach and ability of the social sciences to contribute actively to the implementation of social innovation, (9) the contribution of humanities-based knowledge and research methods for social innovation, (10) the creation of an international database of proven promising practices for inclusion and integration, (11) the conditions of participation and self-management in social innovation to overcome poverty and pauperization, (12) indicators of short-term and long-term effects of the educational system on the quality of life, prosperity, innovativeness, (13) lifelong learning, work and generational solidarity as a component of socially committed ageing (14) opportunities and risks of social media for the implementation of large and system social innovation.

The recommendations for the focus at innovation activities in the further implementation of the HREOP in the current period was directly discussed with representatives of the contracting authority during the contract implementation, with regard to the plan of targeting innovation topics in the HREOP within one (pilot) call in the area of support 3.1, which was evaluated as the area with the greatest potential for innovative projects.

The assumption is that it will be a call for grant projects with the explicit innovation targeting, in particular on the transfer and sharing of best practices beyond established procedures, on mobilization and networking of stakeholders and on reflection of currently discussed and fundamentally new approaches on the frontier between research and policy implications. It should also be emphasized that targeting of innovative topics requires appropriate methodical support and within the pilot call

would be appropriate, to the maximum extent possible, to take into account the output of this evaluation, especially the guide (see separate attachment) and the proposed system of two-round assessment (i.e. first evaluation of topics, then subsequently preparation and evaluation of the project as a whole in selected subjects).

The results of the expert panel, in which the Czech experts evaluated subjects for ESF according to the Common Strategic Framework⁴² representing the greatest potential for the application of innovation in the new programming period, are according to the thematic objectives as follows⁴³:

Thematic objective 1 - Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility

1.1.1. Active and preventive labour market measures at an early stage and open to all, including for the identification of individual needs, personalised services and guidance, targeted and tailored training, validation of acquired competences and skills, and outplacement (168/319 respondents)⁴⁴

1.2.1. Introduction of a 'youth guarantee' by establishing schemes to offer further education, (re)training or activation measures to every young person not in employment or in education or training, within 4 months of leaving school. There should be a particular focus on apprenticeship-type vocational training and internships for graduates to acquire first work experience (113/319 respondents)

1.4.3. Developing work-life balance policies, including through support for reintegration into the labour market of persons who have not been working due to caring duties (111/319 respondents)

Thematic objective 2 - Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty

2.1.1. Integrated pathways combining various forms of employability measures such as individualised support, counselling, guidance, access to general and vocational education and training, as well as access to services, notably health and social services, child care, and internet services (107/264 respondents)

2.4.2. Enhanced access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality social services such as employment and training services, services for the homeless, out of school care, childcare and long-term care services (96/264 respondents)

2.5.2. Mobilisation of funds to support initiatives in the social economy and social entrepreneurship (94/264 respondents)

2.5.1. Capacity-building and support structures for the promotion of social enterprises, in particular through social entrepreneurship education and training, networking, the development of national or regional strategies in partnership with key stakeholders, and the provision of business development services and easier access to finance (93/264 respondents)

When comparing the results of Czech and international panel for the same thematic objective, we find that themes 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 acquired abroad most preferences, which further confirms the focus on social entrepreneurship.

⁴² Its version from 14. 3. 2012, part II consists of four thematic objectives, for each of them investment priorities and the key activities.

⁴³ Details are contained in the technical part of the final report (partial analyses 5A and 5B).

⁴⁴ The first number indicates the number of respondents who ticked the subject; the latter total number of respondents to whom the question was asked. It was possible to select none, one or more answers. Sorted by frequency. Listed are topics that received the most, considerably more than the next in ranking.

Thematic objective 3 - Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning

3.3.1. Implementing life-long learning strategies for the workforce, in cooperation with the social partners, including training and skills development and upgrading the transversal competences of the workforce, such as languages, digital competence and entrepreneurship (171/347 respondents)

3.3.2. Adapting vocational education and training (VET) systems to labour market demands, by developing work-based learning in VET, including apprenticeship schemes, and encouraging companies to take on more trainee (149/347 respondents)

3.3.10. Support the development of adult learning systems responding to high quality (143/347 respondents)

Thematic objective 4 - Enhancing institutional capacity and ensuring an efficient public administration

4.1.1. Reforms to ensure better legislation, synergies between policies and effective management of public policies, and transparency, integrity and accountability in public administration and spending of public funds (61/109 respondents)

4.1.2. Development and implementation of human resources strategies and policies. (42/109 respondents)

Among other areas that respondents were able to choose as appropriate to support social innovation, the following areas belonged to the most frequently selected:

- *Networking and coordination - interconnecting (potential) stakeholders on a territorial or a subject basis for innovative solutions, including social donors (380/510 respondents)*
- *Local engagement and innovation (stronger communities) - support the involvement of local communities in solving problems (369/510 respondents)*
- *Innovation workplace - human resource development in companies (359/510 respondents)*
- *Incubation of social innovation (launchpad) - support the new business projects with a social impact (finance, social capital, business expertise) (358/510 respondents)*
- *Creative Economy - connecting creative industries with economic and social activities (344/510 respondents)*
- *Support field workers - divided by target groups (327/510 respondents)*
- *Training / education - educational programmes for the local communities (workshops, informal meetings) (321/510 respondents)*
- *Increased entrepreneurship - corporate social responsibility (316/510 respondents)*
- *Sharing good practice / capacity building - a comprehensive knowledge base centred (or divided) e.g. by target groups (education, networking, knowledge products, research of journals, expert panels) (307/510 respondents)*

Other areas as a whole were divided into sub-parts, forming thematic units. Below are listed the most commonly selected from each unit:

- *Under "Funding social innovation": community support of (non-profit) start-ups (combination of financing instruments and supporting community)*
- *Under "Social Innovation Incubation (launchpad)": support new business projects with a social impact (finance, social capital, business expertise)*
- *Under "Increasing entrepreneurship": corporate social responsibility*
- *Under "Sharing good practice / capacity building": a comprehensive knowledge base centred (or divided) e.g. by target groups (education, networking, knowledge products, research of journals, expert panels)*
- *Under "Promotion and knowledge sharing": Social Innovation Forum*

- *Under "Support for field workers": aid divided by target groups*
- *Under "Local involvement and innovation (stronger community): promoting involvement of local communities in solving problems*
- *Under "Networking and coordination" - interconnecting (potential) stakeholders on a territorial or a subject basis for innovative solutions, including social donors*
- *Under "Education / Awareness": educational programmes for the local community (workshops, informal meetings)*
- *Under "Innovation workplace": human resources development in companies*
- *Under "Creative Economy": connecting creative industries with economic and social activities*
- *Under "Research and policy consultancy": creating interdisciplinary connections*

From the system point of view, it would be appropriate to focus the remaining support on preparing for the new period, including access to the support for innovative activities. After clarifying this approach the appropriate activities in that respect seem to be: the creation of appropriate internal and external knowledge (expert) capacity in the field of social innovation, active participation in transnational expert networks and international research activities, setting up a home thematic network for the area of social innovation at the national, regional and local level; a methodical support for the implementation of the principles of innovation at the programme and project level with use of a foreign experience; making international best practices accessible in form of an inspirational database for domestic use; education of stakeholders in the agenda of social innovation at all vertical levels and in interdepartmental cross-section (at least in selected pioneering agenda); opening up and active dissemination of demonstrably innovative projects of the current programming period.

With regard to the long-term nature of these interventions we address this issue within the evaluation task 7 (Establish an innovation implementation system for the next programming period), or in the proposal of the implementation system in Appendix 6.

5.3 Task 3 Identify innovation projects and their products, divide them into thematic areas and assess the degree of innovation implementation in the HREOP's areas of support.

This section introduces the processing of Task 3 "Identify innovation projects and their products, divide them into thematic areas and assess the degree of innovation implementation in the HREOP's areas of support."

Evaluation questions "1. What ground-breaking (pilot) innovative projects have been implemented?" and "4. What are the differences in the application of innovation in projects in each priority axes or in the areas of support of the HREOP?" were answered for each project whole according to the distribution of units primarily by areas of support and or other characteristics (see below).

Other evaluation questions, namely "2. How are the projects aimed at dissemination and promotion of innovative products (social innovation)?" "3 What are the appropriate thematic areas of innovation activities and which projects and products belong to them?" and also "4. What are the differences in the application of innovation in projects in each priority axes or in the areas of support of the HREOP?" are answered in the context of the case studies conducted and topics of expert panels.

Within the survey it was chosen a methodology, which refers to the characteristics of innovative projects as they were already named in the 1st Interim report. For the purposes of the survey, a project sample was created, taking into account: the type of programme (HREOP, CIP EQUAL), the priority axes and areas of support, type of project (grant, individual), the results of substantive evaluation, project statuses (especially accepted – not-accepted) and last but not least, the

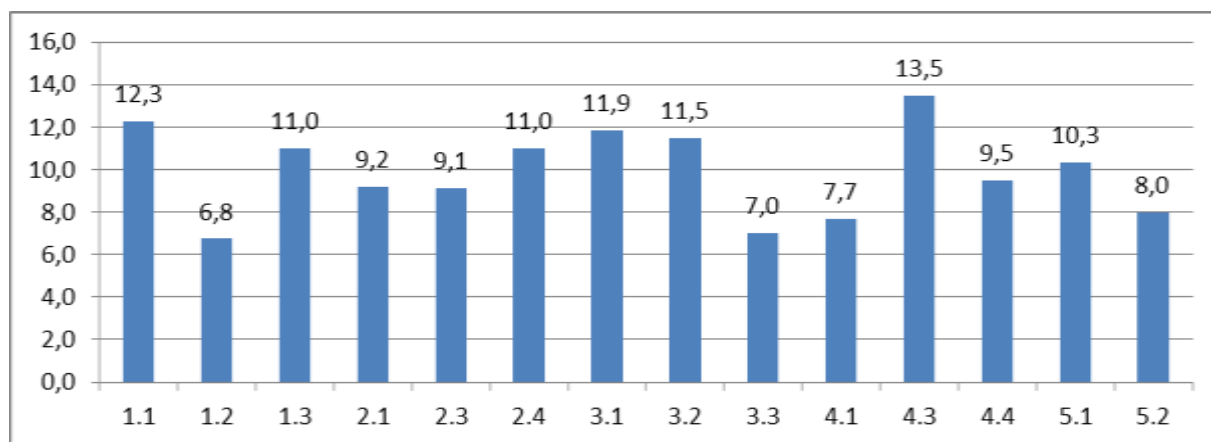
implementation phase, with regard to the continuity with the case studies (see evaluation task 4). Altogether 562 projects were analysed. The expert team then studied all available background material and data, and assigned values of these characteristics to each of the projects, namely it was possible to assign 0-2 points of innovation in 12 monitored characteristics in total: Necessity, Complexity, Novelty, Improvement, Process, Target Groups, Partnerships, Practice, Dissemination, Sustainability, Initiation and Evaluation. So it was a quantified subjective expert evaluation, on the basis of a predetermined range and observed characteristics. If there were found projects indicating innovative solutions in the project sample, it was held a selection among these projects in order to create a detailed case study on the basis of the additional depth interviews. In total, 26 surveys of beneficiaries were conducted and it was created **16 case studies** that form the Proceedings as a separate appendix to the final report. Details of the methodology are given in the technical part of the partial analysis no. 7

Evaluation question 3.1. What ground-breaking (pilot) innovative projects have been implemented?

CIP EQUAL

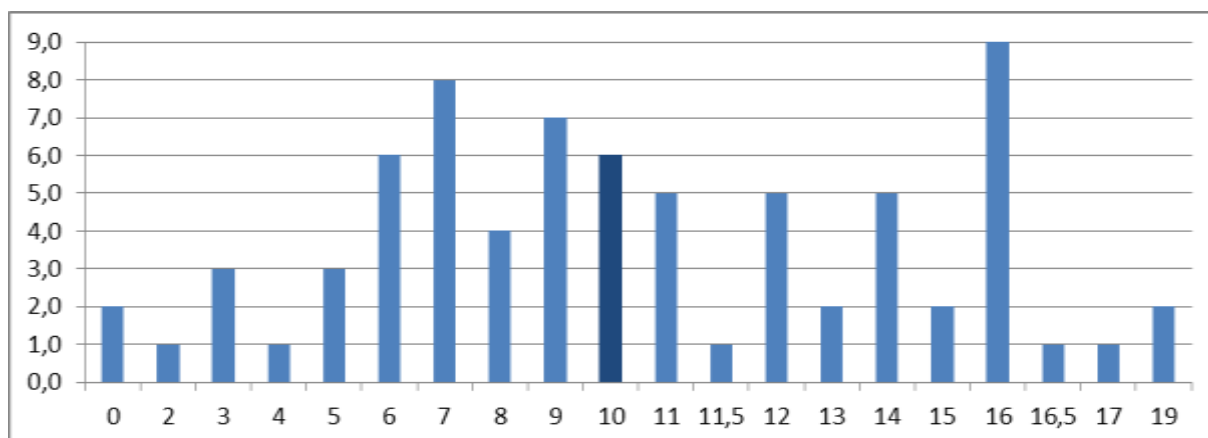
Overall evaluation of the CIP EQUAL shows, thanks to the programme as such, a relatively high level of innovation; the averages for each priority are ranging from 6.8 to 13.5 innovation points (hereinafter referred to as "ip" from 24 maximum).

Graph 1: CIP EQUAL innovation points averages according to priorities



Frequency distribution of occurrence with respect to the number of points is shown in the graph below, and it is evident that the average number of innovation points of a project across the programme is 10 ip.

Graph 2: Frequency distribution of occurrence of number of innovation points of the CIP EQUAL's projects



Within the evaluation of the CIP EQUAL, there were assessed 6 innovative projects⁴⁵ in total which were suitable for further investigation using depth interviews and the presentation of a case study as well (5 of them in total are part of the Proceedings):

CZ.04.4.09/1.1.00.4/0038 Rehabilitation - activation - work (19 ip)

CZ.04.4.09/1.1.00.4/0048 Bohemian Switzerland Community Centre (16 ip)

CZ.04.4.09/1.3.00.4/0079 Polis – creation and promotion of non-discriminatory social, educational and employment policy (16 ip)

CZ.04.4.09/2.3.00.4/0039 Beskydy for all (16 ip)

CZ.04.4.09/3.1.00.4/0077 IQ Servis – System for successful application of the Roma people in the labour market (16 ip)

CZ.04.4.09/5.1.00.4/0106 Why should they stay apart? (16 bi)

Findings and preliminary recommendations

Projects of various thematic areas addressed mostly the same problems of the same target groups (endangered, socially excluded, etc.), which led to the fact that similar methods were developed more times, such as the case of Czech language for foreigners. Seldom cooperated these projects together and it is possible that they did not even know about each other, which would be appropriate to change. Entities that has a long-term experience with the target group implemented the project well, but usually rather routinely. In contrast, entities with a wider range of interests and activities (training organizations, development agencies, chambers of commerce) often do not have a direct experience with the target group. They started to be aware of actual needs, possibilities and limits of the target group in the course of the project, when they are forced to perform a series of changes - often administratively and time-consuming. As a result they do not have enough time or space for innovation. An innovative approach has been identified mostly in case of such projects, where several entities, including experience with the target group, participated on project's preparation and implementation, and together with another entity able to "disrupt" routine approaches, which is able to transfer the approaches, methods and techniques of its field. The ideal body is one that has already proven to be an innovator in its field. The call could e.g. specify the condition that the project must be implemented by partners of different types (an approach that works for example in France).

⁴⁵ For a better orientation of a reader, the original Czech names of projects were translated in English for the purpose of this final report. Any project can be identified by its unique CZ code (translator's note)

HREOP

The HREOP situation is more complicated with regard to cross-sectional and uneven emphasis on innovation, i.e. the major differences between the type of a project (individual vs. grant projects) and individual calls, which deflect values due to their focus. Below are presented only compact, comparable units.

AREA OF SUPPORT 1.1 (grant projects) – call 2

Summary

Evaluation of these projects in terms of innovativeness / innovation is not possible. Innovation was not their goal. The presentation of innovation is superficial and formal (the claim that "the whole project is innovative"). The real innovation is not present - only few so-called new products created externally. Applicants perhaps do not have enough capacity for truly innovative projects. If there are any improvements, these are rather small or cosmetic, not proven and overvalued in relation to the total costs of projects. The projects' aim is to raise funds for the operation of organizations and member organizations. It is not clear what problems should be solved or what opportunities exploited. No risks have been identified.

AREA OF SUPPORT 1.1 (grant projects) – the other calls

Summary

The achieved innovation values range in maximum to 7 ip in case of the best project and average 5 ip at the best projects evaluated. For other projects, including an expanded sample by individual calls, the most often value assigned was zero, due to the fact that it was a purely educational programme.

A necessity is explained very vaguely, as if based on the assumption that an increase in the quality of human resources is itself a sufficient reason for public support. The complexity of projects is negligible (with one exception), the key activity is primarily education, to which are sometimes connected innovation components (e-learning) and HRD activities. Innovation of projects or their parts is only internal, their products or procedures are largely created elsewhere and in varying degrees adapted to the needs of the company. Tangible improvements thanks to the project is not usually obvious, education can potentially improve the quality of human resources and their employability in the labour market, some innovation sub-elements can represent an improved efficiency of the educational process, e.g. its availability thanks to IT methods. Innovation of process is very limited, educational courses are mostly outsourced, a specific adaptation of the company needs is expected, but in reality is very limited. Target groups are included in a rather passive role of recipients of the programmes offered, their views are surveyed for the purposes of the project, only rarely are used more complex and interactive methods of survey, findings are rarely used for other activities within HRD. Only in one case between a group of companies, but without further specification of meaning. Some partial innovations are tested in practice and their use is evaluated (all educational programmes are implemented under the project, but they are not considered innovative activity). The resulting educational products are likely to be spread, but this aspect is not explained, it is primarily about internal activities. Sustainability is supported by the development of internal training capacities or their integration into more comprehensive HRD strategy. It is not visible that projects would have an ambition to initiate follow-up activities (with the exception of a comprehensive approach to HRD as part of the development strategy of the company). Evaluation is carried out using standard procedures to collect views on the educational activities implemented, the results are in case of complex projects incorporated into the HRD strategies / concepts. Risks are minimal and include lack of staff interest in courses offered, which is solved with education. They occur sporadically, without the knowledge of the importance and possibilities of the concept in the project (innovation = new

course, e-learning). Evaluators' evaluations of innovation are unskilled, superficial, taking formulation from applicants; evaluators do not know how to evaluate this aspect.

Findings and preliminary recommendations

If this area of support will be implemented in the future, it is a much recommended candidate for model projects. In this respect, it would be good to distinguish support in the form of educational vouchers, i.e. standard training courses outsourced, and support of internal educational activities, or a combination of both, with a possibility of a bonus for innovation element or elements. The innovation element would be processed and evaluated according to the established methodology. Besides the module of training courses, it can be completed by other HRD modules or in relation of HRD to the overall business strategy. In summary, it would be determined that each module would have standardized content (with modifications according to the specifics of the company) and unit costs. Internal innovations can also be standardized, including costs. Truly innovative type of projects in this OP is not expected, especially if the implementer will be only a firm, but not (at the same time) an external body with appropriate skills, knowledge and potential scope of action.

Within the evaluation, there was assessed **1 innovative project** in total which was suitable for further investigation using depth interviews and the presentation of a case study (5 of them in total are part of the Proceedings):

CZ.1.04/1.1.02/35.01760 Limex company staff training (6,5 ip)

AREA OF SUPPORT 1.2 (grant projects)

Summary

The achieved innovation values range in maximum to 5.5 ip in case of the best project and average 3.7 ip at the positively evaluated projects. Two projects are registered only, three projects are duplicates Of all the projects (26) is only 10 in the implementation.

The necessity of innovation is not specifically justified; it is an attempt to comprehensively treat problematic actors in the labour market by standard procedures. Although the projects declare complexity, it is based on standardly arranged segments of support for endangered or unemployed groups. We can quote one of the reviews: *"I rate the criterion (of complexity) with 3 points, because the applicant's complex programme includes counselling, education, mediation and payroll contributions, i.e. four areas out of outlined of activities supported by the call."* Regarding novelty, projects include minor elements which are, however, considered standard in developed countries, as well as the complexity of the approach. Tangible improvements thanks to the project is not usually obvious, education can potentially improve the quality of human resources and their employability in the labour market, some innovation sub-elements can represent an improved efficiency of the educational process, e.g. its availability thanks to IT methods. Innovation of process is very limited, educational courses are mostly outsourced. Target groups are included in a rather passive role of recipients of the programmes offered, their views are surveyed for the purposes of the project, usually before the start of its implementation. Projects are submitted under the consortium, but it is not clear what the qualitative added value of such a partnership. Some partial innovations are tested in practice and their use is evaluated (all educational programmes are implemented under the project, but they are not considered innovative activity). The resulting educational products are likely to be spread, but this aspect is not explained, it is primarily about standardized activities. Sustainability is supported by the development of internal training / lector capacity, but only in a very small extent. It is not visible that projects would have an ambition to initiate follow-up activities. Evaluation is carried out using standard procedures to collect views on the educational activities implemented. Risks are minimal and

include lack of staff interest in courses offered, which is solved with education. They occur sporadically, without the knowledge of the importance and possibilities of the concept in the project (innovation = new course, e-learning). Evaluators' evaluations of innovation are unskilled, superficial, taking formulation from applicants; evaluators do not know how to evaluate this aspect (see quote above).

Findings and preliminary recommendations

This is particularly about the educational programs and methodologies, it is not clear how it will be further disseminated, the major part includes externally developed standardized products, innovation rate is from zero to negligible. If this area of support will be implemented in the future, it is a much recommended candidate for model projects that will vary by the number of included modules. In summary, it would be determined that each module would have standardized content (with modifications according to the specifics of the association's member companies) and unit costs. Truly innovative approaches can be implemented (with an extra bonus) e.g. the introduction of new modules, individualization of support. However, the types of implementers (chambers of commerce, business associations) do not have the capacity for innovative approaches, reflecting their dependence on externally supplied services. In fact, implementing entities are only the intermediaries of services, with administrative functions towards the grant provider.

AREA OF SUPPORT 1.2 (individual projects) – call 37 (Restart, LO)

Summary

The project scheme (types of key activities) is identical, with only minor exceptions. The texts of calls are apparently based applications on a common copy. The content is to help employees who are at risk of losing their jobs or are already in the notice period. Innovation of individual aspects is not clarified and is presented rather formally. The only obvious innovative aspect is the inclusion of potentially unemployed. It is not clear what the benefits of this innovation are (no available tool to evaluate it). The question is whether it would be more efficient to release future unemployed actors from employment (a termination agreement) and let them go through that programme. It would be worth it especially for the current employers, but also for future unemployed who would be able to fully concentrate on addressing the new situation. In this way the implemented projects would become standard tools involving retraining / education, counselling, mediating work, i.e. typical model project, which would facilitate project preparation and implementation of actual applicants. It would also be possible to apply the unit cost-effectiveness perspective for the individual modules of projects. Most activities are outsourced.

Findings and preliminary recommendations

It does not seem appropriate to implement this type of innovation on multiple projects with entities whose innovative capacity is very low. A blanket introduction in the labour offices should be preceded by pilot testing, in-depth evaluation of the effectiveness / benefit of innovative solution in comparison with the existing procedure, and then, eventually, mainstreaming. The major part of projects has a prototype nature and once again, it appears to be a suitable candidate for modular arrangement. As suitable for evaluation would be a comparison with the similar projects from the content point of view (like retraining / education / counselling / mediation) would be appropriate as well.

AREA OF SUPPORT 2.1 (grant projects)

Summary

The achieved innovation values range in maximum to 12 ip in case of the best project, however, it is an exception; another very highly rated projects received slightly over 6 ip. Average of all projects is 4.3 ip considering the fact that several projects, which evaluators identified as unsatisfactory, gained

significantly high ip (specifically one even 10.5 - the second highest result). A total of 16 of the 30 evaluated projects is under "the implementation" or "implementation was terminated."

The necessity of innovation is not specifically justified; it is an attempt to comprehensively treat problematic actors in the labour market by standard procedures with some interesting (rather than innovative) elements. Although the projects declare complexity, it is based on standardly arranged segments of support for problem groups (motivation, counselling, education). Regarding novelty, projects include minor elements which are, however, considered standard in developed countries, as well as the complexity of the approach. Some innovation sub-elements can represent an improved efficiency of the educational process, e.g. its availability thanks to IT methods, consultancy in a form of individualization or mentoring, taking into account the specifics of the target group. Innovation of process is very limited, partial segments are outsourced, but a significant part is internal and uses its own know-how (in the form from rather standard to routine procedures). Target groups are included in a rather passive role of recipients of the programmes offered, their views are surveyed for the purposes of the project, usually before its commencement or during the first phase. The partnership includes variously intense relationship with prospective employers of problematic entities or it is not included at all. Some partial innovations are tested in practice and their use is evaluated (all educational programmes are implemented under the project, but they are not considered innovative activity). The educational products are likely to be disseminated, but it's primarily about standardized procedures, it is not clear whether the procedures of their own know-how will be further disseminated. Sustainability is not specifically supported or cared of, which is a problem in terms of the importance of the new application in the labour market. It is not visible that projects would have an ambition to initiate follow-up activities. The evaluation is carried out by standard procedures to collect views on the implemented educational and other activities; the evaluation may also represent a business foundation / getting a job. Risks include the target group's lack of interest in its use, not opening a business. Evaluators' evaluations of innovation are unskilled, superficial, taking formulation from applicants; evaluators do not know how to evaluate this aspect

Findings and preliminary recommendations

If this area of support will implemented in the future, it is a much recommended candidate for model projects that will vary by the number of included modules. . In summary, it would be determined that each module would have standardized content (with modifications according to the specifics of the association's member companies) and unit costs. Truly innovative approaches can be implemented (with an extra bonus) through e.g. the introduction of new modules, individualization of support. The big question is whether the implementers would be able to create truly innovative projects in the field, what own capacity they have. It is possible that they adapt to a non-innovative grantor or evaluators. Undoubtedly, it would be appropriate to open space for innovators, at least those accepting foreign experience, in parallel with the support of prototyped projects. The emphasis on efficiency, however, should be essential in order to avoid unnecessary activities offered (under the label of innovation). A (cost) superiority aspect is in this regard significant. Experience should also be systematically evaluated and mediated towards other applicants and should be familiar to all subsidy providers and evaluators so that applied procedures really reflect best practice (including foreign).

Within the evaluation, there were assessed **2 innovative projects** in total which were suitable for further investigation using depth interviews and the presentation of a case study (for more information, see the appendix):

CZ.1.04/2.1.01/63.00144 Agency A-P-Z (7 ip)

CZ.1.04/2.1.01/44.00008 Job opportunity centre (6,5 ip)

AREA OF SUPPORT 2.1 (individual projects) – call 13 and 70 (LO)

Summary

Innovative products are not mentioned in the projects. The projects build on previous activities, their innovation level is low. They involve similar activity schemes - various forms of courses, counselling, job search, work experience / internship. Activities are usually outsourced. Although the projects mention innovations, these are rather small features within standard activities, new for a given entity. Presentation of innovation highlights its complexity, a new way of working with employers (it is rather some form of organizational change in order to communicate with them).

Findings and preliminary recommendations

Mostly standardized projects may put more emphasis on the aspect of efficiency. On the other hand, the aid should also enable the implementation of truly innovative approaches if the LO are able to adopt them. In such case, a partnership should be enabled that will boost innovation for the LO or will implement projects outside the LO, whose results will inspire the offices

AREA OF SUPPORT 3.1 (grant projects) – without call 30

Summary

The achieved innovation values range in maximum to 17.5 ip in case of the best project, however, it is an exception; other very highly rated projects received between 7 and 10 ip. Average of all projects is 5.7 ip considering the fact that several projects, which evaluators identified as unsatisfactory, gained significantly high ip. A total of 8 of the 30 evaluated projects are under "implementation was terminated"; it must be pointed out that more than half of the very well rated projects did not receive funding.

The necessity of innovation is usually justified rather traditionally, i.e. to improve or expand the existing procedures (usually in reference to previous projects). Argumentation is quite convincing and is based on direct experience and long-term experience of the applicant with the work with target groups (rather narrowly defined and very problematic, i.e. with accumulation of a number of unfavourable characteristics). However, despite the persistent problems, applicants do not choose truly innovative approaches (with the exception of the worst projects evaluated). Projects are not too broad (with the exception of a few best evaluated projects), which is probably due to a narrow focus on specific target groups, but also due to the traditional (routine) approach. On the other hand, there is an obvious effort to include, in addition to traditional types of support activities, some innovative elements or rather an improvement as well, but of a partial character only. It may also be due to budgetary constraints. However, it is good that applicants focus on what they are able to implement in some quality than submitting artificially bloated "complex" projects. New elements are rather small, based on the previous experience of the applicant. They remain behind real possibilities and probably reflect a tendency to traditional approach. It should be noted that the target groups are usually very problematic, which may weaken the courage of innovative providers. Knowledge support (moderated sharing of experience) would therefore be very beneficial. Improvements are convincing thanks to a long experience of applicants with the target groups, like in case of novelty, however, they could be larger and more efficient. The process of innovativeness is rather low due to the limitations of innovative elements. Target groups are included in a rather passive role of recipients of the programmes offered, which may be due to their problems - it is difficult to assess this aspect. However, the experience of applicants suggests that its needs are well reflected. It would therefore be advisable to involve more targeted elements of participation and empowerment of the target groups. Partnership is developed in varying degrees of intensity and it is not clear how it truly works. Partners are (with some exceptions) the organizations of a similar orientation, or government agencies / authorities.

All supported activities are implemented in practice, including partial innovative elements. Such implementation usually does not have the form of testing, piloting and implementation. Information about created products was mostly impossible to seek out. In addition to traditional publicity tools, there are not particularly enforced dissemination practices. Rather indirectly, it can be suggested that acquired new knowledge and experience will be applied in practice even after the project (at least in most cases). It is not visible that projects would have an ambition to initiate follow-up activities. Evaluation is carried out using standard procedures (if at all) and it is not specified in relation to the innovative elements, which probably reflects the fact that these elements are not considered (in most projects) essential. The risks are very small and include actually only a lack of interest of the target group and employers in its application. Evaluators did not evaluate innovation, it is only rarely mentioned. The main emphasis is placed on the evaluation of the necessity.

Findings and preliminary recommendations

In summary, most of the projects reflect the positive characteristics of the applicants - the entities that have long experience with relevant target groups, projects show an obvious interest in their problems. However, innovative are not well presented, it is apparent that they are not seen as a priority, or at least fundamentally important (except the projects listed below including the worst rated). This approach of applicants primarily builds on the need for solving problems of the target groups. A long-term experience is beneficial, but it also leads to a routine. Innovation could significantly boost these projects (and their implementers). It would be very suitable to get acquainted with innovative approaches, including foreign ones; the use of good practice (if such exists in the Czech Republic). Thanks to the deep interest of applicants in the issue, there is a high probability that they would be able to implement innovative features and approaches with an appropriate support. MoLSA could at least encourage the creation and dissemination of good practice through the use of example applications in which could be added the recommended innovative features for inspiration.

Within the evaluation, there was assessed **1 innovative project** in total which was suitable for further investigation using depth interviews and the presentation of a case study (for more information, see the Appendix):

CZ.1.04/3.1.02/21.00125 Social prevention programme for youth at risk in the Ústí Region (17,5ip)

AREA OF SUPPORT 3.1 (grant projects) – call 30

Summary

The achieved innovation values range in maximum to 18 ip and other very highly rated projects received between 10 to 15 bi.

Surveyed were all projects which evaluators identified as satisfactory and 10 projects rated as unsatisfactory. During the survey it was found, however, that the call is due to its continuous nature burdened with duplicity and multiplicity. As the "worst" were thus selected the projects that were in the line-up and were proposed repeatedly, namely 3 times, and always failed. In addition, the sample was supplemented with the very poorly rated projects. Status as per 24th of May 2012 is given below for information, it is clear that about half of the applicants repeated application in case of its failure, about 10% of failed applicants even more than once⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ It is possible that some entity submits an application to multiple types of social enterprise or changes the proposal completely, but this is not often the case and is therefore neglected.

Table 1: Number of subjects by the number of applications in the HREOP's call 30

Number of applications	Number of applicants
1	136
2	63
3	16
4	4
5	1

(MONIT7+, as per 24th of May 2012)

36 of the 100 projects in total is "under implementation" or "implementation was terminated"; in addition, four projects are in a state "approved"

The necessity of innovation is usually based on the actual need to start with social entrepreneurship, often in combination with the argument that for this purpose a new company (institution) has been founded, which is based on the formal requirements of the call. In the second step are usually applied arguments that are based on direct and long-term experience of applicants with work with target groups, if any. In many cases, it is clear that the social enterprise is started by persons / institutions that either come "from the field" (but do not have experience with social entrepreneurship) or on the contrary, they try to start a social enterprise (they know how it works), but have no direct experience with a selected appropriate field. However, despite the persistent problems, applicants do not choose truly innovative approaches. Neither of these facts may be negative; the projects then relatively frequently include reimbursement for advice on the management of social enterprise, on the other hand an integral part of most projects is an expert (head, master) in a relevant field. From the perspective of the substantive evaluation, it is then a move "into other field" usually perceived negatively, while the effort to begin social business "in my field" is more appreciated. Projects are not too broad, in most of them it is a routine approach represented by the preparation of operation / locations, hiring employees, their training and the operation itself, including promotion. On the other hand, it is an obvious effort to include at least partial support and innovative features or improvements; mostly these are flexible workloads, more sophisticated systems of staff motivation and training, PR and media relations, etc. With the respect to the relatively small number of jobs created, the majority of activities focus on individualisation and team building, and only in a minimum extent on process optimization. It is often seen that the applicants focused on depicting an elaborate complex system, which in practice may be very different. New elements are rather small, based on the previous experience of the applicant; it also reflects the inclination towards the location where social enterprise is established, which is based on the nature of the request for participation in the life of the local community. Improvements are convincing thanks to a long experience of applicants with the target groups, like in case of novelty, however, it could be larger and more efficient, but it is not the primary business objective. Innovativeness of the process is very different, often very low, with regard to a greater focus on job performance, sometimes innovative approaches just appear. Target groups are included in a rather passive role of recipients of the available jobs and training that must be completed for inclusion in the workforce. However, the experience of applicants suggests that their needs are well reflected. Yet even here, it would have been more appropriate to engage targeted elements of participation and empowerment of the target groups. Partnership is developed in varying degrees of intensity and form, very often the utility connections towards the target group (securing employees or consulting and training services), or partial promotional activities. Partners are (with some exceptions) organizations focused on work with the target groups, or government agencies / authorities. At the same time there is a specific type of "partnership" - services or products contracted in advance, which is crucial for social enterprise. All supported activities are implemented in practice,

including partial innovative elements. This implementation usually does not have the form of testing, piloting and implementation, even though such cases are to be found, especially when it is part of building and preparation of a facility. Information about created products was mostly impossible to seek out. In addition to traditional publicity tools and web presentation there are not particularly enforced dissemination practices, with the possible exception of "community engagement", i.e. in the local events, and in professional business associations or communities. Rather indirectly we can suggest that acquired new knowledge and experience will be applied in practice even after the projects' implementation (at least in most cases); sustainability is perceived more towards workloads and running business as such, not towards partial knowledge and experience. Only some of the projects would have an ambition to initiate follow-up activities, however, the reason may be the fact that social enterprises are trying to compact all their activities to the main activity. Evaluation is carried out using standard procedures (if any) and is not specified in relation to the innovative elements, often it has only the form of individual plans for staff, regular meetings, feedback on the work of employees, etc. The risks are generally very broad and often critical; except the lack of interest of target groups (represented by the impossibility of finding staff), there are many risks associated with the topic of social entrepreneurship as such, sustainability after the end of support, with project administration, but also with employees and ensuring the operation itself, e.g. due to potentially more often fluctuations and / or morbidity especially in case of some target groups.

Findings and preliminary recommendations

As already mentioned in the introduction, much of applicants submit their applications repeatedly, which was supposed beforehand due to the effort of preparation (e.g. to found a company). At the same time, this process should lead to the tuning of the application. However, at least according to the survey carried out, it is not always like that - sample of 6 times unsuccessfully proposed applications shows that their level is still de facto the same, only slightly modified, and is never completely redesigned. This of course also means a bigger administrative burden on the evaluators' side, repeatedly assessing still just the same poorly written applications. Here it would be appropriate to work with (unsuccessful) applicants actively. It is clear that some of the projects tend more to simplicity regarding management of jobs and employees (see above the procedure mentioned: prepare a place, find an employee, train employee, manage enterprise). We recommend the authority to take a full attention on the evaluation of results and impacts of the call as a whole, especially sustainability of working contracts and social firms. Continual monitoring of the current state and controls in field could / should be an integral part of the project cycle, not only during implementation, but also after it. Without this information it will be quite impossible to assess, for example, to what extent are the effects of innovative practices represented by social entrepreneurship different from simple single support for a job creation (see, e.g. call 91 in the area of support 2.1).

Within the evaluation, there were assessed **4 innovative projects** in total which was suitable for further investigation using depth interviews and the presentation of a case study (three of them in total are part of the Proceedings):

CZ.1.04/3.1.06/30.00138 Alternative canteen in the heart of Chrudimi – Health Circle (18 ip)

CZ.1.04/3.1.06/30.00078 Second hand SECOND HELP (15 ip)

CZ.1.04/3.1.06/30.00068 CF_social enterprise (13 ip)

CZ.1.04/3.1.06/30.00048 Social enterprise in Odra region – construction work STAVZEM (9 ip)

AREA OF SUPPORT 3.1 (individual projects) – call 5 - Planning (development) of social services

Summary

The project scheme is similar. It includes mapping / analysis of the current situation, methodical, or educational support to stakeholders (municipalities) and communication with them. Projects are richly covered with different types of management and administrative staff at the promoter's side. Promoters are regional authorities, supplies are external, the authorities are involved in the implementation (budget execution). The necessity of projects is based on a common basis (legal requirement). Among the regions, however, there are large differences in the budgets, which in summary seem much exaggerated. The applications do not include perspectives, according to which it would be possible to assess the effectiveness of spending. Evaluators often criticize the exaggeration of spending in each application. Given the fact that the types of activities carried out do not show other substantial benefits in addition to rather standard types of activities, criterion of efficiency should be an important aspect of innovation evaluation, as the efficiency seems to be very questionable. In summary, projects act as a way to obtain significant resources from which they cover standardized activities. Their contents are very similar between regions, so that there is no reason why each region should invent its own approaches for implementation of standardized parts. Auctions on the demanded activities would undoubtedly significantly reduce costs. The so-called innovation is seen in community planning processes, which are rather standard procedures which involve municipalities (physical meetings of representatives) - it is not clear why this participation costs tens of millions. As innovative products are presented analyses and methodologies, but it is not explained what such innovation is about.

Findings and preliminary recommendations

The use of community planning processes means probably a novelty for stakeholders, but its benefits cannot be identified from the documents - the methods used are rather traditional. Examination of possible innovative elements would require obtaining of field information. In the future it would be appropriate that these types of calls, which expect schematically similar projects from a number of organizations, would use some form of central support and control. Shared methodology would certainly be usable for multiple entities. Again it should be noted that a truly innovative approach should be first tested on a small sample of projects, and evaluated and disseminated, including the establishment of normal cost / capacity levels, e.g. as per capita of the region. It is also not clear whether the experience was somehow evaluated after the first round of projects, because most regions have been implementing at least two projects of a very similar type (follow-up is not convincingly justified).

AREA OF SUPPORT 3.1 (individual projects) – call 5– Training of social workers

Summary

Projects are well elaborated and contain some extras reflecting the experience and expertise of the applicants and suppliers, who are specifically focused on the issues. The needs of the target group are reflected, the new (but not entirely) programmes and procedures for their implementation are offered, but they are not sufficiently clarified in terms of novelty and improvements. Implemented educational activities are outsourced. Innovation cannot be evaluated based on the information supplied, rather surmised. Evaluators do not mention project innovation. Scoring of the projects was not carried out; it is rather about traditional educational programmes for specific target group, with (apparently) good level of implementation.

Findings and preliminary recommendations

Like in case of other educational projects, these are also candidates for prototypes with a possibility to add an innovation module. Given the high level of standardization of implemented activities it is appropriate to emphasize the efficiency aspect.

AREA OF SUPPORT 3.1 (individual projects) – call 5 - Social services

Summary

Not evaluated – projects represent a funding of standard services.

AREA OF SUPPORT 3.2 (grant projects)

Summary

The achieved innovation values range in maximum to 17.5 ip and 21.6 ip in case of the best two projects, however, these are exceptions; other very highly rated projects received between 9 and 12.5 ip. Average of all projects is 6.3 ip considering the fact that several projects, which evaluators identified as unsatisfactory, did not significantly differ from the projects in the middle of the rating scale. A total of only 6 of the 30 evaluated projects are under "implementation" or "implementation was terminated"; it must be pointed out that more than 3/5 of the very well rated projects did not receive funding. Given the high ratings of innovation, this is the fundamental findings (see below).

The conclusions on the evaluation results show a similar trend, as in the area of support 3.1, the following summary of characteristics, therefore, partly repeats: The necessity of innovation is usually justified in a rather traditional way, i.e. the existing practices need to be improved or expanded (usually in reference to previous projects). Argumentation is quite convincing and is based on direct experience and long-term experience of the applicant with the work with target groups (rather narrowly defined and very problematic, i.e. with accumulation of a number of unfavourable characteristics). Probably with regard to the clear definition of the target groups, the applicants are very often able to design truly innovative solutions, which may meet with opposition in the evaluation process. Projects are not too broad (with the exception of a few best evaluated projects), but this is due to the specific focus of the areas of support and the call, which was subject of evaluation. On the other hand, there is an obvious effort to include, in addition to traditional types of support activities, some innovative elements or rather an improvement as well, but of a partial character only. It may also be due to budgetary constraints. However, it is good that applicants focus on what they are able to implement in some quality than submitting artificially bloated "complex" projects. New elements are rather small, based on the previous experience of the applicant. However, it is obvious that the sharing of experience works and is very beneficial. Improvements are convincing thanks to a long experience of applicants with the target groups, like in case of novelty, however, they could be larger and more efficient. The process innovativeness is rather low due to the limitations of innovative elements. Target groups are included in a rather passive role of recipients of the programmes offered, which may be due to their problems - it is difficult to assess this aspect. However, the experience of applicants suggests that its needs are well reflected. It would therefore be advisable to involve more targeted elements of participation and empowerment of the target groups. Partnership is developed in varying degrees of intensity and it is not clear how it truly works. Partners are (with some exceptions) the organizations of a similar orientation, or government agencies / authorities. All supported activities are implemented in practice, including partial innovative elements. Such implementation usually does not have the form of testing, piloting and implementation. Information about created products was mostly impossible to seek out. In addition to traditional publicity tools, there are not particularly enforced dissemination practices. Rather indirectly, it can be suggested that acquired new knowledge and experience will be applied in practice even after the project (at least in most cases). It is not visible that projects would have an ambition to initiate follow-up activities (with exceptions). Evaluation is carried out using standard procedures (if at all) and it is not specified in relation to the

innovative elements, which probably reflects the fact that these elements are not considered (in most projects) essential. The risks are very small and include actually only a lack of interest of the target group and employers in its application. Evaluators did not evaluate innovation, it is only rarely mentioned. The main emphasis is placed on the evaluation of the necessity.

Findings and preliminary recommendations

All projects are undoubtedly based on the necessity to solve the problem of the Roma community, their approach is however rather traditional (except for some of the best projects). Applicants are perhaps influenced by previous experience that allows them to go for partial innovations or changes only. It does not appear that it would be a qualitative change. Caution may be in place because of a high risk level of target groups, however, it shapes up that in this case an innovative approach is possible, so it would be good to find more examples (if any) and to encourage their dissemination. It would also be advisable to encourage the transfer of good practice from abroad if domestic examples do not exist. A system problem seems to be the division of the target groups between the HREOP and the ECOP (this was pointed out by some evaluators), because in case of the Roma community, it is really important to take a really complex approach in addressing social and labour problems, i.e. including family background and parallel capture of all generations.

Within the evaluation, there was assessed **1 innovative project**⁴⁷:

CZ.1.04/3.2.01/19.00195 Social and community work in socially excluded Roma locality - Chánov (9,5 ip)

AREA OF SUPPORT 3.2 (individual projects) – call 15

Summary

This is a standard support of field services in excluded localities with any innovative features from the applicant's perspective; projects do not show ambition for innovation, decisive is the quality of the supplier and the efficiency aspect per capita (supported person).

AREA OF SUPPORT 3.2 (individual projects) – call 55 – Projects for the integration of socially excluded

Summary

Evaluation of innovation is difficult, projects build on already implemented activities, and actions are supported from other sources / programmes as well, so the evaluation of the effectiveness is limited. It is rather a collection of traditional field activities, rarely with (targeted) innovative features (e.g. IP in Most, see below). In general, the success rate of programmes is low in this area in the CR, or it requires long-term work, which further contributes to the difficulty in evaluation of innovation of the projects, a field research would be appropriate.

AREA OF SUPPORT 3.3 (grant projects)

Summary

The achieved innovation values range in maximum to 16.5 ip and 18.0 ip in case of the best two projects, however, these are exceptions; other very highly rated projects received between 8 and 12.5 ip. Average of all projects is 5.9 ip considering the fact that several projects (especially those evaluators identified as unsatisfactory) were not evaluated at all due to their very poor quality. A total of only 7 of the 30 (25, respectively) evaluated projects are under "implementation" or

⁴⁷ Selected were two following projects, with the same implementer (IQ Roma servis) as in case of one of the EQUAL projects (see above): CZ.1.04/3.2.01/19.00193 (17,5 ip) Personality and life direction - promoting education and employability of young Romas a CZ.1.04/3.2.01/19.00077 (12,5 ip) Time to try another way

"implementation was terminated"; however, 3 projects are under "approved" and 5 under „fulfilled the objective evaluation“.

The necessity of innovation is usually justified in a rather traditional way, i.e. existing procedures need to improve or expand (usually in reference to previous projects). Argumentation is quite convincing and is based on direct experience and long-term experience of the applicant with the work with target groups. However, despite the persistent problems, applicants do not choose truly innovative approaches. Projects are not too broad, which is probably due to a narrow focus on specific target groups or a few of them, but due to the traditional (routine) approach. On the other hand, there are obvious efforts to include in addition to traditional types of support activities as well as some innovative features or improvements, which have been achieved. Novelty involves rather small features, based on previous experience of the applicant. They are lacking behind and probably reflect a tendency to traditional approach. Problems in the target group are not so substantial as to prevent the use of innovative methods. The improvement level corresponds to the low intensity of innovative projects. The preferred way is to minimize risk. The innovativeness of process is rather low due to the limitations of innovative elements. Target groups are included in a rather passive role of recipients of the programmes offered, however the possible exceptions are the projects submitted by stakeholders of these target groups. But it is not clear whether the beneficiaries of the projects are involved in the actual preparation of projects. It would have been appropriate to involve more targeted elements of participation and empowerment of the target groups. Partnership is developed in varying degrees and it is not clear how it actually takes place in reality. Partners are (with some exceptions) organizations focused on work with the target groups, or government agencies / authorities or employers (they are not the partner of the project, but are included in its implementation). All supported activities are implemented in practice, including partial innovative elements. This implementation usually does not have the form of testing, piloting and implementation. Information about the products generated refer primarily to the methodologies that are provided free of charge for the further dissemination. No other (active) promotional approaches are implemented (or mentioned). The projects mention that acquired new knowledge and experience will be applied in practice even after the project (at least in most of cases). But no specific mechanisms or instruments have been created (it is assumed to obtain other grant sources for this purpose). It is not clear that projects would have an ambition to initiate follow-up activities (with exceptions) or this ambition is expressed only vaguely. Evaluation is carried out using standard procedures (if any) and is not specified in relation to the innovative elements, which is probably largely due to the fact that these elements are not considered (in most projects) essential. The risks are very small and include only the lack of interest of target groups or employers about products' application. Evaluators did not evaluate innovation, it is only rarely mentioned. The main emphasis is placed on the evaluation of the necessity.

Findings and preliminary recommendations

Evaluated projects include a qualified approach to help disadvantaged groups. They are based on long-term experience of the applicants, who also represent the disadvantaged groups, which is undoubtedly beneficial (e.g. Wheelchair Association). Innovative elements are partial. Innovation is not the primary projects' objective. Emphasis is placed on the expansion of existing services (geographical, in the content of the activities). Rather than innovative aspect is therefore an important aspect the effectiveness, i.e. what costs are spent on people in the individual projects (assuming adequate quality of implemented services). The projects' scheme is similar - educational, advisory activities, involvement of employers, assistance even after getting a job; benefit could thus be targeted focus on a greater level of participation of target groups in the very creation and running of the project.

Within the evaluation, there were assessed **3 innovative projects** in total which was suitable for further investigation using depth interviews and the presentation of a case study (two of them in total are part of the Proceedings):

CZ.1.04/3.3.05/56.00136 (16,5 ip)

The first success - the work integration programme for young people growing up without families

CZ.1.04/3.3.05/56.00103 (12,5 ip)

The second step - a multi-level integration programme

CZ.1.04/3.3.05/31.00099 (10 ip)

STRONG COUPLE – counselling and cooperation of two groups of women in the area of production and sale of handcrafts: + 50 yo (manufacturer) a - 25 yo (dealer)

AREA OF SUPPORT 3.4 (grant projects)

Summary

The achieved innovation values range in maximum to 8.5 ip in case the best projects; other well rated projects received between 7.5 and 8 ip. Average of all well rated projects is 5.6 ip considering the fact that other projects receive rating 0 ip (non-innovative projects). A total of 7 of the 30 evaluated projects are under "implementation", however some of them in the early stage of implementation (call 76).

Findings and preliminary recommendations

In respect of the very low ratings of the projects and a featureless distribution of evaluation as to the representation of the individual characteristic, in this case a different way of summary has been chosen than in previous areas. The fundamental reason for the very low ratings is that a part of the project is aimed at kindergartens and a considerable part on the promotion and / or deployment of gender audit.

The calls, e.g. for the business kindergartens, could be (following a similar procedure proposed in the area of support 1.1 on education) designed as prototyped projects, taking into account effectiveness. This is a standard set of services supplied from outside, or the support of internal capacity in relation to the overall business strategy. In summary, it was determined that each sub-module should have a standardized content (with modifications according to the specifics of the company) and unit costs. Truly innovative type of projects in the framework of this type of activity is not expected, especially if the implementer is only one company, but not (in parallel) outside body with the appropriate skills, knowledge and potential scope of action. Classification under the equal opportunities often leads to very inefficient concepts, (at least) without innovation potential. The situation is similar as in case of projects aimed primarily at increasing the skills and retraining, where it is again possible to proceed in a prototyped way, or the provider of retraining could be directly required to provide direct support to the target group (described in terms of the HREOP terminology), often recurring theme of "deployment" of gender-auditing is then another example, where can be used an unambiguous calculation of costs / subsidies without a necessity to integrate it as "innovative" element to the strongly local solution, which is limited to one company or another institution, etc.

Within the evaluation, there was assessed **1 innovative project** in total which was suitable for further investigation using depth interviews and the presentation of a case study (for more information, see the Appendix):

CZ.1.04/3.4.04/54.00105 CRISTAL - Equal opportunities and work-life balance in practice (8.5 ip)

AREA OF SUPPORT 5.1 (grant projects)

Within the application of the methodology on the area of support 5.1 we encountered the limits of innovation assessment of these projects. The reason is the very definition of the areas of support, such as when the specific objectives: 1) to increase the efficiency of strategies and policies in the field of human resources and employment, and 2) development of partnerships, pacts and initiatives in the field of human resources and employment (quoted ESFCR.cz) directly refer to capacity and value added building. Regarding the fact the transfer of know-how and international experience is considered in other areas of support an innovative approach and added value, which increases the innovation score achieved by the project, it is not possible to evaluate the innovativeness of international cooperation "as is" in other way than by comparing the potential innovative project "without international cooperation" and "with international cooperation." But in the case, when international cooperation is the core around which is a project formed, this method cannot be used because without international cooperation, no project would arise (as opposed to thematically defined project, where is an element of international cooperation "only" added value) and the "base-line" definition plays, among others, an important role. Within deployment of the methodology in the project sample it was found out that the evaluated projects can receive two extreme values with regard to whether, within the methodology, to consider base-line a foreign practice or purely local context. Innovation rating is from the perspective of transferred experience from abroad minimal in result, unlike the local perspective, which rates added value as extremely valuable (even in such cases when a local deficit would be solvable more efficiently, e.g. as a transfer of know-how within one country). With this in mind, we consider the deployment of innovation evaluation methodology for international cooperation projects to be inappropriate, because its use would depend on the decision of the thematic (content) the appropriateness of the project, i.e. it would have to be decided in advance whether a specific project with an international dimension has sense. Of course we cannot answer it even after a factual assessment or analysing the text of call as it is currently implemented, it would have to be a detailed expert evaluation of project content.

Within the evaluation, there was deeply analysed **1 project** (from comparability reasons) in total which was suitable for further investigation using depth interviews and the presentation of a case study (for more information, see the Appendix):

CZ.1.04/5.1.01/51.00010 Incubation and acceleration of activities in the social economy

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS - others

The problem in evaluating these innovative projects lies in the fact that the documentation does not include sufficient information to evaluate improvements (e.g. calls 4 and 11). While the implemented activities are apparently new, at least partially and for the applicant, it is not possible to objectively assess whether and why they also represent a better solution than existing methods. Such an assessment would require an in-depth work on each project, including communication with implementers and beneficiaries, which exceeds the capacity of this evaluation project. However, it is advisable to make such an assessment (i.e. evaluation of innovativeness) performed or it could be a part of project evaluation. It should also be added that, compared to other types of projects, this group is specific in the fact that it not applies an open competition, there is no choice of different approaches or variants, which is one of the conditions for the possibility of the best (innovation) selection.

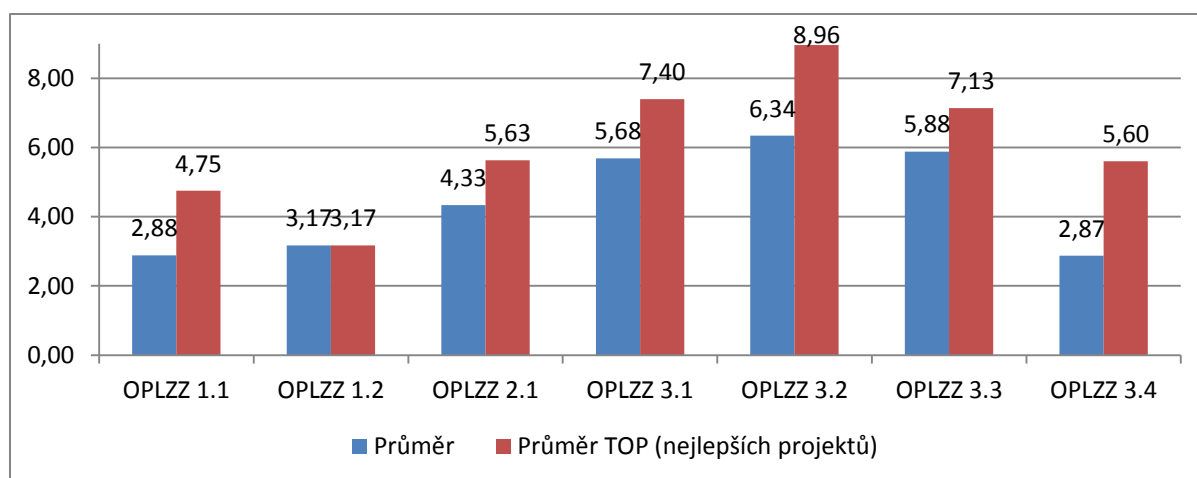
Summary of the extent to which the projects in the HREOP and EQUAL meet the parameters defined in the methodology.

Individual HREOP and EQUAL projects, which were analysed, meet the characteristics specified in the methodology in a very large variance. There are projects (and proposals, or applications respectively) that can be described as very innovative, across programmes and axes. Innovative projects are therefore not limited only to the "inherently" innovative call 30 (social economy). It is also worth highlighting the fact that there were identified very innovative projects (proposals) between those which were not accepted for funding, both among those who have passed the factual assessment and those who did not pass it. Based on the survey is therefore clear that, purely in terms of support for innovation, there exist at least partial reserves or capacities.

On the other hand, there are a large number of projects in which innovation is identified only with great difficulty, or not found at all. These are mainly projects, which – e.g. with respect to the wording of the relevant call - contained a standard set of activities and actions only tailored to a particular applicant / recipient. An example might be the area of support 1.2, specifically call 36, where (apparently with regard to efforts to gain maximum points for a specific criterion of complexity) were included de facto all supported activities in the projects, which created a homogeneous pool of identical projects with an average rating of 4 points of innovation (out of 24 possible). With this in mind, it was the case of such a type of call where the so-called template should be considered for the future.

Average numbers of points for all innovation projects evaluated and for the category of best evaluated projects (TOP) by areas of support are listed in the chart below. The data are taken from a separate Appendix Evaluation of projects linked to Chapter 8.2.

Graph 2: Averages of innovation points for projects evaluated in the HREOP, by area of support



Evaluation question 3.2. How are the projects aimed at dissemination and promotion of innovative products (social innovation)?

The surveys carried out have identified two basic types of projects focused on the dissemination and promotion of innovative products:

- The first type is a theme of social enterprises in the HREOP's call 30. Dissemination and promotion of social innovation often has multiple forms / products, namely the combination of an expansive business strategy of an enterprise itself (pointing beyond keeping the status quo), spreading awareness of the possibilities of social enterprise model and effort to engage in local initiatives, or community planning, etc. Generally, in dealing with the local problems and the target group within a (corporate) responsibility.

- The second type is a group of projects, which are successfully transferring foreign methodology in the Czech Republic. In the Proceedings of Case Studies, there are two of these projects, both in the priority axis 3 (i.e. no one in the area of support 5). The Tripitaka, o.s.' project "The first success - the work integration programme for young people growing up without families" (priority axis 3.3) is based on the Danish theatre's project OPGANG2 (www.opgang2.dk), which works with teenagers in the Danish city of Aarhus. The target group consist of people less than 26 years old, growing up without families; and young people, who left the children's home or a special educational institution, without family background, jobless and at risk of social exclusion. Thanks to the project they can get work as actors, while the fate of their own lives serve as the basis for a play in which they play under the guidance of professionals. In addition to demonstrable positive results in the target groups, project activities are not only attractive for media, but also generate significant synergies at networking and building partnerships. The basis of the project "Socio-prevention programme for youth at risk in the Usti Region (SPAM)", implemented by Mosty – socio-psychological centre, o.s. (PA3.1), is the transfer of a foreign "good practice" in the field of prevention programmes for socio-pathological phenomena in Czech conditions, based on a core comprehensive socio-prevention programme "It's in U2," which has been successfully realized since 1994 by SIMA - UK (Ltd) in the UK between different groups at risk of social exclusion.

Evaluation question 3.3. What are the appropriate thematic areas of innovation activities and which projects and products belong to them?

Again, it is necessary to specify the thematic area: *2.5 Support of the social economy and social entrepreneurship*, which is represented by projects in the HREOP's call 30, but also the expert panel identified this area as one of the truly innovative directions. It should however be pointed on two sub-issues that have been assessed as equally important, *2.5.2. Mobilisation of funds to support initiatives in the social economy and social entrepreneurship*, and *2.5.1. Capacity-building and support structures for the promotion of social enterprises, in particular through social entrepreneurship education and training, networking, the development of national or regional strategies in partnership with key stakeholders, and the provision of business development services and easier access to finance.*

The case studies included projects falling at least partially into the Thematic Objective 2 - Promoting social inclusion and poverty reduction, namely: *2.1 Active inclusion*, or *2.1.1. Integrated pathways combining various forms of employability measures such as individualised support, counselling, guidance, access to general and vocational education and training, as well as access to services, notably health and social services, child care, and internet services.* Projects in most cases, however, also intervene in the Objective 1 *Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility.*

The expert panel suggested the following specific topics:

1.1.1. Active and preventive labour market measures at an early stage and open to all, including for the identification of individual needs, personalised services and guidance, targeted and tailored training, validation of acquired competences and skills, and outplacement; here we can mention the case study of the "Agentura A-P-Z" project of the Wheelchair Association providing individual counselling even during entry into employment;

1.2.1. Introduction of a 'youth guarantee' by establishing schemes to offer further education, (re)training or activation measures to every young person not in employment or in education or training, within 4 months of leaving school. There should be a particular focus on

apprenticeship-type vocational training and internships for graduates to acquire first work experience; this includes both the above described projects transferring foreign experience and practice (Tripitaka, o.s. and Mosty o.s.);

1.4.3. Developing work-life balance policies, including through support for reintegration into the labour market of persons who have not been working due to caring duties; here is the representative an innovative project 'Cristal - equal opportunities and work-life balance in practice' of the Grafia, Ltd., which is creating online portal and working proactively with employers.

A suggested topic *2.4.2. Enhanced access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality social services such as employment and training services, services for the homeless, out of school care, childcare and long-term care services* is not represented in the case studies. On the contrary, most of the projects in the case studies include activities of the topic *3.3 Enhancing access to lifelong learning, upgrading the skills and competences of the workforce and increasing the labour market relevance of education and training systems*, and the expert panel pointed in particular out:

3.3.1. Implementing life-long learning strategies for the workforce, in cooperation with the social partners, including training and skills development and upgrading the transversal competences of the workforce, such as languages, digital competence and entrepreneurship

3.3.2. Adapting vocational education and training (VET) systems to labour market demands, by developing work-based learning in VET, including apprenticeship schemes, and encouraging companies to take on more trainees

3.3.10. Support the development of adult learning systems responding to high quality

Due to the upcoming new programming period, it is advisable to mention the expert opinions regarding the thematic area 4.1 Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance (in all sub-areas, 4.1.1. Reforms to ensure better legislation, synergies between policies and effective management of public policies, and transparency, integrity and accountability in public administration and spending of public funds and 4.1.2. Development and implementation of human resources strategies and policies - and of course, of social innovation). The case studies in this area concern only two EQUAL projects in the wider intervention, no project under the HREOP.

5.4 Task 4 Compile the methodology for the quality evaluation of innovation projects and products, and process a case study for each thematic area about the implementation of an innovative project, which represents an example of good / promising practices

Following the Task 3 (identification of innovative projects) and the above methodology, there were, afterwards (ex-post) within this evaluation task, identified the projects selected as suitable for processing case studies. They are listed in the text of Task 3 above and the case studies are in a separate Appendix 7 of this final report. In the future, a similar methodology should be deployed in the pilot innovation HREOP's call or in the next programming period, according to the proposal of implementation and "properly", i.e. including the publication (weights) of the evaluation criteria, establishing the base-line, providing information about evaluation process in advance to all potential stakeholders and linking to the self-evaluation procedures selected by the applicant themselves.

5.5 Task 5 Evaluate the ESF Products Database as a tool for the dissemination and promotion of innovative products, and suggest its amendment (both content and functional)

This section introduces the processing of Task 5 "Evaluate the ESF Products Database as a tool for the dissemination and promotion of innovative products, and suggest its amendment (both content and functional)"

Evaluation questions:

- 1. To what extent does the ESF Products Database contribute to the dissemination and exploitation of innovations arising in ESF projects?*
- 2. How are the ESF Products Database, the products included and their use and benefits evaluated by the registered database users and how is the database evaluated by other entities (potential or unregistered)?*
- 3. To what extent do other tools or procedures contribute to the dissemination and exploitation of innovations resulting in projects and what is their impact in comparison with the ESF Products Database?*

Evaluation question 5.1 To what extent does the ESF Products Database contribute to the dissemination and exploitation of innovations arising in ESF projects?

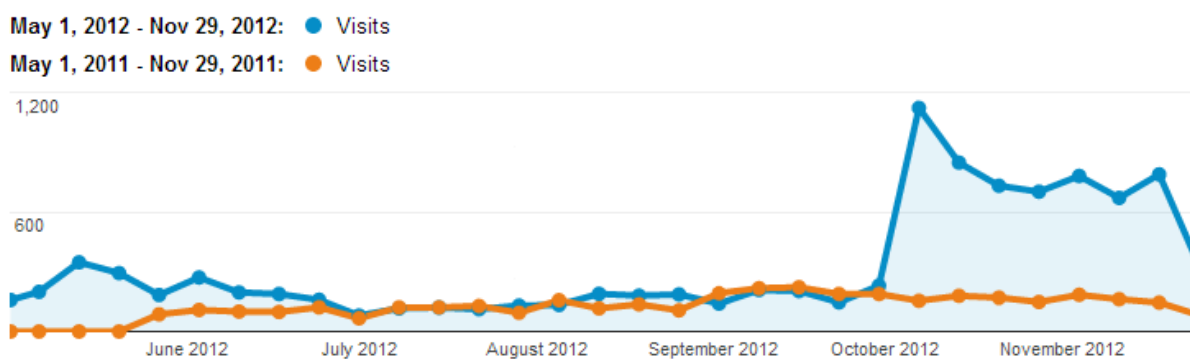
It was found that there exist only few hyperlinks to the ESF Products Database (total 20 unique⁴⁸). There were identified several different types of resources. First of all, the ESF portals (esfcr.cz, structural-fondy.cz, equalcr.cz). Links can also be found on governmental (state) or public web portals, namely the two links on the MoLSA portal (one of them is a MoLSA's press release) and a link at the official web portal of the Zlín Region. The widest range of links can be found at websites of private and non-profit organizations or information portals (two links). Two links to the database can also be found in the organizations' bulletins. Only one link can be traced from the media (specifically, HN.IHNED.CZ.). Two references to the database were also found on the websites of schools (high school and college).

The database achieved the total number of 4,000 visits (660 per month) in the period May – October 2012⁴⁹, which is higher than in the same period a year ago (when there were about 2500 visits, i.e. 400 per month). Basically, the length of stay on page (3-4 minutes) or the number of visits from esfcr.cz (circa 1000) did not change. In 2012 significantly increased the number of visitors redirected from the search engine Google.com (specifically, from 600 to 1600). The most visited page is still the main page (about 2500x), followed by product search, which in 2012 significantly strengthened (from 800x to 1500x) and search for projects (sustained about 1000x), followed by pages about the database and its context (about the programmes).

⁴⁸ A list of all sources that refer to the ESF Products Database is shown in a separate Appendix of the technical part of the report (sub-analysis 8).

⁴⁹ The period is chosen since May because only since May 2011 are available comparable data within the monitoring of the site using Google Analytics.

Graph 4: ESF Products Database visits



Source: Google Analytics

The fundamental change in number of visits, however, occurred in the last 2 months, when the number of visits per day increased from dozens (2011) to hundreds (2012) and the number of visited pages grew 8-times (from 5,000 to 45,000 a day). The targets of visitors have significantly changed during the last two months as well: most of them spend the most time with product search. This change is due to an accumulation of 1) a new obligation of applicants to upload products to ESFPD (and therefore also to register and log in, which generates additional visits) and 2) mandatory access for at least 100 workers and employees of an external administrator and managing authority. Only with the passage of time, it will be possible to assess whether it was a one-off increase, or the interest would be maintained.

Other findings in view of the answer to the evaluation question are taken from the related surveys of registered and unregistered database users (see evaluation questions below) and summarized in the section of partial recommendations.

Evaluation question 5.2. How are the ESF Products Database, the products included and their use and benefits evaluated by the registered database users and how is the database evaluated by other entities (potential or unregistered)?

The ESF Products Database reached only average results in the information audit⁵⁰. The user interface looks obsolete and suffers with partial errors in terms of smooth and clear navigation, including inconsistent use of graphic elements and poorly structured navigation menu. The search tool does not provide enough information about the specific findings and the functionality when searching projects is limited due to excessively long response (i.e. having to wait to view the search form itself). Among the identified vulnerabilities belongs the registration (user login respectively), that is inappropriately hidden in the navigation menu and can be one of the reasons why the number of registered users is not higher.

In terms of content, it is necessary to point out the limited clarity of the texts, which are based on the "language of the project application," which becomes a barrier for users who are new in this area. Essential is the fundamental disproportion between the high proportion of projects (automatically imported from www.esfcr.cz) and a small number of products, which is also reflected in the minimum number of posted ratings, comments and tags (thematic labels). These user functions have the potential to create significant added value, but this could be so, only if they are used extensively by users. Now they just underscore the fact that this website is "dead".

⁵⁰ Details are given in the technical part of this report (partial analysis 9)

The findings from an information audit, questionnaire survey among users and an interview with the contractor (database administrator) can be summarised up as follows:

- Increase the user-friendliness of the portal (including removal of partial errors), simplify the language Z
- Introduce a new system of selection and approval of products
- Open system not only for products, but also for projects
- Extend the range of published information
- Add examples of good practice and stories

Based on meetings with representatives of the contractor (database administrator), it was found that their overall rating does not significantly differs from the outputs of information audit, i.e. that the contracting authority is aware of the weaknesses of the current implementation. The key information was the fact that the authority has the tools and will to significantly change the current functionality of the ESF Products Database.

The **online survey** was conducted by interviewing all active registered users of the ESF Products Database (i.e. in total 252 respondents were contacted). An internal email delivery tool was used for contacting users, with the option to directly enter a sender's email address. 15 emails were returned as undeliverable, the maximum number of responses was therefore 237. Return on survey was relatively low, only 33% of surveyed respondents completed at least partially the questionnaire (i.e. 84 registered users in total).

The results of the survey showed, however, that even though only the registered users were contacted by e-mail (and this was mentioned in the text of the email and introductory text), a significant percentage of respondents answered the question "Do you know the ESF Products Database located at: <http://esfdb.esfcr.cz> ?" responded negatively - it was in total 23 respondents (9% of respondents surveyed). Because it was the first and obligatory question, we consider it likely that a significant percentage of respondents, who did not continue in the questionnaire, also fall into the category of negative answer (it was 27 respondents, i.e. 11% who did not continue in completing the questionnaire). In total, 27 responses that were poorly filled (or were completely empty) were removed in the next step. In total, **57 responses were therefore analysed** (24% of the registered database users).

The registered users of the ESF Products Database use database most when preparing a new project and want to be inspired by the successful ESF projects or products, or to keep awareness of what projects are currently being implemented under the ESF. The registered users appreciated the very existence of the database, even though they had reservations and concerns about its current form.

Most users evaluate the content of the database positively. A total of 23 out of the 48 respondents answered that they evaluate the content of the database partially positive, because the database does contain many good examples, but they are hard to find. A total of 16 respondents feel satisfaction about the database's content, as the database contains plenty of innovative projects and products that they can use. The negative evaluation of the content is in favour of nine respondents. The current structure and keying is also rather positively evaluated (two thirds of respondents are in favour of the positive evaluation). The vast majority of respondents (38 of 48) were also inclined to think that the programmes and products are described in the database in a clear language. The strengths were identified as the following aspects (selection): the very existence of the database, clarity, quality of information and material, the possibility of inspiration, comprehensibility. The weaknesses have been shown as (selection): chaotic arrangement, problematic orientation in the website, missing products,

incompleteness of materials, small number of examples, problematic searching, lacking quality of some products.

The users evaluated areas that should be improved in order to increase the usability of the ESF Products Database. Respondents most frequently mentioned a transfer of good examples in the practice (a total of 28 respondents), followed by information retrieval (23 respondents), the structure and classification of information (21 respondents), user-defined functions (14 respondents), clarity of information (11 respondents), design and user friendliness (10 respondents), interactivity, product reviews (9 respondents) and overall impression (9 respondents).

The ESF Products Database user-focused online survey (i.e. for both current and **prospective users**) was published on the portal ESFCR.cz and then automatically sent to all users who have registered for the automatic sending of news to their email. The maximum number of responses thus cannot be accurately determined. A total of 141 respondents filled in the questionnaire (at least partially). A total of 20 respondents, however, indicated that they were registered in the database; their answers were not processed in this analysis. In summary, we analysed responses from 121 respondents. A large proportion of respondents (49) reported that they did not know the database; so that it was obtained a total of **72 relevant answers**.

The respondents mostly use the database to keep the awareness on what ESF projects are currently being implemented (18 respondents), when preparing a new project and want to be inspired by the successful ESF projects or products (9 respondents) or do not use the database at all (9 respondents).

The content of the database is evaluated positively, according to ten respondents the database contains plenty of innovative projects and products that they can use. A total of 19 respondents answered that they evaluate the content of the database partially positive, because the database does contain many good examples, but they are hard to find. A total of four respondents evaluated the database rather negatively, and according to them, the information in the database is not complete or clear and cannot be effectively used. The respondents are split in terms of the database structure evaluation and keying information, a total of 19 respondents positively assess its current form, according to 17 respondents it is rather unclear. Most respondents think that the language of the database is satisfying (17 respondents), according to nine respondents the language should be more humane, so that everyone would understand, the text is too technical. A total of 4 respondents think that the language of individual projects / products varies; the text is messed up.

The respondents also commented on what they believe could improve the usability of the ESF Products Database. According to the vast majority of respondents, any of the evaluated aspects (namely, clarity of information, structure and classification of information, information retrieval, transfer of good examples to practice, interactivity, product reviews, user-defined functions, and user-friendly design, the overall impression) cannot improve the usability of the database.

Evaluation question 5.3. To what extent do other tools or procedures contribute to the dissemination and exploitation of innovations resulting in projects and what is their impact in comparison with the ESF Products Database?

For the purpose of benchmarking it is necessary to distinguish from databases that are in various states connected directly to the official ESF database, and databases, which act more like inspirational data portals, collecting the best examples of projects or products in respective areas. The future focus of the ESF Products Database, although it is currently linked to the official ESF Database, leads clearly to the second type, i.e. the added value that represents the selection and evaluation of projects and

products. If the database is used as a tool within the network to support innovation in a given country or region, activities, by which these networks deal with, include:

- Interconnecting innovators within the Internet community (e.g. a platform OpenIDEO www.openideo.com)
- Consulting for innovation actors (e.g. a network Social Innovation Generation (SiG) <http://sigeneration.ca>)
- Public enlightenment and dissemination of good practice within the network (e.g. Topregion.cz)
- Interconnecting innovators and donors (e.g. Social Venture Partners Seattle www.svpseattle.org or The Australian Centre for Social Innovation www.tacsi.org.au)
- Research and development in the field of social innovation (e.g. NSI Network Social Innovation www.networksocialinnovation.nl) or ZSI www.zsi.at)

Databases in the Czech Republic – Topregion.cz

Currently there is only one database of projects in the Czech Republic that would meet the definition above, and that is Topregion.cz. It is the only inspirational database, focusing on human resource development in the country. This database provides comprehensive information and advisory support for developing and implementing the strategy of human resources development at the regional and national level. It is intended primarily for HRD regional coordinators and project managers who are involved in the strategic management of the HRD. Inspirational database also serves other people interested in the field of public administration and the business sector and the general public. The information in the database should serve as a good and clear expertise for all who make decisions about the future direction of the labour market and must take into account a wide range of aspects related to the issue.

Picture 2: Topregion.cz

The data bank is administered by the National Training Fund, o.p.s., and a part of the team of this evaluation is directly involved in the management and design of the database. It contains, among other things, a database of ESF projects that were nominated in the competition "Good advice is worth more than gold". In this competition, the competing projects are focused on the development of human resources and they are nominated by the regional councils for human resource development. The winning projects undergo expert evaluations, the second part of the evaluation is performed publicly on topregion.cz portal via internet voting.

The projects located in the database were therefore selected from many others by the regional councils for HRD and subsequently evaluated by an expert committee, which itself is an added bonus. Description of the project includes not only the usual attributes of the target type, target groups, etc., but also the story of a life that greatly illustrates the applicability of the project.

Links to other activities:

Topregion.cz is not a stand-alone database, but it serves as support in an existing network of regional councils for human resource development. This network regularly uses various forms of activities and tools used to disseminate examples of good practice in the field of HRD for interconnecting organizations and networking. This includes the following activities:

- Regular nationwide meetings of HRD regional councils (information exchange, presentation of innovative projects, trends, funding opportunities and resources)
- Workshops (team work to solve a specific problem or a project, presentation of good examples of solutions)
- Networking (interconnection of regional organizations, businesses, educational institutions, etc.)
- A competition "Good advice is worth more than gold" (competition for the best project in the area of human resources development in the Czech Republic, collected by a professional jury and in part by the public at portal topregion.cz, serving primarily as examples of good practice for inspiration - in particular the ESF projects)

Picture 3: Topregion.cz

The screenshot shows the website interface for 'MIC Akcelerátor'. On the left, there is a sidebar with icons and text: 'naše poradny' (our advisors), 'analýzy a prognózy vize a strategie partnerství řízení projektů financování' (analyses and forecasts vision and strategy partnership project management financing), 'cesta ke strategii' (path to strategy), and 'Kam by mělo MŠMT nasypat peníze z EU fondů pro další vzdělávání?' (Where should MŠMT pour money from EU funds for further education?).

The main content area includes a login form with fields for 'mandarin' and 'heslo' (password), a 'registrace' (registration) button, and a 'přihlásit' (login) button. Below the login form, there is a 'rubrika: databanka projektů' (category: project database), 'obor: soutěž' (field: competition), 'zaměření projektu: Vzdělávání' (project focus: Education), and 'cílová skupina: Žáci a studenti' (target group: Students and pupils). There are also buttons for 'Tisk' (Print) and 'Poslat e-mailem' (Send by email).

The main heading is 'MIC Akcelerátor' with the motto 'Motto: Nastartujte svou firmu, teď! Zn. MIC Akcelerátor'. The text describes the program as a one-year program for students of secondary and higher vocational schools in Central and Eastern Europe. The goal is to educate future entrepreneurs in the field of information technologies and lead them to the realization of their own ideas. The program provides knowledge, experience, and contacts that participants can use in their own businesses. The program's main results include the creation of innovative start-up companies, the creation of new hi-tech workplaces, and the strengthening of the position of the CR in the field of knowledge economy.

Additional details include: 'URL projektu: http://www.micakcelerator.cz', 'Zaměření projektu: Rozvoj podnikatelských kompetencí studentů, vznik inovativních firem a nových hi-tech pracovních míst.' (Project focus: Development of entrepreneurial competencies of students, creation of innovative companies and new hi-tech workplaces.), 'Region: Jihomoravský kraj', 'Místo: Brno', 'Hlavní řešitel projektu: Jihomoravské inovační centrum, z.s.p.o.', 'Spoluřešitelé, partneři: Partnerem projektu je společnost Microsoft s.r.o.', and 'Cíle projektu: Cílem programu je vznik nových start-up firem a hi-tech pracovních míst v oblasti informačních technologií skrze cílenou a intenzivní podporu aktivních studentů. Ta' (Project goals: The goal of the program is the creation of new start-up companies and hi-tech workplaces in the field of information technologies through targeted and intensive support of active students. This).

CIP EQUAL

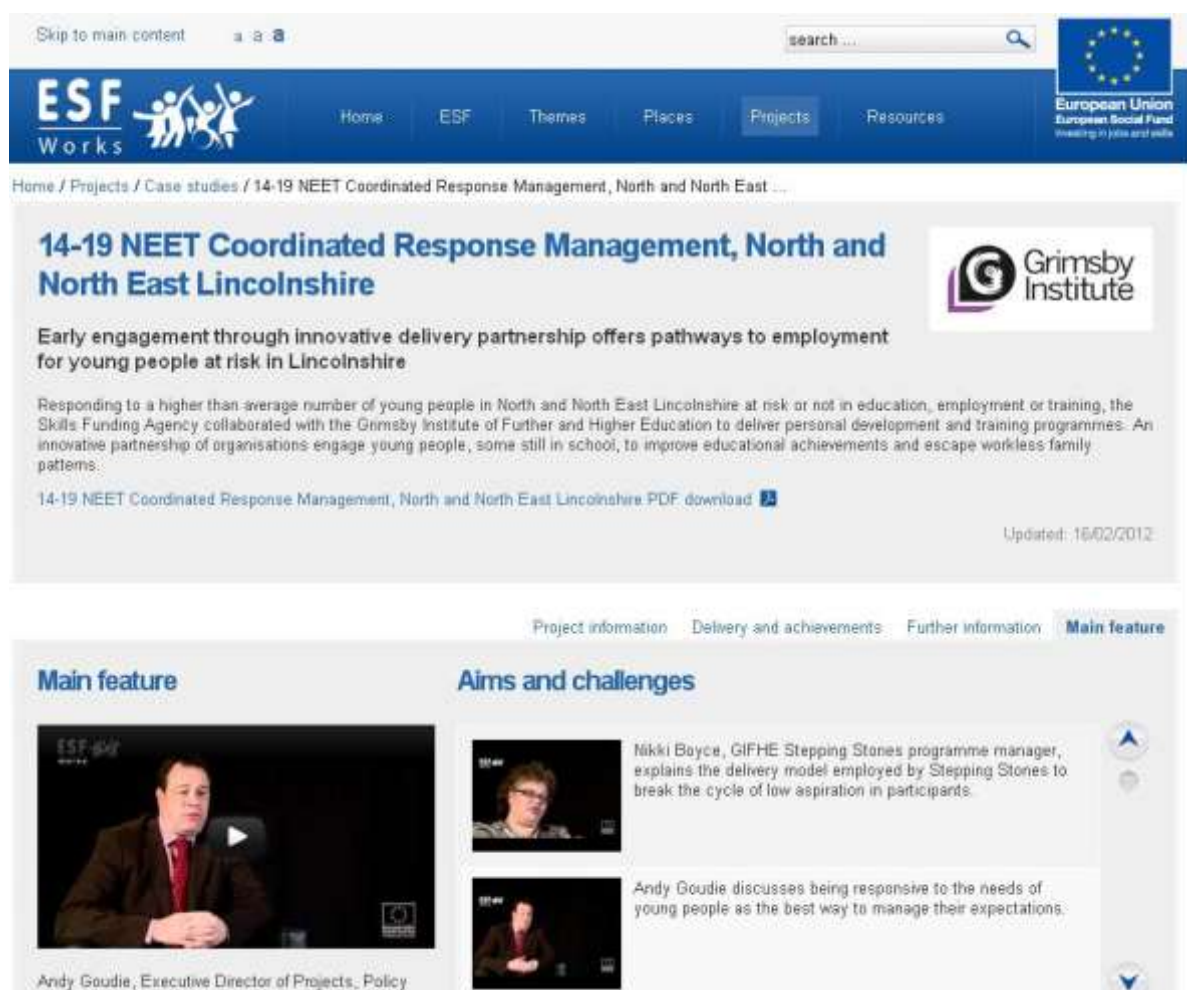
MoLSA is the promoter of the CIP EQUAL project database <http://www.equalcr.cz>, where are collected outputs, results and descriptions of the projects implemented. The database is particularly interesting because the EQUAL projects compared to the current ESF operational programmes showed higher innovation intensity. The database structure is very simple and can be evaluated as not very modern and attractive. The database links to the ESF Products database.

Tools and procedures abroad

ESF Works

It's a British portal <http://www.esf-works.com/> presenting ESF projects in England. It has two main sections: projects with a brief structured description and case studies with much more detailed information. The section of case studies is much more interesting than the rest, because it is a selection of projects - unfortunately it is not clear from the portal, according to what the key projects were selected.

Picture 4: ESF Works



The big advantage of this portal is the emphasis on personal story (like the database topregion.cz) and varied use of media, e.g. video interviews with project implementers or with representatives of target groups of various projects, and various photos. The portal is very clearly arranged, there are tabs for each project for more information.

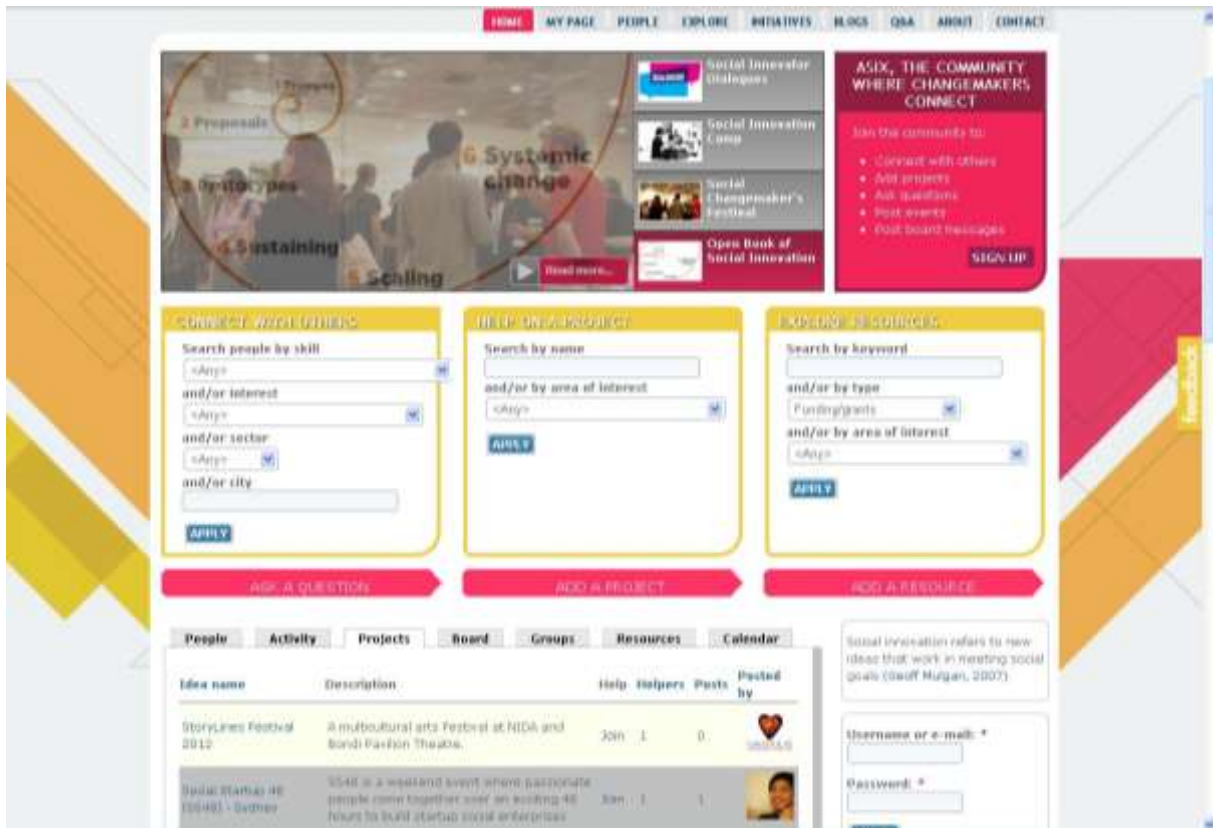
Australian Social Innovation eXchange

This Australian project developed a database of innovative projects <http://www.asix.org.au/>, whose main purpose is to connect innovators and disseminate examples of good practice. The inspiration for the Czech ESF Products Database is an interesting design of the database structure. Individual social innovation projects are linked to specific personal profiles of the project creators, innovators and experts in the field. The project can be entered as a partner or volunteer (for each project there is a description of what requirements for a partner are or how to participate). There is also a database of activities and events, which are again linked to the projects. These are various workshops, educational programmes, festivals, etc. Projects can be rated (simply by clicking on the stars) and commented.

A very interesting solution for the new ESF products database is also linking to the various sources of social innovation funding. The portal contains a simple database of currently available resources of funding social innovation projects and activities. These are mainly private sources, but there are public

funds and schemes as well. For each source it is given a very brief description (user-understandable) and an external link.

Picture 5: Asix.org.au

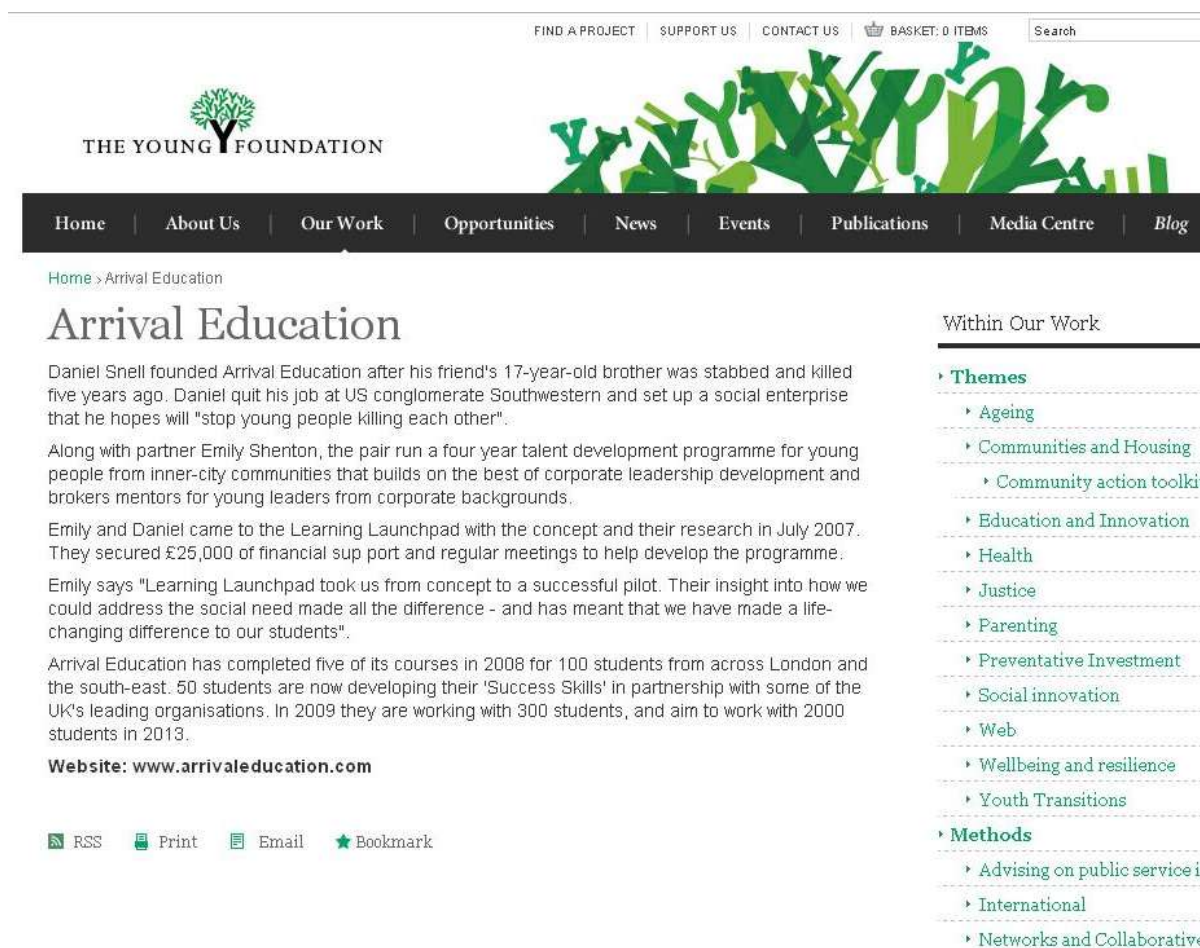


There is a free access to the database, i.e. everyone can post own project, activity, source or personal profile

The Young Foundation

This is again a British site, but here it is by far not the mere collection and publication of information, but a real network of innovative organizations and projects in the regions of the UK. The Foundation is engaged in networking of selected partners, innovators, and initiation of new projects at regional, national and international level. The portal www.youngfoundation.org contains a number of analytical data and additional information and a database of projects, whose managers are involved in the network (and thus are "proven innovators").

Picture 6: Youngfoundation.org



High added values of this portal are not only the truly innovative projects, but also their broader contextualizing. Projects are classified into various topics and subtopics, where each topic is broadly elaborated, and the topic descriptions follow trends on which way the area develops. Such provision of a wider context is very desirable, which is one of the reasons why we suggest publishing a wider range of information in the website of the ESF Projects Database as well.

5.6 Task 6 Perform an impact evaluation of the CIP EQUAL

The following chapter introduces the processing of Task 6 "Perform an impact evaluation of the CIP EQUAL, in relation to the innovativeness issue"

The evaluation questions mentioned below were processed together in view of their mutual interdependence.

1. *What are the impacts of CIP EQUAL on policies and strategies?*
2. *What are the institutional and organizational impacts of CIP EQUAL?*
3. *What are the impacts of CIP EQUAL on the implementation of projects under HREOP, ECOP and OPPA?*

Evaluation question 6.1 What are the impacts of CIP EQUAL on policies and strategies?

During the project implementation, the impacts of CIP EQUAL were observed nearly at every survey level - all types of target groups and a large number of respondents, and this fact is reflected in the prepared case studies. The reason was mainly direct thematic link between CIP EQUAL and evaluations conducted at the level of (social) innovation support. Links to other programmes or

interventions, such as EIOP, innovative activities in ECOP and OPPA or transfer of innovation in programmes such as Leonardo da Vinci and PROGRESS, appeared less frequently. The cause was mainly in a smaller (or no) experience with these projects.

The specific impacts on policies and strategies from the position of the beneficiaries then vary according to the focus of the project. None of innovative projects, which were selected for case studies, was assessed as sufficiently "strong" to reach the stage of causing social change. However, in many projects, it was found that they overrun the implementation stages, i.e. that intervention enabled spread of social innovation or its partial products as outputs of the project. There were identified impacts, especially at the level of local governments or local communities, whether it takes the form of a formal or informal group of long-term cooperation. An example might be a geographical transfer of social innovation from the site of the city of Brno to the city of Břeclav and other locations in connection with the activities of IQ Roma Servis, o.s., in the "IQ Servis" (see case study). Another example mentioned in the case studies is a project of the Consortium of NGOs Working with Migrants, o.s., which thematically associated organizations dealing with the issue, where one of the unexpected and unplanned results of the project was the creation of a think-tank. The project was also an opportunity to interconnect NGO sector working with refugees, allowing them to work in a team and solve the issue comprehensively. This project has begun to adjust elements of a systematic approach in working with refugees in the Czech Republic (including participation in working groups of government); however, after the end it failed to continue in activities, mainly for financial reasons. The long-term effects were largely relegated to the level of strengthening cooperation between NGOs and dissemination of outputs / products.

Generally speaking, in addition to the specific impacts, the CIP EQUAL contributed significantly to the networking of actors, not only on an international scale. As one of the impacts can therefore be mentioned the mind change in approach to the know-how (or the acceptance of the principle of partnership and recognition of the networking added value). Lastly, we can see partial impacts on the role and perception of the role of public administration, which was within CIP EQUAL projects often involved in the role of the cooperating entity, or thanks to the activities of the project, a long-term cooperation was started.

Evaluation question 6.2 What are the institutional and organizational impacts of CIP EQUAL

Impacts at the MoLSA (MA) level can be evaluated, in particular in relation to the current social innovation agenda, which includes this report as part of the contract, from three perspectives. The first aspect is the human resources and the existence of links between CIP EQUAL and the current agenda at the MoLSA staff level. Although we further observe that the current expert capacity of MA are not sufficient due to the specific nature of social innovation, it is clear that at least can be used the existing network of contacts and experience with e.g. CIP EQUAL for activation of the platform for social innovation, or for recruitment of expert capacities. Another impact that cannot be attributed only to CIP EQUAL is a long-term experience with the evaluators, the process of evaluation and awareness on limits of the current (or previous) system, which is crucial for the acceptance of a different setting of processes for evaluating innovation projects. The third aspect is a procedural difference between CIP EQUAL and HREOP, which currently allows at least generally refer and find similarities between the proposed system of innovative projects and CIP EQUAL. An envisaged implementation is thus much more tangible than if it would not be possible to point out the parallels, or to show that even different models (such as the selection and organization) could and will operate.

Evaluation question 6.3 What are the impacts of CIP EQUAL on the implementation of projects under HREOP, ECOP and OPPA?

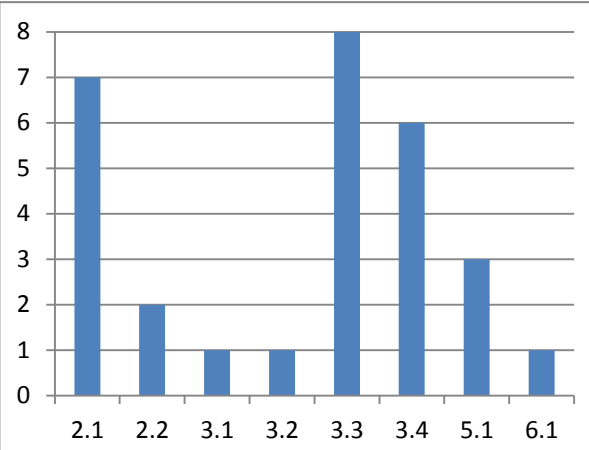
The survey found that 90 projects directly referred to previous CIP EQUAL projects in applications submitted to the HREOP⁵¹, with varying degrees of success. A total of 29 of them received support and was implemented or their implementation is ongoing, see the table below. In most cases, it was one successfully supported "follow-up" project per organization, some organizations did not receive funding even after repeated applications. Supported projects generally fall into priority axes 3 and 4; significant failure rate is seen especially in priority axis 5 (19% in international cooperation) and area 3.4 (18 projects in the area Equal Opportunities of Women and Men on the Labour Market and Reconciliation of Family and Working Life).

Table 2: Applications / projects in HREOP directly referring to the projects CIP EQUAL

Status of application (project)	Number
Project application did not meet eligibility criteria	11
Returned for revision to BENEFIT7	1
Project failed factual evaluation	22
Project passed factual evaluation	1
Project not recommended / not approved	24
Project recommended / approved as backup	1
Project recommended / approved	1
On-going implementation	10
Implementation terminated	8
Funding finished	8
Certified project costs	3
Total	90

Table 3: Applications / projects in HREOP directly referring to the projects CIP EQUAL, by areas of support

Area of support	Number	Funded	%
1.1	3	0	0
2.1	16	7	44
2.2	2	2	100
3.1	5	1	20
3.2	4	1	25
3.3	19	8	42
3.4	24	6	25
5.1	16	3	19
6.1	1	1	100
Total	90	29	32



Out of the 61 organizations that won a project under CIP EQUAL, at least 46 of them submitted an application to the HREOP in the role of the applicant, mostly repeatedly (average 8 applications per

⁵¹ It was found using full text search in the IS MONIT in the "Project Description" item.

organization). Then a total of 35 organizations were funded, mostly repeatedly (the average number of approved projects per organization that has ever won the project is 3.3). Thus there are significant differences between applicants and recipients - on the one hand, there is as People in Need, o.p.s. with 38 proposed and 11 projects approved in different areas of support (but mainly in 3.2), on the other hand, there are organizations with one or two funded projects.

At the level of beneficiaries (organizations) it is especially about a significant impact on capacity building in the human resources area and knowledge level of the organization as a whole, not only in the subject area of the project, but also in the preparation, administration and organization of the project itself. These changes led to significant changes in the organizations themselves, at least thanks to the increasing number of employees and collaborators, which often require a radical change in organizational structure and / or work organization. As the key aspects then show not only the financial support that enabled the project activities, but the "getting the project" as well, which means an important reference to the activities of the organization, both at project and international levels. This fact is reflected in the case studies, specifically e.g. in case of the organization IQ Roma servis, o.s., whose HREOP projects were evaluated as very innovative, however, a case study was conducted for the project, which enabled the organization growth and capacity-building, the project CIP EQUAL "IQ Servis".

An impact on HREOP project implementation is possible to perceive as a direct one, i.e. transfer of experience in field of project management, application of experience gained in these projects, transfer of know-how, as well as an indirect impact, i.e. the reference to the previous project-oriented activities at the international level, thus demonstrating the ability to handle the next project as well. In the survey it was not possible the data from other OPs, but there were repeatedly found links to other projects at websites of the recipients (e.g. in case of above mentioned IQ Roma servis, o.s., links to ECOP, ROP SE, projects of the MoEYS or PROGRESS, i.e. dozens of projects in total).

5.7 Task 7 Establish an innovation implementation system for the next programming period and set up a methodology (manual) for implementers of innovation projects

A proposal of an innovation implementation system in the next programming period and a Guide for implementers of innovation projects are separate Appendixes 6 and 8 of this final report. While preparing these outputs there were used pieces of knowledge and findings from previous evaluation tasks, in combination with other chapters (Chapter 6 - Conclusions and partial recommendations by evaluation tasks and Chapter 7 Recommendations) and in a combination they represent an "Action Plan" prepared with an emphasis on expected realism of the following steps towards implementing innovation.

6 Conclusions and partial recommendations by evaluation tasks

6.1 Task 1: Evaluate the relevance of the HREOP's innovation themes and their reflection in the calls in the context of socioeconomic development and progress in the HREOP's implementation

Evaluation question 1.1: To what extent are the topics of the innovation activities within the HREOP and the HREOP's implementation document relevant?

Conclusions

1. The impact of socioeconomic changes on innovation supply

The innovation supply is characterized by grant projects that react to the content of the calls. The influence of socioeconomic changes on the project level is not monitored; innovation supply is, however, consistently rated as low, with no ties to cyclical changes. Grant economy is always more resistant to them, the main key for the business sector is the development of a main activity. The exception is a social enterprise that connects social and economic aspects. However, its support is low in HREOP.

2. The impact of socioeconomic changes on innovation demand

The innovation demand in HREOP is embodied by individual national projects that target system change. This systems approach to innovation agenda is long-term and generally applicable in the wider international context. In this context, more significant are domestic political changes and resulting political demand, and an eligibility of potential innovation solutions.

3. Impacts of changes in the course of implementation

Evaluation of the impacts of changes in the course of implementation did not prove their innovativeness, or this impact is not directly measurable while absenting a reliable criterion for innovation activities or innovative output that would allow comparisons over time and between areas of support.

4. Relevance of themes of innovation activities

Presented is a basic overview of innovation themes in domestic and foreign sources. Domestic issues are derived from current national strategic documents; it can be assumed that they reflect current political demand (innovation supply). Foreign themes are also based on current knowledge of social innovation agenda. They include a wide range of differentiated approaches according to already implemented ways of support, barriers of social innovation and considerations on future support.

Implications

Immediate adverse socioeconomic impacts can reinforce the urgency of addressing long-term system problems, especially when combined with the effects of fiscal retrenchment. They can also stimulate more radical innovation approaches, or increase the pressure on their implementation and dissemination. They can also increase the resistance to changes, or cause them to slow down or mitigate.

A missing operationalized definition of innovation, specified by areas of support and related criterion of innovation activities and outputs, disables direct and comparative in time assessment of the relevance of innovation activities in the HREOP.

All identified themes of innovation activities may be due to their currentness considered relevant for possible implementation in the HREOP, i.e. reflect the current state of knowledge in the given field (foreign sources), or the political and professional demand (domestic sources).

Partial recommendations

For the next period 2014+ is desirable systematically and competently monitor and evaluate the impact of socioeconomic and political changes on innovation supply and demand, or on the factors that influence them. Such monitoring is important for the effective engagement of stakeholders both as representatives of supported interest / target groups and creators and implementers of related policies. It is also an essential condition for adapting innovation support to any prospective changes.

For the next period 2014+, a system approach is necessary to define the concept and application of innovation support (see proposed solutions for the questions in task 2 and implementation proposal in task 7), which would allow qualified assessment of its evolution over time, including the impact of socioeconomic changes and changes in implementation. When deciding on the implementation of changes, it is also necessary to take into account their impact on innovation support (innovation supply and demand).

A prioritization of relevant themes for innovation support will require the use of external expertise because their identification was not feasible at the MoLSA level. For the current period, prioritization of topics and specifications, as required by the contracting authority, applies in particular in the area of support 3 of the HREOP in relation to the expected pilot call (see the solution of the question 1.4). For the period 2014+ is a process of identifying priority topics a part of the recommended system changes (see again the tasks 2 and 7).

Evaluation question 1.2 Which needed topics are not included in the innovation activities identified?

Conclusions

Based on current information (on the side of MoLSA), no lack of innovation topics has been observed in the HREOP. Within its framework are the themes in the implementation document defined very broadly and generally and in terms of managing authority allow a sufficient reflection of the specific needs of innovation demand (its specification is vague or absent, with the exception of support for social enterprises).

Partial recommendations

An identification of the missing topics is necessary to make on an on-going basis, so in the future, with the use of external domestic and international expertise in distinguishing relevance for the current period (in relation to addressing the question 1.4) and for the preparation of the 2014+. This should be supported both by the innovation platform and its building, and by specifically announced evaluations.

Evaluation question 1.3 To what extent are the topics of the innovation activities reflected in the calls published?

Conclusions

1. Innovation calls

The themes of innovation actions are always included in HREOP's calls for proposals, which is given by their latitude and generality. In summary the innovation calls can be broken down by type of project, i.e. individual or grant projects.

In the case of grant projects is explicitly innovative only the Call 30, which targets the creation or development of social entrepreneurship. In the case of individual national projects innovation targets the system reform and transformation. A comprehensive approach across the axis for all the calls in this regard represents only the priority axis 4. For other projects, innovation is emphasised differently and it depends entirely on the project implementers, in what particular form it will be implemented.

2. Taking into account of an innovativeness

Some calls explicitly emphasise innovative tools and approaches, but without further clarification. An emphasis has therefore rather declarative character. A very small number of calls directly involves a specific innovation criterion (which was later abandoned), but without an apparent impact on innovation projects. However, the majority of calls include some innovative or even proinnovative characteristics, even though they are not directly mentioned in the text. Part of each project application is to explain the innovation criterion A1

3. Definition of innovation themes and base-line

Defining themes and the base-line proceeds in individual reform and transformation projects and in grant projects through the reference to the related legislation and strategic documents (these references, however, do not relate directly to innovation, but sometimes only to the definition of the conditions for providing the support). The priority axis 4 in this regard represents a complex approach, in relation to the Smart Administration Strategy.

In grant projects a specific definition of the topic and its base-line (including a specific evaluation methodology) is made in the call 30 only, i.e. the promotion of social entrepreneurship. Another group of calls lists the types of supported innovation activities, but their specific thematic focus and innovation itself are subject to individual projects.

Most of the calls, in general, do not specify innovation topics and do not use base-line. Clarification of innovation of the project is dependent on argumentation skills of the applicant and its assessment on the evaluator's knowledge capacity.

It can be observed through the time that the projects being implemented tend to certain unification, which may be due to the weakening of supply innovation capacity and the measured adaptation to the type of already approved projects and the type of evaluator knowledge capacity (its conservativeness, narrow-mindedness).

Implications

Due to the low level of knowledge capacity, which was available at the time of the documents creation (generally due to a deficiency of strategic intelligence for policy-making in the Czech Republic), is a wide range of innovation topics defined beneficial in terms that it does not restrict any future targeting of innovation support.

The problem is that between the initial list of innovation themes and the published calls, the appropriate conditions for the implementation of innovation were not created, either inherent or targeted (with the exception of support for social entrepreneurship).

Partial recommendations

Currently, with regard to the overall situation described above it is appropriate to focus on a pilot call in area of support 3.1 (see the evaluation questions 4 below) and the setting of appropriate mechanisms for the next programming period.

Evaluation question 1.4. On what areas / topics should the innovation activities be focused within the next implementation of the HREOP?

Conclusions

Based on current information from the contractor, it has been identified a space for pilot innovation call in the area of support 1.3. The attention and adequate resources should also be given in order to build expert capacity on the contractor's side, probably from the HREOP's Technical Assistance.

Implications

In the area of support 3.1, it is possible to identify the innovation potential, if it would be feasible to announce the call for grant projects with explicit innovation targeting, especially at the transfer and sharing of best practices, networking and mobilization of stakeholders, raising expert capacity. A targeting at specific innovation topics requires matching specific methodical support and process settings, especially in connection with received applications and their evaluation.

Partial recommendations

From the system point of view, it would be appropriate to focus the remaining support on preparing for the new period, including access to the support for innovative activities. After clarifying this approach the appropriate activities in that respect seem to be: the creation of appropriate internal and external knowledge (expert) capacity in the field of social innovation, active participation in transnational expert networks and international research activities, setting up a home thematic network for the area of social innovation at the national, regional and local level.

A methodical support for the implementation of the principles of innovation at the programme and project level with use of a foreign experience. Making international best practices accessible in form of an inspirational database for domestic use.

Education of stakeholders in the agenda of social innovation at all vertical levels and in interdepartmental cross-section (at least in selected pioneering agenda); opening up and active dissemination of demonstrably innovative projects of the current programming period.

The framework opportunities for advancement are listed below and are divided by innovative supply and demand perspectives and their networking (harmonization). A detailed proposal of the implementation system is presented as an output of task 7 in a separate Appendix.

1. Innovation supply (new themes)

a) to clarify the existing space for innovation activities in the area of support 3.1, especially what will be a possible range of support and what will be the timing of the call

b) to propose innovation topic/s with the use of existing or supplemented expert groups / panels; in this context, we refer to the results of the Czech and international expert panel in the technical part of the report. Summing up the results of the Czech expert panel relevant to the area of support 3.1, the participants described the mapping of innovative ideas for current and especially following period of support from the Structural Funds as the most relevant to the following topics in the Thematic Objective 2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and Combating Poverty⁵²:

2.1.1. Integrated pathways combining various forms of employability measures such as individualised support, counselling, guidance, access to general and vocational education and training, as well as access to services, notably health and social services,

⁵² The first number indicates the number of respondents who ticked the subject; the latter total number of respondents to whom the question was asked. It was possible to select none, one or more answers. It is sorted by frequency. Listed are topics that received the most, considerably more than the next in ranking.

child care, and internet services (107/264 respondents)

2.4.2. Enhanced access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality social services such as employment and training services, services for the homeless, out of school care, childcare and long-term care services (96/264 respondents)

2.5.2. Mobilisation of funds to support initiatives in the social economy and social entrepreneurship (94/264 respondents)

2.5.1. Capacity-building and support structures for the promotion of social enterprises, in particular through social entrepreneurship education and training, networking, the development of national or regional strategies in partnership with key stakeholders, and the provision of business development services and easier access to finance (93/264 respondents)

When comparing the results of Czech and international panel for the same thematic objective, we find that themes 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 acquired abroad most preferences, which further confirms the focus on social entrepreneurship. Based on the results of an international panel, there were suggested another areas outside the thematic objectives that have been submitted to all respondents, irrespective of their expertise domain. Most preferences received by the following topics⁵³:

- *Networking and coordination - interconnecting (potential) stakeholders on a territorial or a subject basis for innovative solutions, including social donors (380/510 respondents)*
- *Local engagement and innovation (stronger communities) - support the involvement of local communities in solving problems (369/510 respondents)*
- *Innovation workplace - human resource development in companies (359/510 respondents)*
- *Incubation of social innovation (launchpad) - support the new business projects with a social impact (finance, social capital, business expertise) (358/510 respondents)*
- *Creative Economy - connecting creative industries with economic and social activities (344/510 respondents)*
- *Support field workers - divided by target groups (327/510 respondents)*
- *Training / education - educational programmes for the local communities (workshops, informal meetings) (321/510 respondents)*
- *Increased entrepreneurship - corporate social responsibility (316/510 respondents)*
- *Sharing good practice / capacity building - a comprehensive knowledge base centred (or divided) e.g. by target groups (education, networking, knowledge products, research of journals, expert panels) (307/510 respondents)*

c) to determine a limited number of innovative projects with a special regime (from the preparation and submission of applications to the evaluation) and with strong links to the existing expert capacity (combined domestic and foreign), the rules of the scheme to be create within a deadline set.

d) to create a specific regime of monitoring for innovative projects, which will be proactive and will support qualified implementers up to the mainstreaming phase, i.e. using an external capacity that it will cooperate already in step (c).

⁵³ There is always stated an area and behind dash a more accurate thematic definition. The first number indicates the number of respondents who ticked the subject; the latter total number of respondents to whom the question was asked. It was possible to select none, one or more answers. Sorted by frequency. Listed are nine topics that received the most preference, however, the frequency distribution across all topics were always linear.

2. Innovation demand (development of existing topics)

Extending existing demand in the types of projects with innovation potential, especially given the pilot call and preparation of programming period 2014+. The only type of activity that is innovative by nature, are social enterprises and their number is still very small. It is advisable to explore the space for increasing their number, such as modification of funding conditions or inclusion of counselling services, preparatory and follow-up activities.

3. Reconciliation of innovation supply and demand (support of system changes)

a) demand: developing knowledge capacity by combining internal (from MoLSA's expert departments) and external resources, while building a pool of evaluators of innovative projects (usable in the future)

b) supply: thematic networks for social innovation, proactive targeting at (potential) groups of applicants / innovators and their support (including innovation scouting), marketing of social innovations as a concept, presenting existing examples, creative seminars, workshops

6.2 Task 2 Evaluate the current concept of innovation in the HREOP and in ESF abroad, and suggest suitable definition of innovation in the context of the current state of implementation of the HREOP

Evaluation question 2.1. What are the current concepts of innovation (incl. EC's concept) relevant for the implementation of the ESF and the interest of the contracting authority?

Conclusions

1. Functional definition of social innovation

The universally valid definition of social innovation is not available and is not possible. In terms of operationalization, the definition must always be context-specific. In summary, social innovation represents new solutions in a current concept, which meet urgent social (or societal) needs while creating new social relations and cooperation in social interaction

2. The importance of social innovation

The essential characteristic of social innovation is the importance of social interaction that is itself an innovation result because it creates social capital. Interaction involves the participation and cooperation of various actors and stakeholders as well as an empowerment of beneficiaries, i.e. innovation is developed and distributed within their participation. The quality of interaction affects the sustainability of innovation and its upscaling. Compared to the traditional concept of innovation in the Lisbon strategy, the emphasis on a direct link between economic and social dimensions of development appears, and the area of social innovation is becoming the sphere of innovation policy. In addition to other priorities, the Europe 2020 Strategy (and especially its pillar initiative Innovation Union) underlines this importance. It mobilises creativity while forming solutions and it better uses resources, promotes innovation and learning society. At the same time all types of actors can be innovative in creating their products and services

3. The types of social innovations

Social innovations can be distinguished by various criteria - by the nature of social interactions as a solution of social demand (need), addressing societal challenges and system change, as well as by type of institutional sector, where do they take place, or the interaction of different sectors (public, market, third sector, household and innovation intermediaries). By the phase or phases of the innovation cycle: development of options and solutions, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

phase and the phase of adaptation and dissemination. Alternatively, one can distinguish six types of phases of social innovation: ideas and inspiration, suggestions and ideas, prototyping and pilots, maintenance, development and dissemination and system change (according to the Young Foundation⁵⁴).

4. Evaluation of social innovations

Evaluation of social innovation can be divided into two types of approaches. The first is used to identify the characteristics of innovative projects (and their groups), and is closely related to the evaluation process. The second is used to assess the benefits (i.e. the social impact of the project, group of projects or programme). Both aspects are mutually related. However, when social innovation is not an explicit objective, it is not specifically evaluated.

Implications

Social innovation agenda is still relatively new and live at EU level, brand new in the Czech Republic. It means that the authority that wishes to promote it therefore requires an appropriate expertise, including continuous monitoring of the development of professional knowledge and practice in an international context, the ability to adapt to the ongoing changes and the ability to use acquired knowledge in domestic conditions. This also applies to separate appendixes of this final report (specifically the Guide for the development and implementation of innovative projects and a proposal of the Implementation of social innovation for the next programming period), which summarize the current state of knowledge in the field of social innovation in the form usable for the area of ESF and the managing authority, but which will need further development and adaption.

Partial recommendations

1. Creating internal expert capacity (i.e. constantly working in close interaction with the target subjects, having a corresponding position to them) for the agenda of social innovation with the use of external knowledge sources. Among other tasks it should be flexible to respond to developments and the changing context in the Czech Republic and the ESF. The existing internal resources of the managing authority are not available in this regard, and due to the complexity of the agenda it is not realistic to assume their own creation.
2. Expert capacity for social innovation should be gradually extended for the preparation and implementation of the agenda of the programming period 2014+ within the MoLSA and for the development of interdepartmental interaction (in best case collaboration) with entities affected by the area of social innovation (especially education and quality of human resources (including health care), a traditional innovation performance, sustainable development, institutional quality, ICT).

Evaluation question 2.2. To what extent is the current HREOP's concept of innovation appropriate?

Conclusions

1. Horizontal principle of innovation

The innovation agenda is in the HREOP programming documents formally based on the horizontal principle of innovation, which in the implementation practice means that it is only optional and mostly very vaguely perceived perspective.

⁵⁴ In details, the typologies are provided in the Guide (Appendix 8) and implementation proposal (Appendix 6, Chapter 5).

2. Selection of priorities for innovation activities

Selection of priorities for innovation activities is not justified and their contents are not specified, as well as the application of the principle of innovation at the project level (incarnation of this unqualified application is the information value of the indicator "number of new / innovative products).

3. Explicit focus on social innovation

Only support of social entrepreneurship is explicitly and with appropriate knowledge and implementation capacity focused on social innovations, which, however, represent in terms of extent a very small part of the resources expended within the HREOP.

4. Reflecting problems in evaluation documents

The problems with the definition, concept and application of the principle of innovation are mentioned continuously in all evaluation documents and other types of feedback during the implementation of the HREOP (indeed, within the assignment of this report), i.e. in annual reports, annual operational evaluations and focus groups records.

5. Missing system solution

A system solution of mentioned problems, however, was not observed, nor attempted. The attention is focused on the adaptation of definitions in the manuals, i.e. administrative solutions. Reflection on the contribution of these changes on the part of administrators and evaluators is rightly sceptical, or even negative. In some cases, obvious is the apparent helplessness of both groups over the very concept of innovation, which is also reflected in the idea, that the problem can be solved just by creating other manuals or formulations of simple rules or recommendations.

Implication

The current concept of innovation in the HREOP is inappropriate both in terms of implementation and system, and strategically unclear and is not formulated according to the rules for the period 2007-2013, based on experience with the CIP EQUAL (which is not in any way exceptional in terms of international comparison).

The findings from previous experience (on the side of both the management and administration of the HREOP and the evaluators of the projects themselves) confirm that the innovation support cannot be implemented mechanistically in compliance with the manuals, but there must be available continuously developed knowledge capacity capable of qualified and comprehensive targeting (support) of innovation supply and demand.

Partial recommendations

Innovation strategy

It is necessary to decide whether innovative activities will be targeted and therefore limited to a certain segment of allocated resources (completed projects) or considered desirable inherent characteristics of all projects, or both. Combined approach can be considered as the best for the future programming period and is further elaborated in detail in Appendix 6 (implementation proposal).

Of course, it is desirable that all supported projects aimed at innovation. This effort should be supported by training of potential applicants, expert assistance in developing projects, dissemination of good practice and other types of activities for the development of innovation supply. But it is not appropriate to include innovation as part of the evaluation.

Innovation activities should be the key characteristic in evaluation of such projects that explicitly target innovation. However, these projects must have adequate knowledge capacity at its disposal in all phases of the project cycle (quality of innovation demand), administered by the managing authority. Innovation outputs of these projects must undergo a qualified and demanding validation.

Innovation projects

For the current period, it is recommended to set the new concept of innovation projects selected for pilot innovation activities (see the solution in question 2.7 and in question 1.4). Methodology for the implementation of this concept is included in this report in relation to the task 7. For the period 2014+ is necessary to continuously develop this methodology also in the (qualified) reflection on knowledge development in the EU.

Principles of innovation

In the current period, qualitative changes in the principles of innovation, or their complex and qualified introduction are not real.

For the period 2014+, there exists a recommended procedure for the preparation according to the principles of innovation support which were formulated for the period 2007-2013. The procedures must be consistently updated with knowledge developments at EU level and during interactions with domestic stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Context specification

For the period 2014+ is particularly necessary to take into account the specifics of the innovation support according to phases of the innovation cycle, institutional sector, or a sectorial combination of innovative type (creation vs. adoption of innovation), the level of development of innovation supply etc.

The importance of horizontal principles

For the period 2014+, the horizontal principles of international cooperation must have appropriate weight in targeted innovation projects (from qualified support of applicants to an appropriate expertise of evaluation), partnership, mainstreaming (see solutions in questions 2.4 and 2.5).

A detailed description of the proposal is shown in a separate Appendix 6 (Implementation of support for innovation), specifically in Chapter 3, "Implementation of support for innovation." **Here are listed, for clarity only, substantial partial recommendations in abbreviated form.**

Evaluation question 2.3 What foreign approaches to the concept and application of innovation in the ESF can be used in the Czech Republic?

Conclusions

1. Lagging support of social innovation in ESF (top-down)

At the level of policy making and implementation (top-down), including the setting of the ESF itself, as yet the social innovation agenda gains ground rather rarely (compared to traditionally-based innovation policy).

2. Thematic limits of support and the dominance of agencies

The most common example of an established support of social innovation is an area of social entrepreneurship and work-place innovation. Implementation of ESF support is carried out by specialized agencies with adequate knowledge capacity.

3. The diversity of national approaches

The existing approaches to social innovation agenda are very diverse in the EU and with different demands on the quality of the successor entity (its knowledge and institutional capacity, but also cultural, historical and socio-economic specifics).

4. Lack of social impact evaluation

The foreign approaches are formalised / institutionalized differently, as yet there is usually missing evaluation of impacts (social impact), or is associated with uncertainties.

5. The dynamic development of social innovation from the bottom

Initiators of new, particularly local approaches to the development of social innovation are initiatives of actors themselves (bottom-up), often using information and communication technologies (social media), with an interdisciplinary scope / overlap (environment, creative industries) and a significant mobilization of civil society.

6. Support for local innovative approaches from other resources

Local approaches (which, however, can develop into a national or even international outreach) are not generally supported by the ESF, as their settings and implementation approach ignores innovation type (creative, dynamic, difficult to predict, risk). They often receive support from other entities, including corporate (in the Czech Republic is such an example the Vodafone Foundation).

Implication

Although there are always certain national specifics of social innovation agenda, in the EU there were not identified obstacles of the transfer of foreign approaches to the Czech Republic, or these obstacles are solved in the process of adaptation (localization) to domestic needs and restrictions.

International approaches to the concept and application of innovation support in ESF (top-down) are developing, but lag behind the development of social innovation area itself (bottom-up) both in an approach and content. This underdevelopment has been manifested especially in recent years in comparison with the increasing importance and innovation impact of social media.

The rigidity of the ESF support reflects superiority of an administrative approach, which is fundamentally inconsistent with the character of social innovation activities as non-standard procedures and solutions. A related problem is also setting of a seven-year programming period (plus at least two years of preparations) and the inability or unwillingness of major changes in its course, in contrast to the ever-accelerating dynamics of social development. A cross-sectional problem is the low internal knowledge capacity and under-utilization of external capacity.

Partial recommendations

Prioritizing transferable approaches (applied within the ESF but also outside of it) using foreign and domestic expert panel. Defining conditions of an effective transfer, or demand of and possibilities on customization according to domestic specificities.

Evaluation question 2.4 What is the role of international cooperation in the application of innovation in the ESF, is it appropriate (necessary) to connect both principles?

Conclusions

1. The role of the ESF is considered essential, but in practice is insufficient

In the topic of innovation support and international cooperation in the ESF is proclaimed a close relationship. Past experience however points to the need for improved coordination and thematic

focus (especially at EU level). Furthermore, sophisticated implementation procedures for promoting international cooperation are missing, an international synchronization of calls is considered desirable.

2. The role of international cooperation in the HREOP

Given the continuing lag of the Czech Republic in the development of social innovation behind advanced countries (on side of innovation supply and demand), the extent of international cooperation support and its importance are insufficient. On the other side the process of re-use and the possible modification of foreign experience is not sufficiently elaborated and linked to professional issues (i.e. in axes off the priority axis 5).

3. International cooperation and innovation

In the priority axis 5, innovation activities are defined completely freely in terms of their content and are in identical form copied to the calls of a respective axis. Thematic focus (e.g. reflection of new social needs) is not applied in any of the calls.

4. Transfer of innovation in the projects of international cooperation

An innovative type of projects represents an adoption of a foreign experience. In this respect, therefore, all projects include (adopted) innovation. It is not clear whether and to what extent there is also a content adaptation of a foreign content according to domestic specificities.

The realized projects have certain prerequisites for transfer of innovations, such as recipients' knowledge capacity, participation in networks, continuing education activities, usually with methodical support. Dissemination and promotion of innovation outside implementer's own organization has a rather passive character and blends in with the publicity. The induced qualitative changes and their impacts are not generally understood.

5. Implementation of international cooperation

Project implementers have adequate knowledge capacity to adopt foreign experience and seek to enhance it (capacity building), they have technical expertise and practical (field) experience in the area. Foreign partnerships are often based on previous cooperation.

Rather passive participation of foreign partners, which significantly reduces the benefits of international cooperation, is necessarily influenced by budgetary constraints (i.e. particularly badly set rules and conditions of financing their participation).

Dissemination and promotion of the transferred experience is not usually incorporated into the project with equal prominence and it's rather complementary, which is the main drawback.

Implication

Based on the experience in the ESF are formulated recommendations of the Working Group on innovation and international cooperation and suggestions for inclusion of international cooperation in future programmes. These recommendations, however, are still very general.

A limited support for international cooperation in HREOP hinders a better use of the experience developed and possibly implemented elsewhere. Due to the backwardness of the Czech Republic in the development of innovation supply and demand and dynamics of the Agenda, the importance of international cooperation is essential.

A thematic generality of innovation activities support in priority axis 5 is a favourable characteristic, if the capacity of the provider's knowledge is limited. On the other hand, it diminishes the possibility of concentration of project capacity on the current or prospective problem areas.

The induced qualitative changes and their impacts are not usually explained in the projects (in terms of type and extent), which basically makes impossible to assess their impact. It can be only judged whether the preconditions are being created or not.

Partial recommendations

At the international level will be crucial an ability to create and effectively maintain a common platform at EU level and the ability of the Czech part to actively contribute to its work and to mediate domestic entities with derived knowledge, and present their feedback abroad.

Within the OP, the principle of internationality should be horizontal, i.e. all projects should present themselves in reflection to foreign experiences (manifest its knowledge) and dedicate a part of the budget to its adoption, possible modification and dissemination.

In projects with the active participation of a foreign partner is necessary to establish rules that will enable his significant share on the project implementation, i.e. that he will be able to get the appropriate reward for the created entry. In these types of projects should be required not only passive transfer of adopted innovation, but also the participation of Czech entities in its development, with a significant modification for local needs.

Project applications must be specified in more detail (based on appropriate methodical support) in the content of individual parts, in addition to the characteristics of social innovation also by aspects of adoption / modification (i.e. knowledge capacity), dissemination and enforcement of foreign innovation.

On the provider's side is essential a proactive approach supporting (potential) applicants and project implementers in obtaining information about opportunities of international cooperation, including recommendations for its thematic agenda in accordance with the foreign good or best practice.

Great emphasis should be placed on the creation and development of appropriate internal knowledge capacity of the provider in relation to supranational and international level and the ability to support its qualified internal use in relation to innovative demand entities: evaluators, administrators, management.

Evaluation question 2.5. What are the effects and the weight of related principles, such as partnerships, mainstreaming, etc.

Conclusions

1. The effect is not systematically / specifically required / evaluated / monitored

The effect of the principles of partnership and mainstreaming is not systematically demanded in the OP and there's therefore no systematic monitoring and evaluation.

2. Little attention is paid to both principles (their weight)

In the OP are the principles of partnership and mainstreaming rather marginal aspects, generally their weight is not considered high within implementation.

Implication

The importance of both principles is essential for social innovation (see definition), especially for sustainability and up scaling. In the concept put forward by this report, the partnership principle is emphasized, mainstreaming is a follow-up phase. Both partnership and mainstreaming should have adequate methodical support, as is proposed in international cooperation. The key issue is not only finding a suitable partner, but also the right timing and range of cooperation.

Partial recommendations

Principles of partnership and mainstreaming are closely related to the principle of international cooperation, as mentioned above, in the OP, the principle of internationality should have horizontal nature (see previous evaluation question). Recipients should always have the opportunity to use resources to draw on new experiences and cooperation, especially with regard to the potential for creating synergies and the creation of long-term alliances. Like in area of international cooperation, in this area of support is essential a proactive approach supporting (potential) applicants and project implementers. A comprehensive knowledge of the local situation and knowledge of foreign approaches should be a part of every application. There should also be a strong emphasis on evaluation and dissemination of results (including foreign), which should be both external and internal within the MoLSA (used to increase the knowledge capacity).

Evaluation question 2.6. To what extent would it be possible and appropriate to align the approach to innovation within the ESF with the principles of the System of support of research, development and innovations in Czech Republic (see the Research, Development and Innovation Council (RDIC)-<http://www.vyzkum.cz>)?

Conclusions

1. Fundamental difference between the concepts of the traditional innovation and social innovation

Due to the differences in the concepts of innovation within the ESF (social innovation) and R&D support system in the Czech Republic (restriction to linear innovation based on research and development), such unification is not possible. The traditionally conceived innovation have the problem with evaluation (see the discussions about so-called "coffee mill") and this problem is even more pronounced for social innovation.

2. A suitability, but the real unattainability of a comprehensive concept of innovation

Ideally, of course, would be appropriate to have the complex concept of innovation and access to their support at the national level, but this is very difficult to achieve (and is still exceptional even in international comparison). So far there is no indication that the range of innovation support in the R&D system was extended to the area with no ties to pure research and development (which by the way has not yet been common even abroad). A comprehensive approach to innovation is, of course, a desirable way (i.e. including social innovation and innovation without direct links to research and development), but the Czech Republic will probably not be its pioneer.

3. The absence of universally applicable methodologies for evaluation of innovation results

The national capacity for knowledge-based methodology for evaluating the results of traditional innovation should be subject of the individual national project as specified by the MoEYS. Incorporating the results is expected from 2015. The project reflects a fundamental concern of the international audit of PRIs in the Czech Republic on the attempt for a consistent approach to innovation activities and results.

The methodology of evaluation of social innovation is in international comparisons in the embryonic stage. There were identified hundreds of evaluation methods. Their ongoing research is identified as a priority in the Vienna Declaration, however we cannot expect early results, or straightforward results transferable in a simple definition.

Implication

A comprehensive approach to innovation requires fundamental changes in the creation and implementation of the innovation policy, in particular the creation of adequate knowledge capacity and mind-set of all involved key stakeholders and their representative (cross-section) presence (i.e. both traditional and comprehensively based innovation policy).

Potential changes at the national level do not have simple solutions (such as changes in legislation), require long-term and focused approach in rather small steps and depend, besides the corresponding knowledge capacity (i.e. qualified methodology and especially its application), on the willingness and interest of both parties, in particular representatives of traditional innovation policy who are very conservative in the Czech Republic (i.e. neither taking into account the existing progressive approaches in a traditionally defined innovation agenda).

At the EU level there exist (potentially) contact surfaces between the traditionally conceived innovation and social innovation that are mentioned in the Agenda of the Union of Innovation, and specifically in Directorates General Enterprise and Industry, Research and Innovation, Information Society and Media. Other contact surfaces include social aspects of traditional innovation (e.g. health care) and interconnecting social and traditional innovation in local development and innovation strategies. These contact surfaces will become increasingly important, however, they are beyond the scope of the HREOP and its existing expert capacity.

Partial recommendations

The creation and development of internal knowledge capacity for social innovation that will (among other agendas) include knowledge from both innovation concepts, and will be able to support (inspire, initiate, attract, visualize, promote) their multi / interdisciplinary / interdepartmental networking. This capacity must have (among other qualities) corresponding reputation especially in area of the traditional innovation policy in order to make its officers take it as an equal partner.

In the long period, a gradual incorporation of the results of the development of methodologies for innovation activities and results and hypothetically also their possible connections between traditional and social innovation (if ever possible). Primarily, however, it should focus on the development of appropriate expertise for the application of the methodology of evaluation of social innovation.

Evaluation question 2.7. Is the evaluation of project applications, reporting and monitoring of innovative products appropriately adjusted?

Conclusions

1. Missing (functional) methodical documents

At disposal there is only the definition of specific criterion of innovation, which has been applied in a limited number of calls for grant projects. There are no analytical data, identifying baseline for best practices, or other sources. The fulfilment of this specific criterion does not mean an automatic approval of the project. An innovativeness criterion is completely missing in case of individual projects, where it should yet be given a special attention.

2. Deformation of the information value of the indicator new / innovative products

Especially misleading is significance of number of innovative products, among which can be huge differences. Without further qualification, this indicator loses its information value.

Implication

The absence of adequate methodological bases assigns the weight of decisions about project innovativeness on the individual ability of evaluators, which is very different. Personality assessment

innovation further enhances its A very vague characterization under criterion A1 further enhances the subjectivity of the evaluation of innovativeness/

The inevitable result of the setting of output indicator is an inflation of reported innovation and loss of its explanatory power (Goodhart Rule) and the long-term degradation of innovation concept as such.

Partial recommendations

The creation of a new system for evaluation of applications, reporting and monitoring of innovative products and its pilot application for selected topics for a limited number of pilot projects in the upcoming call. System will be developed and implemented with the use of external expert capacity, will be based on the characteristics of so-called innovation characteristics of a project (see Table 5) and the proposal for implementation (see separate attachment).

Every innovation-oriented project will include a reasonable strategy of evaluation of innovative outputs Monitoring and reporting of the innovative products, or their validation, including evaluation of its potential or suggestions for mainstreaming.

A targeted presentation of the new system to potential applicants / stakeholders, the evaluators and (externally derived) project administrators is essential. The quality of evaluators and administrators must meet the specific requirements to support innovation activities. Compliance with these requirements must be verifiably demonstrated.

Table 4: Characteristics of social innovation projects

Characteristic	Description
Initiatives and inspiration	Procedures to identify problem / opportunity and its cause (diagnosis), grabbing attention on theme (making visible) for potential stakeholders. Mapping / evaluation of the new approach application (e.g. abroad).
Suggestions and ideas	A procedure from an idea to the project proposal, using creative and interactive methods, an active involvement of beneficiaries and stakeholders (participation and partnerships).
Necessity	Existing solutions of the problem or taking the opportunity is (in the long-term) inadequate or inappropriate. The reasons for the unsatisfactory solutions (lasting or expected problems or missed opportunities) and the necessity of a new approach.
Complexity	Problem / opportunity and their innovative solutions are put into the context of other solutions, policies, strategies in the field, region, country (holistic approach). Evaluated is the context of problem / opportunities and innovative solution.
Novelty	The essence of novelty approach (compared to the current solution), such as the novelty of looking at the problem / opportunity, the novelty of the target group. It's about creating your own innovation or transfer / adaptation of innovation developed elsewhere. Radius of innovation, i.e. the scale of a new solution (organization, region, country, industry, target group).
Improvement	The essence of improvements of a new solution compared to the existing solution. A comparison of the current solution and projected improvement, evidence of a positive difference. Ways and means of measurement of an improvement and its benefits.
Process	Process characteristics of a new solution, such as social learning, interactivity, openness, crowdsourcing, networking / sharing, collaborative work, creativity, engagement, participation, empowerment, social / relational capital, change in behaviour.
Involvement of target groups	User orientation, i.e. (inter)active engagement, participation in project (solution) co-creation, share in decision making about its direction, systematic feedback from users, adapting to the changing needs of the project, focusing on the strengths of individuals (groups) and their activation.

Characteristic	Description
Impact on target groups	Persistence and specificity of the impact of innovation on the target groups, increasing the potential of target groups and their ability to participate in solving their own problems / taking opportunities (after the end of funding), project's contribution to improve the social recognition of the target group.
Diversity and partnerships	Ways of interconnection (form and intensity of interaction) of various entities (sectorial / institutional diversification of partners), solving multidisciplinary problems (as opposed to restrictions on their partial aspects), sharing the objectives, knowledge, responsibility (and also funding).
Practice and dissemination	Ways of delivering innovation solutions in practice (test, pilot). A form of transferable output and a way to disseminate , getting feedback. Supporting the dissemination of innovative solutions and involving (potential) interest communities (professional, political, regional).
Upscaling and sustainability	Upscaling procedures for innovative solutions and its scope (local, specialized, group). Other activities that the project may cause or inspire. Conditions and form of innovative solutions follow-up after the end of the support.
Mainstreaming	Options / conditions of mainstreaming innovative solutions and its scope, i.e. usability in a broader context (compared to the original), usability by third parties, the ability of continuous improvement, creating opportunities for learning and collaboration.
Evaluation	Methods of evaluation of ongoing implementations (phase and evaluation criteria), including obtaining and matching feedback of key actors. Possible options for further action and the ways of making decisions.
Risk and changes	Risks of innovative solution and ways of its assessment and consideration in evaluating progress. Innovation risks and benefits in individual project phases. Setting possible changes in the course of implementation, the determination of control points (breakpoints) for an early termination.
New qualifications and skills	Creating new qualifications and skills in innovative solutions, such as communication, learning experiences (including negative), conflict resolution, inclusive visions, focus on client, project management and innovative change, teamwork, brokerage, management, i.e. in the areas that require interdisciplinary and inter-organizational approach in multicultural contexts, territorially specific organizational capacity, partnerships, the ability of visualization of the future, the identification of new and efficient practices.

6.3 Task 3 Identify innovation projects and their products, divide them into thematic areas and assess the degree of innovation implementation in the HREOP's areas of support

Evaluation question 3.1. What ground-breaking (pilot) innovative projects have been implemented?

Pioneering (pilot) innovation projects implemented under partial priority axes and areas of support of the HREOP and identified during the survey have been selected for the case studies, which is a separate Appendix of the final report, in form of proceedings.

Evaluation question 3.2. How are the projects aimed at dissemination and promotion of innovative products (social innovation)?

It was mainly about social enterprises (in the HREOP's call 30), where a project's activity itself is linked to raising the awareness of the possibility of a social entrepreneurship and an effort to participate in local initiatives, or in community planning, etc. The second type is mainly foreign projects successfully transferring the methodology in the Czech Republic, but implemented within the thematic priority axes.

Evaluation question 3.3. What are the appropriate thematic areas of innovation activities and which projects and products belong to them?

This evaluation question, in the context of the HREOP, was answered during the evaluation question 1.4 (On what areas / topics should the innovation activities be focused within the next implementation of the HREOP?), including the processing of responses generated by expert panels. Approaches to innovation incl. activities are also part of the findings of the evaluation question 2.3, presented in detail in the guide as a separate Appendix 8.

Evaluation question 3.4: What are the differences in the application of innovation in projects in each priority axes or in the areas of support of the HREOP?

Conclusions

The survey identified as the most innovative projects those under the call 30 (social entrepreneurship). This result, however, was predictable given as the very definition of social entrepreneurship assumes innovative approaches, incl. compliance with formal rules to further stimulate this approach. Another innovation projects were identified particularly in samples in the area of support 3.3 (Integration of Socially Excluded Groups in the Labour Market), 3.2 (Support of Social Integration of Members of Roma Localities) and 3.1 (Support of Social Integration and Social Services). In individual cases, it was found that the funded projects or practices fixed in the form of project proposals are very close to the activities of social entrepreneurship, with the only difference being that they use a different institutional form, i.e. they do not meet the formal rules for a social enterprise.

Implication

The fact that an innovation potential and partial (absorption) capacity have been identified under priority axis 3 confirms the recommendations that precisely in this area is still possible in this programming period to implement innovation pilot call. Still, it cannot be expected that potential beneficiaries would be able to prepare a "pure innovation" project, without significant institutional expert-consultative capacity. With regard to the publication horizon of this call (several months) is then without any doubt that for the contracting authority it will be difficult to provide adequate expert capacity both for the actual preparation of the call and for the provision of expert consultancy to beneficiaries. Similarly, it will be difficult to obtain appropriate expert evaluation capacity. International trends in innovation are very much focused on the multi- and inter-sectorial thematic areas, which further complicates finding expert capacities.

Partial recommendations

Currently, the possibilities for innovation in the HREOP's areas of support are strongly limited by both remaining resources and absorption capacity of potential beneficiaries (especially in the case of change in approach to innovation, i.e. from the horizontal theme to a targeted support of innovative solutions in the pilot call). The focus of the call would take advantage of those topics that applicants already know and where is a high proportion of projects, i.e. where the next project is rather "nice-to-have" than where there is currently deficit (e.g. related deficit in social services). This will allow applicants to think of an innovative project in a broader context.

6.4 Task 4 Compile the methodology for the quality evaluation of innovation projects and products, and process a case study for each thematic area about the implementation of an innovative project, which represents an example of good / promising practices

Evaluation question 4.1 What is the appropriate methodology for evaluation of the quality of innovative projects (criteria, tools, processes, entities involved in the evaluation)?

Conclusions

Evaluation of social innovation can be divided into two types of approaches. The first is used to identify the innovation characteristics of projects (and their groups), while the second to evaluate their benefits (social impact). Both aspects are obviously linked. There are a large number of tools and methods for measuring the social impact and their combinations, in detail are more methods of social experimentation for testing policy interventions mentioned in the manual in a separate appendix.

Specific and generally applicable methodology for the evaluation of social innovation, however, is not available and its creation cannot be even expected. The reasons are mainly two. The first is the variability and openness of approaches to the very definition of social innovation (novelty aspect), absence of other independent (external economic) criterion for evaluation of a success rare (improvement aspect). Setting of parameters for evaluating the social innovation must therefore be always professional (thematically), sector-based and application-specific, and based on specific objectives that the project, group of projects, a tool, an intervention or a programme determine.

Implication

Within the Task 3, a total of 12 innovation characteristics were monitored: Necessity, Complexity, Novelty, Improvement, Process, Target groups, Partnership, Practice, Dissemination, Sustainability, Initiation, Evaluation. Their definitions were based upon the characteristics of the innovative projects that is presented in the final extended version within the response to the evaluation question 2.7, and which is also part of the implementation system proposal (see separate Appendix 6).

Partial recommendations

Recommendations are listed in detail in a separate appendix of the draft implementation; however, the actual project settings can be distinguished according to several basic criteria that are mutually interacting. They must be therefore formulated and evaluated comprehensively. (1) The first aspect has a horizontal nature and focuses on the current project type according to phases of the innovation cycle, institutional sector, the complexity of the changes and others. (2) The second aspect involves (partial) innovative features of the project, as specified by its specific content. Type of project is largely influenced by the innovation intensity of the project and therefore the weight and the structure of individual innovation characteristics (criteria).

In addition to these two specific aspects of innovation, of course, plays a very important role (3) a thematic focus of the project, its innovativeness is thus always also industry-specific. The importance of thematic focus is reflected in the specification of the initial state (knowledge of the problem / opportunity and affordable approaches) and the innovation process. Thematic aspect must be adequately taken into account especially in programmes targeting diverse subjects (in terms of sectors or industry, characteristics of applicants, target groups, etc.). (4) All previous aspects must be specifically taken into account according to the type of project subjects, or phases, i.e. in the formulation of innovation demand (call parameters), in an applicant's project and in an evaluation concept (applications process and result). These perspectives must be met by the required competencies of the project's applicant (implementer), as well as competence and the method of evaluation of projects.

For the purpose of evaluation, innovative features of the project are generally defined, but their content is to be updated and adapted to changes in the state of knowledge and realized practice. It is also important to note that this definition has only an indicative character and self-assessment must always be connected with individual or group expertise with appropriate multidisciplinary and innovative competencies. Each innovative feature includes aspects relevant to its formulation and evaluation of the project, and both entities, i.e. the applicant and the evaluator must actively manage their application. The applicant must be able to explain the different criteria as specific as possible. The evaluator must be appropriately qualified to properly understand this clarification, to recommend further improvements of the project for increasing innovation intensity and impact. It is essential that the terms of the innovativeness evaluation of projects will always be updated (specified) according to the specific call (for applicants and evaluators). Updates must also take into account the experience from the calls based on the evaluation of application innovation intensity and the evaluation of evaluation.

Evaluation question 4.2 What are examples of good / promising practice of innovation projects for each thematic area?

The methodology for the identification of good / promising practice, respectively, or innovative projects, was proceeded according to the individual programmes, their areas of support (measures in case of CIP EQUAL) and then calls - details are given in the technical part of this report and in the solution of task 3 The best-rated projects were then identified those that best represent the given example of good / promising practices, and these were further developed as case studies (see separate Appendix 7).

Evaluation Question 4.3: What is the impact of partnerships, international cooperation and created innovation on the quality of innovative projects in the examples of good / promising practice?

Conclusions

Following the evaluation questions 2.4 (What is the role of international cooperation in the application of innovation in the ESF, is it appropriate (necessary) to connect both principles?) and 2.5 (What are the effects and the weight of related principles, such as partnerships, mainstreaming, etc.?) and identified examples of good / promising practices, it can be said that the partnership aspect plays a key role. It does not always have to be a partnership in the meaning of formal group for an application / project. A crucial contribution can be identified where it comes to a functional cooperation based on common objectives, synergy and / or sympathy. Similarly, the effect of a partnership can be positively evaluated if there is a different type of partner, not only in terms of legal status, but also the position in relation to public administration, decision-making powers, access to the target groups (including the possibility of lobbying), etc. Financial resources play an important role here, in particular their commitment, or independence of financing of the project.

The influence of an international collaboration on the innovative projects quality is indisputable. An opportunity to get acquainted with foreign experience and the use of foreign expertise is in the area of social innovation often the first step, which is immediately followed by an insight into the topic, or ability for a detached view and thinking outside the existing paradigm. Specifically the innovative projects de facto require an international cooperation, even though it may not mean a direct involvement of a foreign partner. However, the big problem is the fact that the participation of foreign partners, especially not in the HREOP, is not adequately priced, which necessarily limits the potential added value.

6.5 Task 5 Evaluate the ESF Products Database as a tool for the dissemination and promotion of innovative products, and suggest its amendment (both content and functional)

Evaluation question 5.1 To what extent does the ESF Products Database contribute to the dissemination and exploitation of innovations arising in ESF projects?

Conclusions

There is a very small amount of hyperlinks to the ESF Products Database. It is not significantly quoted or referenced, its existence and use is considerably limited by the fact that it is not an "ESF flagship" with a substantial media interest. An overlap with a list (database) of the ESF projects published on www.esfcr.cz can be problematic as well. However, at the present time, the responsibilities of the HREOP beneficiaries have changed, so that they are required to log into the database and insert the projects' products. This has significantly increased traffic in the database in the past two months.

Implication

Up to the present moment was the ESF Products Database rather a passive instrument without clear added value, implying a minimum contribution to the dissemination and use of innovations arising in ESF projects. Respondents in our survey mentioned that they were getting "inspired" at the time of application preparation, but a benefit or significant impact on visitors statistics was not demonstrated. A major change can be newly selected mandatory active contribution to the database by the recipients themselves (and also by an external administrator) if this opportunity will be used and will not be only one-off upload of the content without follow-up (albeit moderated) activities.

Partial recommendations

In order to exploit the potential of the ESF Products Database in terms of diffusion and use of innovations arising in ESF projects, we consider, first of all, focusing on a relevant content not only about the products, but also the projects. A demonstrable increase of the number of visits from search engines (especially Google) only underscores the fact that the contents of the database can attract a wider range of potential customers / users. Currently, it was at least temporarily achieved an update of the database by users - beneficiaries, which is a positive finding. However, a long-term plan of work with a created community should be created, provide it with sufficient support and incentives for active participation (e.g. product reviews by call for competition for the best rated product in the call) and further stimulate a mutual communication among members of community. But here we come to the possible duplication with tools such as the ESF Forum, where appropriate synergies should be found. In consideration is also a full integration with a database at www.esfcr.cz (or location of project products only in product – and projects - database on the ESF). Only in relation to setting of a long-term strategy is recommended to focus on the promotion of any of website's content, and also in view of the recommendations of the final report aimed to create available online "Innovation Platform" (see chapter 7 Recommendations).

Evaluation question 5.2. How are the ESF Products Database, the products included and their use and benefits evaluated by the registered database users and how is the database evaluated by other entities (potential or unregistered)?

Conclusions

1. Information audit

The ESF Products Database achieved only average results in the information audit. The user interface looks obsolete suffers with partial errors in terms of smooth and clear navigation. In addition to the

missing content, which makes impossible to use some of linked functions (such as the most commonly used tags), the most problematic areas seem to be a search tool, as it does not sufficiently display results, and merging login and registration items in the navigation menu.

2. Registered users

A significant percentage of registered users (9% of respondents) answered that they do not know the ESF Product Database, which is sort of a disturbing conclusion manifesting a little awareness even among registered users. However, it is confirmed that those who use the database does so at the time of preparing a new project and want to be inspired by the successful ESF projects or products, or to keep awareness of what projects are currently being implemented under the ESF. Respondents also stated that a major improvement would be a better representation of good examples transferable into practice and better search tool, which confirms the findings of the audit information.

3. Unregistered users

Unregistered users, who know the ESF Products Database, responded that they follow the database in order to be updated on what ESF projects are currently being implemented (25% of respondents) and they want to be inspired when preparing a new project (12% of respondents). This is not significantly different from the registered users. However, they disagree with the evaluation of the database structure and information keying; unregistered respondents assess its current appearance as significantly positively (26%) or on the contrary, as unclear (24% of respondents).

Implication

There is a small group of users who really use the database, and especially in the time of preparation of projects and in order to be updated. However, compared with the total number of applicants and project implementers, it is a very small number. It repeatedly shows that usability is dependent on the quality of content. Only such content that delivers relevant and comprehensive information (in combination with an appropriate metadata description and deploying robust search tool as this function dominates in the database) can enable a real work on increase of interest in the database.

Recommendations

Focus on making accessible a quality content, combined with the preparation of media plan for promotion of the newly available information. In terms of timing it would be appropriate to publish the content simultaneously with the announcement of the call in question, which will attract the attention of those people and institutions that are considering the application. Along with modifications to consider redesign of the portal, to increase user friendliness (including removal of partial errors), simplifying the language, expand the range of published information including information about projects and add examples of good practice and stories.

Evaluation question 5.3. To what extent do other tools or procedures contribute to the dissemination and exploitation of innovations resulting in projects and what is their impact in comparison with the ESF Products Database?

Conclusions

1. The future of the database

In terms of international practice, there are the databases that are connected directly to the official ESF database, and the databases, which act rather like an inspirational databank, gathering the best examples of projects or products in respective areas. The future focus of the ESF Products Database, leads clearly to the second type, i.e. the added value that represents the selection and evaluation of projects and products (including users evaluation).

2. Czech Republic

The only inspirational databank in the Czech Republic is now Topregion.cz portal, which focuses on the human resources development and provides comprehensive information and advisory support in developing and implementing human resources development strategies at the regional and national level. The databank contains, inter alia, the ESF projects that were nominated in the competition "Good advice is worth more than gold".

4. Foreign countries

From foreign examples there were selected as suitable examples the ESF Works and a portal The Young Foundation. ESF Works is available from the British portal <http://www.esf-works.com/> presenting ESF projects in England, with an emphasis on personal story and the massive use of the media (especially the videos). The aim of the British website The Youth Foundation is a networking of selected partners, innovators, and initiation of new projects at regional, national and international level. At the portal www.youngfoundation.org, there can be found the databank of selected innovation projects, in addition to a number of analytical data and information.

Implication

The ESF Products Database now performs its function only marginally, it can be barely included in the list of tools or processes that contribute to the dissemination and exploitation of innovation. This status can be changed with regard to a pool of foreign examples of good practice, but only with adequate facilities and sufficient expert resources, i.e. in the case of link to the innovation platform (see proposal for implementation in task 7). However, now it is only possible to add the selected HREOP and subsequently conserve (archive) the website.

Partial recommendations

The supporting tools for innovation supply are horizontal in nature. The content is theme-specific, but open to new suggestions and all entities without restriction. A broadest tool represents an increasing knowledge intensity of innovation supply, i.e. awareness of social innovation, implemented approaches and experiences (*awareness raising*). The recommended tool is an innovation platform as a unique source of information and a catalyst for a wide spectrum of innovation support activities. Information provided must be appealing and inspiring for the (potential) innovators, which is in part influenced by the form of presentation, but must also be able to reflect topics of user interest (*user-centred*). Activation of users allows using their knowledge capacity to reverse increasing the attractiveness of the presented content and to map (potential) innovative supply (*knowledge crowdsourcing*). The mapping, from the provider's perspective, is used for inspiration and specification of innovation support, as feedback of efficiency and competency of its provision, thus enhancing the quality and competence of innovation demand in time. The knowledge support of innovation supply therefore also positively affects its compatibility with the innovation demand.

At disposal, there will be continuously updated information on the concept of social innovation and its applications sub-divided into (thematic) areas. The web platform will be connected to expertise activities and their dissemination (studies, analyses, conferences, workshops, seminars, including their online forms and presentations). There will be available a counselling point for (potential) social innovators to help them in managing administrative / technical matters of a project (i.e. not general, but project-specific support).

An approach to mapping innovation supply should be proactive, i.e. an active search for useful suggestions on and examples of innovations (innovation scouting), or to encourage and support their upscaling and upgrading (including the transfer of foreign approaches). Information about completed innovative projects, including foreign ones, is shared continuously. The implementers of innovative projects regularly communicate to share their experience on facilitation workshops (innovation hubs).

These meetings are recorded in order to be freely available to the public, and also serve to upgrade qualification of innovation demand and project support and evaluation.

There are connected other forms of awareness raising in the webplatform, such as competition for social innovation or innovation with social impact (and other forms of public evaluation and implementation of innovative ideas involving a respectful expertise, including foreign). This vision of an innovation platform, which is described in detail in a separate Appendix 6 (Chapter 4.1), refers to the distant future, and thus also a moment when a new system of innovation support will be set, and whose outlines are proposed in this study.

For the current state we consider crucial in the first place to ensure adequate quality of the database content in the form of updating selection of quality projects. This step can, or have to, be implemented, regardless of the setting of the next programming period, or pilot innovation call.

At the same time it would not be efficient to propose a new, complex system of database products in a situation where it is not clear what specific steps and measures in the field of social innovation will be implemented. Only when the system will have specific outlines, it will be possible to design a possible new form and structure of the ESF Products Database and to fully meet the requirements of the new system and, above all, to meet the challenges and opportunities arising from the new platforms and networks. Below outlined list of recommendations has to be taken more generally as a set of measures to transform the product database, if its operation will not be completely stopped:

- 1) A modified database should respect the form of newly created innovation platform. It is necessary to define new roles and hierarchy in the system.
- 2) The database should work as a supporting tool within a broader platform for the dissemination of good practice and innovation. Other tools for dissemination should be public discussions, seminars, presentations of innovative projects, competitions etc.
- 3) It would be appropriate to extend the existing database with a database of persons - innovators in the area, experts, the implementers of successful projects, donors and representatives of innovative organizations. This expert network would allow a broader communication of new innovation trends, products and ESF projects, including their evaluation. It would also allow linking of key actors.
- 4) Selection of products and projects for the database should not be provided by the MoLSA, but a team composed of representatives of:
 - an innovation team (facilitators of innovation, working inside and outside the organization)
 - experts of innovation centre
 - other expert capacities

Projects and products should be selected according to the intensity of innovation, according to set of innovation project features. The most important element of project and product is quality and sufficient erudition of evaluators who have the competence to evaluate the innovation intensity according to the respective set of projects.

5) The selection of the products and projects should be limited to truly innovative projects (i.e. non-stereotyped) in the newly defined innovation axes, or calls; yet the system should be flexible, and in justified cases it would be possible to select other projects and products as well.

7) For certain types of innovation projects, the case studies are appropriate, which are very suitable for further dissemination. It would be an expert work implemented by the Innovation Centre. The database should therefore include a section with case studies. These should be linked to specific projects in the database.

8) It is necessary to consistently promote and disseminate the projects included in the database, bringing it in a sufficiently broad context (sense of innovation, its impacts, building communities and

networks, socioeconomic background, etc.). Innovation can successfully transferred only under certain conditions, which should be clearly described, including risk management.

9) The portal should include information on current innovation trends in the Czech Republic and abroad, in the form acceptable to the average user. Again it is about expert conclusions, the expert should be from an innovation centre or innovation lab.

10) This vision builds on the networking of the key players in the system and is therefore a joint work. It should be a universal system, tailored to the current structure of the system. Therefore, building the basic concept of the system should be dealt within the team of representatives of existing innovation structures, and not just by the promoter.

6.6 Task 6 Perform an impact evaluation of the CIP EQUAL

Evaluation question 6.1 What are the impacts of CIP EQUAL on policies and strategies?

Conclusions

The specific impacts on policies and strategies from the position of the beneficiaries then vary according to the focus of the project. None of innovative projects, which were selected for case studies, was assessed as sufficiently "strong" to reach the stage of causing social change. However, in many projects, it was found that they overrun the implementation stages, i.e. that intervention enabled spread of social innovation or its partial products as outputs of the project. There were identified impacts, especially at the level of local governments or local communities, whether it takes the form of a formal or informal group of long-term cooperation.

Partial recommendations

The expert capacity building and raising awareness of social innovation would be an appropriate tool to follow up on projects and partnerships of CIP EQUAL and try to re-activate the project partnerships (especially where there was a break-up or their passivation) e.g. through a joint workshop. This would allow assessing the time since the end of the programme from the perspective of all stakeholders and at the same time to take advantage of these new activities to obtain expert capacities, information, data, and other materials for participation in the emerging innovation platform.

Evaluation question 6.2 What are the institutional and organizational impacts of CIP EQUAL

Conclusions

On the promoter's side there have been recognised three types of impacts: 1) on human resources, in which is the experience with the implementation of CIP EQUAL important part of the know-how of the organization (or its parts), 2) partial influence on the evaluation process, or an awareness on the limits of evaluation and demanding work with evaluators including seeking appropriate expert capacity, and 3) procedural difference of the CIP EQUAL implementation and a direct link to innovation allowed to create parallels and to think out of the rigid administrative processes of the HREOP, and it applies to both the promoters and stakeholders, applicants and implementers. Apart from the direct effects of sub-projects on policy, both on a local and national level, it is just possible to see the impact in the recognition and acceptance of the existence of the programme focused on the (social) innovation, which opens up many possibilities for creating parallels and synergies within the planning and subsequent implementation in the next programming period.

Partial recommendations

Implemented projects CIP EQUAL are still fresh in the memory of relevant actors, both on the part of implementers (organizations) and created networks and partnerships of formal or informal character and the promoter's part. Their effects can often be assess and identified just now, with sufficient time distance which opens, due to the emerging agenda of social innovation (planned as a pilot call and represented by this contract itself), the opportunity to utilize synergies of evaluation efforts with the preparatory phase of the next programming period.

Evaluation question 6.3 What are the impacts of CIP EQUAL on the implementation of projects under HREOP, ECOP and OPPA?

Conclusions

The CIP EQUAL projects have significantly helped to start the actual operation of an organization and expand the scope of its activities and its influence, impacts on an organization's management up to the impacts on the creation of new partnerships, both local and international co-operation and co-operating networks. The survey conducted case studies of CIP EQUAL projects evaluated using a similar methodology as the HREOP within task 3. These case studies, with respect to the timing of projects' implementation, are focus on the impacts of these innovation projects.

Partial recommendations

Within the expert capacity building and raising awareness of social innovation it should be built on the CIP EQUAL projects and try to re-activate the project partnerships in a similar way as mentioned above.

6.7 Task 7 Establish an innovation implementation system for the next programming period and set up a methodology (manual) for implementers of innovation projects

The complete proposal of an innovation implementation system is included in a separate Appendix 6; guide for implementers of innovation projects is a separate Appendix 8.

The implementation of a system for support of social innovation from Structural Funds (innovation support) includes a series of steps and tools that can be distinguished by components of the innovation system, i.e. by the innovation supply and demand, by the actual implementation phase and by the phases of the innovation process. Below are the basic preconditions for successful implementation of the proposed implementation system, which are immediately followed by the recommendations in the next chapter:

- A) **The granting authority must have the appropriate competencies** to support the most innovative solutions of the applications submitted (project applications) and to help with its implementation and practical application (implemented innovation supply). The provider should also support the actual capacity of proposing innovative solutions (potential innovative supply).
- B) **The recommendations are based on the absence of innovation capacity** (low innovation intensity of demand, supply and the missing system of their support) and the necessity of an open system, where individual phases will be updated (specified) according to the previous developments and achieved (i.e. gradual improvement) innovation capacity.
- C) **The formulation of innovation demand plays a key role in the promoter's part**, which is primarily industry-/ thematically specific activity (identification of needs and opportunities for innovative solutions), **an expertise and innovation competence of implementers' supply-side** (i.e. in particular creation and implementation of innovative projects).

- D) The system challenges are represented by a very innovation demand intensity, which is formulated by the provider (grantor of innovative solutions), especially if the concept of support is significantly demand-limited (i.e. **the solution is as much innovative, as is its grantor**).
- E) The second major challenge is the **management of innovative projects** that are by definition associated with the risk of non-standard procedures and solutions that change the established procedures. Management of innovative projects requires adequate competence both on the part of the grantor and implementers of innovative solutions.

7 Recommendations

This chapter integrates the partial recommendations from previous chapters (divided by evaluation tasks) and presents in a structured form the final set of recommendations based on the implementation proposal, which created a separate Appendix 6 of this report (Chapter 1.2.2 Implementation steps and tools).

7.1 Recommendation 1: Identify the overall strategy of the organization

- [fundamental recommendation] The support of innovation should be integrated into the overall strategy of the organization and its activities and decision-making, i.e. at least in the strategic framework and implementation of support from the Structural Funds. The decision has a major influence on the form of organization and implementation of activities in the framework of other recommendations. A part of the strategy should be innovative priorities in three horizons:
 - a. immediately resulting of the current agenda and suitable for quick implementation (improvement of existing practice, the abolition of inefficient procedures)
 - b. promising topics arising from the existing context and suitable for further development (in response to anticipated new needs)
 - c. long-term key challenges and the associated uncertainties, and their possible impact on the administered agenda and the role of the organization.

7.2 Recommendation 2: Decide on the innovation roles of an organization and the innovation team

- [fundamental recommendation] In relation to the overall strategy of the organization is necessary to decide on the form of ensuring competent support of social innovation. In particular, on the extent to which specific innovation roles will be performed by innovative organization itself (or its component) and to what extent outsource these roles. The decision must include a clear position of the innovation team in an organization, definition of specific roles, responsibilities and powers and the definition of requirements for each of the expert positions.
- **Innovation roles** include:
 - a. a creator (source) of innovation ideas
 - b. idea trainers, who formulate innovative ideas into understandable form for the providers and possibly interconnect innovation source with supporters and sponsors.
 - c. supporters of innovation ideas, solutions to remove the barriers
 - d. donors have adequate resources and authority to explore innovation ideas and experimentation
- **Innovative team** includes innovation facilitators who work inside and outside the organization. Besides the innovation role, its activities include systems of management of

innovative ideas, consultancy and other support needed by innovation actors (supply and demand) in all stages of the innovation process and their networking; administration, monitoring and evaluation of innovation projects, dissemination of innovative results.

7.3 Recommendation 3: Provide full support for education and development of innovation capacity

- [fundamental recommendation] Developing innovation capacity should start to be encouraged immediately, consistently and in all forms, from short-term to long-term. We can recommend study visits at foreign institutions and summer schools, as well as active participation in international knowledge networks and projects, working closely with external (academic) expert workplaces and their own professional production. The target group should not be only MA's employees, but generally everyone, without distinction of (potential) innovation role, however with customised content and form.

7.4 Recommendation 4: Provide full support for building an innovation platform and associated activities to the creation of an innovation centre

- [fundamental recommendation] The aim is to build a platform and organic innovation networks for creating, collecting and evaluating available information and resources. This should include continuous monitoring of the available foreign and domestic innovation approaches, moderated discussions, sharing of suggestions and ideas, the possibility of visibility of actors, and organizing events and e.g. support for contests and awards. This platform should be fully functional and "crowded" at the beginning of the next programming period that may subsequently be linked to the Innovation Centre and the Innovation team responsible for the implementation of innovation axis and supporting OP's innovation intensity.

7.5 Recommendation 5: Formulate innovation demand and define procedural requirements of innovation calls in relation to the limits of the HREOP's pilot call

- [fundamental recommendation] Identification of persistent (so-called wicked) or impending problems that require innovative solutions or unused opportunities, using appropriate methods and maximum use of the available data (including the participation of external stakeholders). It should also include the identification of the political and executive innovation support (including the open identification of bottlenecks of such support) and be aware of limits (both time and procedural). Formulation of innovation demand must be in relation to the HREOP's pilot call sufficiently **specific and justified**. From the demand it must be clear who and why are calling for proposals, the baseline information, why the current solution is unsatisfactory, and what are the criteria for success of the implemented solution (compared to baseline). The application procedure must be two-phase, when the applicant first presents only an idea (containing basic information analysing the current situation and the proposed technique including team members), and then afterwards elaborates the application itself.

7.6 Recommendation 6: Establish helpdesk providing expert advice for the preparation of innovative proposals/projects and their implementation

- [fundamental recommendation] In relation to recommendation 2 and 5: With the announcement of the pilot call, a helpdesk must be made available that will offer qualified

advice for the preparation of innovation projects, i.e. counselling, which is not confined to the formal aspects of the project only

7.7 Recommendation 7: Build expert capacity with adequate competence at the level of (external) evaluators

- [fundamental recommendation] In relation to recommendation 2 and 5: With the announcement of the pilot call, an appropriate expert capacity for the evaluation process must be build, together further implementation of self-evaluation mechanisms

7.8 Recommendation 8: Target innovation support at innovation axis through a continuously open call with continuously updated priorities

- [recommendation] Targeted support of innovation intensity should take place through the **innovation axis** with a continuously open call, whose content will be updated according to the formulation of innovation demand (and its update). It is necessary to determine in advance what proportion of the total budget will be devoted to innovation axis and to gradually increase this amount (definitely not decrease). The explicit allocations of innovation support are significant as for a visibility of innovation priority. But it is necessary to ensure the permeability of innovation axis and other axes in order to gradually increase an **overall innovation intensity** of the OP, i.e. innovation axis should act as an leader of the OP's innovation intensity (not as an excuse for non-innovation of other axes). Permeability can be supported e.g. by allocating a proportion of each axis for innovation projects (if allocation is not run out, it can be transferred to the innovation axis or other axes with higher innovation demand). The innovation support system itself must be innovative and proactive, to be the carries of changes in the whole OP.

7.9 Recommendation 9: Explicitly point out the possibility to involve international partners and enable its full funding

- [recommendation] If the solution involves the transfer of **foreign approaches**, the part of team should always be a foreign partner (individual or institutional), but whose participation shall be rewarded (in the form of job or service). For targeted innovation projects a **foreign partner** should always be the part of the research team. Innovator should be able to choose such a form and extent of participation of a foreign partner that will best meet the needs of a particular innovative solution.

7.10 Recommendation 10: Enable ongoing communication between the provider and the beneficiary

- [recommendation] In relation to recommendation 4: In the course of innovation projects implementation is necessary to ensure ongoing communication with the support provider (workers of Innovation Centre), in order to evaluate, share and disseminate experience towards all those interested in the innovation platform. Emphasis should be placed on publicity and publication of methodologies for innovative solutions (including professional conferences abroad). Emphasis on communication flows from recommendation 7 due to the self-evaluation.

7.11 Recommendation 11: Unblock some resources for open innovation call

- [recommendation] Allow support of rather smaller and short-term projects with simplified administration. Projects under the open call will implement innovative solutions for which there is no domestic demand identified, but abroad it has already been implemented. The evaluation and selection process is similar to demand-specific projects.

7.12 Recommendation 12: Consider voucher-type support

- [recommendation] A voucher-type support of the solutions of needs for bottom-up innovation demand, which also serves to mediate or develop relationships between creators and users of innovative solutions. Setting a voucher-type support, however, requires specification of qualifying conditions (with an actual emphasis on their low administrative requirements).

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9 Appendixes

9.1 Appendix 1: Topics of the HREOP's innovation activities

9.2 Appendix 2: List of strategic documents

9.3 Appendix 3: Relevant sources

9.4 Appendix 4: Changes of the HREOP in the area of methodology and implementation rules (changes in the manuals)

9.5 Appendix 6: Proposal of an innovation implementation system

A separate attachment to the Final Report

9.6 Appendix 7: Proceedings of innovation projects good practice

A separate attachment to the Final Report

9.7 Appendix 8: Guide for implementers of innovation projects

A separate attachment to the Final Report