

# Strategy for the Swedish Competence Center for Social Innovation

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**Authors:**

Anna Tengqvist, FFSIS, Malin Lindberg, LTU, Gloria-Karin López, FFSIS



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## 1. Introduction

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This is the Swedish strategy and action plan for the national Competence Center for Social Innovation (CCSI).

The strategy is developed in the project Building Capacity for a Sustainable Society (BuiCaSuS),<sup>1</sup> one of six European Union (EU) consortia cooperating to strengthen competence centers and ecosystems for social innovation in EU member states, in relation to the new programming period of the European Social Fund (ESF).<sup>2</sup> BuiCaSuS includes partners from Spain, Latvia, France and Sweden with a very diverse profile, from ministries to NGOs.

### About the author

The authors come from Forum for Social Innovation Sweden (FfSIS) (in Swedish Mötesplats Social Innovation, MSI). FfSIS is a national knowledge and collaboration platform for social innovation that started in 2010. FfSIS have functioned as the Swedish Competence Centre for Social Innovation since 2019.

### Disposition

The strategy starts with describing the need for a national competence center for social innovation, and the Swedish context of setting up the CCSI.

It then describes what the Swedish CCSI will do – its goals, tasks, and services. This is followed by a description of the Swedish CCSI's mandate, governance, organization structure, and resources.

The strategy has an appendix that describes the action plan of the CCSI.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://buicasus.eu/>

<sup>2</sup> The European Commission funds competence centers for social innovation in its member states to strengthen their social innovation ecosystems. BuiCaSuS is one of six funded and its partners are Spain, Latvia, France, and Sweden. <https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en/competence-centres-social-innovation>

## 2. Why a competence center for social innovation

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This chapter starts with describing the policy support for competence centers, on EU level as well as the national, regional and local levels in Sweden. It continues to describe the specific preconditions and challenges for the ecosystem for social innovation in Sweden. The chapter ends with describing the specific context of the ESF, in relation to which the competence center has its origin and focus for the coming three years.

### 2.1 Policy support

#### EU level

The European Commission (EC) and other central societal actors in the EU and Sweden emphasize that social innovation is required to solve complex societal challenges such as unemployment, ill health, and segregation.<sup>3</sup> A general definition of social innovation, guiding the current ESF program, is:

“Social innovation means an activity, that is social both as to its ends and its means and in particular an activity which relates to the development and implementation of new ideas concerning products, services, practices and models, that simultaneously meets social needs and creates new social relationships or collaborations between public, civil society or private organisations, thereby benefiting society and boosting its capacity to act.”<sup>4</sup>

The EC has prioritized social innovation through many initiatives, for example Horizon 2020, Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) and ESF. The EC has prescribed that social innovation should be included as a special area in program implementation in the ESF+ program period 2021-2027.<sup>5</sup>

Social innovation is also central in the new social economy action plan launched by the EC in 2021. The plan is aimed at organizations with social purposes, and which are based on democratic values and organizationally independent from the public

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<sup>3</sup> See e.g., BEPA, 2010; European Commission, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1057, p 15.

<sup>5</sup> ESF Social Innovation+, <https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en/esf-social-innovation> .

sector (including associations, foundations, cooperatives, and social enterprises).<sup>6</sup> The action plan presents proposals to mobilize the potential of the social economy through, among other things, social innovation which, it is claimed, offers new ways of meeting social needs and societal challenges, changes social relations, and opens new approaches to policy renewal. In other words, it offers the potential to achieve systemic change. Social economy actors tend to work with a bottom-up perspective and are close to communities and citizens and the problems they face. Thus, it is argued, they are well-placed to contribute to solving societal challenges through social innovation.

In the planning of ESF+ the EC underlined the need for cross-sector cooperation for being able to meet complex societal challenges. There is, however, a lack of good examples of how it can be implemented to obtain lasting results. The EC therefore financed national competence centers for social innovation in several member states, including Sweden.<sup>7</sup>

On a global level, the 2030 Agenda, is of relevance for social innovation in general, and the EU's efforts to promote social innovation in particular.<sup>8</sup> It is a global initiative by the United Nations (UN), which calls upon the world to transition into an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable society.

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<sup>6</sup> European Commission, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> EC call for proposals,  
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en&callId=604&furtherCalls=yes>.

<sup>8</sup> Bonnedahl et al., 2022.

## National level

The Swedish government launched a national strategy to support the development of social enterprise and social innovation in 2018.<sup>9</sup> The aim was to use social enterprise and social innovation to promote a sustainable society. Five crucial areas were identified where initiatives were implemented, illustrated in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Development areas for social enterprise and social innovation in Sweden.<sup>10</sup>

When the strategy was launched, Sweden's innovation agency (Vinnova) and the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket) were tasked with advancing financial initiatives to strengthen the development of social innovation and social enterprise, respectively.<sup>11</sup> The initiatives included support for individual projects, innovation promoters and business promoters, intermediaries, financiers, academia and so on.

The strategy and its accompanying initiatives covered the period of 2018–2020 and have not been officially renewed. Its status is described as ongoing,<sup>12</sup> although no funding has been allocated for its continuation. The strategy outlined the need for long-term efforts as a success factor in strengthening social innovation and social entrepreneurship.

<sup>9</sup> Regeringskansliet, [2018](#).

<sup>10</sup> [ibid, p. 6](#).

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmedalenden/2018/02/regeringen-lanserar-strategi-for-att-starka-utvecklingen-av-sociala-foretag-och-social-innovation/>.

<sup>12</sup> <https://tillvaxtverket.se/amnesomraden/affarsutveckling/socialt-foretagande.html>.



A consensus in the Swedish ecosystem for social innovation in Sweden, supported by several reports, is the lack of a comprehensive policy for social innovation and social enterprise in Sweden.<sup>13</sup>

With regard to social enterprise in particular, more than half of the social enterprise practitioners surveyed by FfSIS stated that they experience low or very low political support for social enterprise in Sweden today.<sup>14</sup> Approximately one third, on the other hand, reported receiving moderate or high levels of political support.

The Swedish work with Agenda 2030 supports cross sectoral cooperation, which is central to social innovation.<sup>15</sup> According to the Swedish Government's plan for coordinating the implementation of the agenda nationally, one important success factor is "initiating and promoting collaboration and partnerships between different societal actors".<sup>16</sup> The plan also states that human rights and gender equality are central starting points in Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with a particular focus on children's rights, children's and young people's perspectives and right to participate, and on activities needed to reach especially vulnerable people, in order to leave no one behind. Social innovation can be seen as central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 2030 Agenda, according to Swedish research.<sup>17</sup>

## Regional and local levels

Swedish regions and municipalities often lack governing documents, policies, and strategies for promoting social innovation and social entrepreneurship.<sup>18</sup> In cases where they do exist, their language is often vague and not concrete enough to create a consensus. There is also a need for clearer goals, which might push these issues higher on local and regional agendas. The traditional silo-organized bureaucracy is not seen as matching the cross-sectoral networks and hybrid organizational structures that social innovation and social entrepreneurship often involve.

Even so, there are some examples of regional and municipal structures that support social innovation in Sweden.

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<sup>13</sup> Ashoka & Reach for Change, [2021](#); Mötesplats Social Innovation, 2021; Region Stockholm, 2020; Tillväxtverket, 2017; Vinnova, 2018.

<sup>14</sup> Mötesplats Social Innovation, 2021.

<sup>15</sup> United Nations, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Regeringen, 2020, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Bonnedahl et al., 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Region Stockholm, 2020.

The Region of Skåne and Malmö municipality have, for example, supported the establishment of Forum for Social Innovation Sweden (FfSIS) at Malmö University. In 2018, FfSIS scaled up its organization through the establishment of a national knowledge platform for social innovation with regional nodes, connecting the Universities of Malmö, Jönköping, Örebro, Luleå, and Umeå. The platform is established to create knowledge and meeting places for social innovation across the country. FfSIS has arranged the yearly conference Social Innovation Summit, connecting practitioners, researchers, public and private sectors, increasing knowledge and cooperation on social innovation. About 5200 participants have taken part in 70 different meeting places such as seminars and workshops during the last two years.

In the Region Örebro county, there is a regional forum for dialogue and exchange of experience on societal challenges and social innovation - the Partnership for Social Innovation (PSI). It builds on a network of 40 organizations from social economy, the university and public sector in Örebro County. PSI has existed since 2015 and the aim is to strengthen the conditions for social innovation in the County in order to deal with societal challenges and contribute to a sustainable development. PSI offers competence building, knowledge sharing, funding of social innovation initiatives, project support and provide advice for the development of social innovation.<sup>19</sup>

The municipalities of Umeå and Malmö have established initiatives to strengthen their citizen participation by laying the ground for local innovation platforms. In Umeå, the platform is called Umecom,<sup>20</sup> and in Malmö it's called Malmö Tillsammans.<sup>21</sup> Both platforms have been realised through external funding, the funding-programme Social Progress Innovation Sweden (SPIS) by Vinnova and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) respectively.

### Policy goals relevant to the CCSI

In relation to the insufficient policy support for social innovation in Sweden, it will be relevant for the Swedish CCSI to identify and connect to other goals and policy areas. Policies to relate to will be goals and policies of relevance for ESF+, such as innovation policy, labour market policy, social policy and education policy.

The work to connect to these policies and goals and to establish contact points at relevant ministries will be a key part of the coming work of the Swedish CCSI.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://utveckling.regionorebrolan.se/en/kultur-och-civilsamhalle/natverk-och-samverkan/the-partnership-for-social-innovation/>.

<sup>20</sup> <https://umecom.se/>.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.malmotillsammans.se/>

Relevant questions will then be what national social and innovation policies' goals and task that potentially get contribution from the activities of the CCSI.

## 2.2 The Swedish ecosystem

This section summarizes the key preconditions of the Swedish ecosystem for social innovation. The description is based on the mapping of the Swedish ecosystem, that maps the needs and preconditions of the ecosystem for social innovation in Sweden.<sup>22</sup>

A summarizing description of the situation for the Swedish ecosystem for social innovation is that there are, essentially, good preconditions for social innovation in Sweden, in the form of engaged actors and manifold initiatives. The Swedish Government's strategy for social enterprise and social innovation has provided a sound foundation and helped bring actors together. In addition, there is widespread commitment in many sectors to achieving the global sustainability goals of the 2030 Agenda.

At the same time, there is a lack of clear political support and guidance for social innovation and social enterprise in Sweden. Access to more long-term and systematic financing is needed to establish and scale social innovations and ventures. More knowledge and research are also needed. Overall, there is a need for a clearer organization of the social innovation ecosystem.

At present, there is a need for specific ecosystems for social innovation and social enterprise, as this report shows. In the long term, however, even more actors need to adopt socially innovative methods to address complex societal challenges, renew the Swedish welfare system and achieve the global sustainability goals of the 2030 Agenda.

The following are some recommendations for strengthening the social innovation ecosystem in Sweden, as well as for incorporating socially innovative working methods in all parts of society.

- **Clearer political leadership** on national, regional, and local levels, with goals, evaluations and budgets established for social innovation and social enterprise policies that enable long-term solutions to societal challenges.

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<sup>22</sup> Mötesplats Social Innovation, 2022

- **Improved financing of social innovation** to create long-term conditions that support the development, implementation, and scaling of social innovation. Different types of financial tools need to be tested and strengthened.
- **Strengthened social innovation ecosystem.** Greater coordination and stronger links between different societal actors and the ecosystem are required to enable broader societal change. This also includes supporting collaborations between social innovators/entrepreneurs, and other societal actors, in order to increase impact and facilitate scaling.
- **Ensure participation and influence for target groups** and those stakeholders directly affected by those current societal challenges that social innovation initiatives seek to address. In doing so, social innovation can promote an inclusive and democratic society.
- **Integrate social innovation in day-to-day activities** by having more societal actors adopting socially innovative ways of working to meet societal challenges. This can mean incentivising traditional innovation and business promoters to support social innovation and social entrepreneurship to a greater extent, as well as providing them with the skills to do so effectively. It can also be about ensuring that more investors focus on societal challenges and the 2030 Agenda, as well as supporting more of the elements and levels inherent in social innovation. This can be facilitated by increased learning and collaboration between investors and other societal actors.
- **Promote local and regional platforms** for social innovation by disseminating knowledge and providing, as inspiration, examples of how existing platforms were established and organized.<sup>23</sup> Such platforms can become facilitators of social innovation by:
  - coordinating the regional or local social innovation ecosystem,
  - bringing together actors from all sectors of society for co-creation, including processes to meet societal challenges,
  - making social innovation knowledge and methods available,

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<sup>23</sup>See eg, The Partnership for Social Innovation in Örebro County, <https://www.regionorebrolan.se/sv/regional-utveckling/kultur-och-civilsamhalle/civilsamhalle/partnerskapet-for-sociala-innovationer/>.

- coordinating and making visible the results and benefits created through social innovation at local and regional levels.
- **Expanded role for academia and research** in social innovation via increased research funding and an increase in academia's participation in collaborative efforts to meet current societal challenges in innovative ways. Research is also an important source of external analysis in social innovation and social enterprise.
- **Make visible and strengthen the social innovation ecosystem via the ESF.** The implementation of the ESF program 2021–2027 can potentially increase social innovation competencies, improve contacts, and disseminate methods among key actors – like administrators, project leaders and business partners – as well as foster closer connection to the Swedish social innovation ecosystem. This can increase the likelihood of ESF projects developing social innovations with better potential to contribute to systemic change and sustainable development.

## The ESF context

The European Social Fund (ESF) is the main policy instrument for supporting employment in the European Union and its member states. It aims to boost competence development and lifelong learning among employees, and improve access to employment for young people, less-skilled jobseekers and people from disadvantaged groups. A central ambition in ESF is to promote social inclusion, based on the notion that employment is crucial for people's integration into society and everyday life. These aims and ambitions are achieved by ESF's funding of employment-related projects on the local, national and international levels, with varying size, aims and beneficiaries. ESF has supported novel approaches for employment, social inclusion and poverty reduction ever since it was established in 1957, e.g. through project funding for developing, testing and disseminating novel approaches for employment opportunities, work integration and competence development.<sup>24</sup>

At the turn of the millennium, the term "social innovation" began to be used in ESF to describe their efforts and ambitions. This became part of a general call for social innovation in the EU as a means to tackle societal challenges in the form of economic

<sup>24</sup> Ahmed et al., 2017; Lindberg et al. 2018

and social crises, the aging of the population, migration waves, youth unemployment, etc.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, social innovation has been part of the EU's growth strategy from Europe 2020 (2010-2020) and onwards, as well as the Social Investment Package (2013) and the Employment and Social innovation program (2014-2020). In the ESF's last programming period (2014-2020), social innovation was introduced as a principle to be mainstreamed across the fund's priority axes or focused through dedicated priority axes. In the current ESF period (2021-2027) all member states are expected to support social innovation, in order to make policies more responsive to social change.

In the Swedish ESF programs, there has so far been a lack of earmarked resources and other types of support for social innovation. The Swedish ESF council has nonetheless pursued a process to improve their strategic and practical support to social innovation. In 2018, they initiated a research review and a project inventory of social innovation in the last two Swedish ESF programming periods (2007-2013 and 2014-2020), as part of their and Forte's joint thematic platform for a sustainable working life (a sustainable working life). The resulting report concludes that several ESF-funded projects have developed social innovations in the form of novel methods, services and alliances for employment opportunities, work integration and competence development, but that their innovativeness is hampered by lack of support throughout the innovation process.<sup>26</sup> The Swedish ESF Council was consequently recommended to promote social innovation in a more strategic and systematic manner.

This was realized in the subsequent programming period (2021-2027), where social innovation was established a separate program area in the Swedish ESF program with funding to projects for developing and testing innovative solutions to meet challenges and needs in employment, education, social inclusion, etc. To support their innovation processes, the Swedish ESF-council granted support to FfSIS for managing the CCSI. This meant that FfSIS could keep developing the competence center established by previous funding from the EC in order to successfully implement the new ESF+ program.

## Identified needs in ESF programs and projects

Earlier reports have identified six main needs in Swedish ESF programs and projects, in regard to social innovation:

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<sup>25</sup> Ahmed et al., 2017; Sabato et al., 2017

<sup>26</sup> Lindberg et al., 2018

## 1. A need to create national support structures

It is considered that there is a need to create support structures at national level in the form of operational support for projects within Program Area E (PAE) - Social innovation. By aggregating, analyzing and disseminating results and good examples, the support can enable actors to drive and scale up projects funded in the program area, and also promote the ecosystem for social innovations. **The main problem that this project wants to solve is precisely the lack of such systematic support to create effective, lasting and value-creating social innovations in the implementation of ESF+. These social innovations can in turn contribute to solving complex societal challenges in the form of unemployment, ill health, segregation, etc.**

ESF projects have insufficient access to knowledge and tools to create effective, lasting and value-creating social innovations.

Studies show that ESF projects often have challenges when it comes to establishing and scaling social innovations and creating strategic, cross-sectoral collaboration around these.<sup>27</sup> Solutions that favor active inclusion, promote equal opportunities and improve employability (especially for groups with major challenges in the labor market) are often invented again and again. Useful solutions are rarely established and scaled up. There is also a lack of sufficient receiver capacity for developed methods and working methods among the social actors who could implement innovative and effective solutions in a long-term way.

An underlying cause of the problem is that ESF projects often lack long-term, systematic support for projects to develop effective, lasting and value-creating social innovations. In previous program periods, the ESF has offered project support and theme platforms to increase the capacity and quality of the projects, as well as to aggregate results and promote learning. At the same time, there is a lack of an actor/function that long-term collects and analyzes experiences in an overall learning process about what is needed for more projects to lead to more effective, lasting and value-creating solutions to the social challenges of working life/the labor market. This means that many promising and proven solutions from ESF projects do not live on or form the basis for new investments. Projects also request support in integrating the horizontal principles of equality, accessibility and non-discrimination in a long-term way in their project work.<sup>28</sup>

## 2. Lack of structural support for cross-sectoral collaboration in social innovation

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<sup>27</sup> Lindberg et al., 2018

<sup>28</sup> see [2016-00665-160 Final report ESF external project support 2021 995425 1 1.PDF](#)

The social challenges that ESF+ is supposed to affect are complex, and in order for them to be solved, interaction and cooperation between many actors and sectors is needed.<sup>29</sup> However, such collaboration entails several challenges, according to previous research and experience.<sup>30</sup> The efforts required to achieve this type of collaboration are often underestimated, among other things because there is a lack of sufficient support and organization for this. Previous studies show that the political and organizational governance for social innovation and cross-sector collaboration is often insufficient.<sup>31</sup> There is also a lack of practical examples of how it is possible in practice to increase cooperation and coordination between different actors and parts of the ecosystem for social innovation. Previous reports point to the need for a systems approach with strategic coordination of large and small actors in the area at an ecosystem level.<sup>32</sup>

One conclusion from the research is that it can be challenging to bridge organizational and sectoral culverts in cross-sectoral collaboration.<sup>33</sup> The actors' different agendas and working methods mean that cooperation requires time, perseverance and coordination. The coordination is also complex as it often covers several operational and policy areas. There are also challenges related to power imbalance between actors/sectors and [special measures may also be required](#) to ensure that target groups and underrepresented actors have the opportunity and incentive to participate.<sup>34</sup> Here, too, is a lack of strategic support for collaboration in social innovation.

### 3. Need for collaboration and innovative working methods at the managing authority

Promoting social innovation through project funding requires new approaches, which ESF+ opens up for. It has previously been shown that, despite innovative ambitions, it has been difficult for ESF projects to change basic structures in organizations and society.<sup>35</sup> A risk then becomes that ESF projects mainly counteract the symptoms of, rather than the root causes of, the societal challenges of working life/the labor market.

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<sup>29</sup> Lindberg et al., 2018

<sup>30</sup> See e.g. Gawell et al., 2020

<sup>31</sup> Hansson et al, 2014; Nordic Council of Ministers, 2014; Region Stockholm, 2020

<sup>32</sup> [Ashoka & Reach for Change, 2021](#); Region Stockholm, 2020; Tillväxtverket, 2017

<sup>33</sup> Gawell et al., 2020

<sup>34</sup> Lindberg, 2021

<sup>35</sup> Lindberg et al., 2018



In order to promote more effective, lasting and value-creating social innovations, the competence and working methods of the managing authority may need to be strengthened. There is also learning from other financiers of social innovation, both in Sweden and other EU countries, which are not used to a sufficient extent today due to a lack of established forms and space for this.

There is also a lack of sufficient dialogue and exchange between the ESF Council and other support actors of relevance for ESF+ implementation, regarding forms and financing for cross-sectoral cooperation. There is also a lack of connection to the competence of key actors in the existing ecosystem for social innovation.<sup>36</sup>

#### 4. There is a lack of models for aggregating learning and making visible the benefits of innovative ESF projects

As described above, the innovative results created in the implementation of the ESF too rarely lead to scale-up and diffusion. Despite good results for participating individuals and that new working methods and models have proven to be successful, the efforts are often short-lived. The potential for upscaling is not utilized to a sufficient extent.

The learning from and between projects, nationally and transnationally and between program periods, lacks systematic analysis, replication and dissemination. There is currently a lack of models to measure and make visible the benefits of innovative ESF projects, which makes dissemination and structural learning difficult. The project evaluations that are made rarely capture what is specific to social innovation – that is, the experimental process from societal challenge to societal change, cross-sector collaboration, target group involvement, etc.

There is a need to make visible which factors are behind successful and socially innovative projects in the ESF. It would enable aggregated learning to increase knowledge of – and the utilization of – cluster evaluations in the field. Furthermore, existing evaluations rarely make visible the extent to which the horizontal principles of equality, accessibility and non-discrimination are integrated in the project work and contribute to innovative and sustainable results. On the other hand, there are quite a few models for measuring and making visible the benefits of social innovation in contexts other than the ESF.<sup>37</sup> There is thus a potential to bring these models together with the evaluation models that are usually used in ESF projects - and thus create an adapted model to measure and make visible the benefits of innovative ESF projects.

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<sup>36</sup> Mötesplats Social Innovation, 2022

<sup>37</sup> See e.g. <https://effektfullt.se/>

## 5. Deficient connections between ESF projects and the social innovation ecosystem

There is a lack of connections between ESF projects and the established ecosystem for social innovation in Sweden - which includes support actors, social innovators/entrepreneurs, public sector, civil society, business, academia, etc. At the same time, previous studies show that the ecosystem is fragmented, due to a lack of coordination, policy support and long-term funding for long-term coordination between different actors and initiatives.<sup>38</sup> This affects the conditions for the ecosystem's actors to collaborate and actively drive, develop quality and coordinate issues of support for social innovation. Another side of the coin is that individual innovators and entrepreneurs often lack sufficient support and networks in their development processes.<sup>39</sup> Lack of coordination through a fragmented ecosystem means that social innovations do not get the conditions to create benefit and scale up. There is insufficient connection between actors who can connect needs descriptions and solutions between sectors in general, where the ecosystem can contribute with links between both support actors and innovators/entrepreneurs. There is also a collective competence on social innovation in the ecosystem, which can be gathered and contribute to more effective, lasting and value-creating social innovations in the implementation of ESF+. The knowledge from here needs to be better linked to ESF projects.

In order to achieve effective, lasting and value-creating social innovations in ESF projects, they need to simultaneously identify and safeguard the context-specific ecosystem for their own social innovation. As this is rarely done, the potential for new perspectives and lasting changes is missed.

Overall, this limits the possibilities for more and more actors to adopt socially innovative ways of working in order to tackle complex social challenges, renew the Swedish welfare system and achieve the global sustainability goals in Agenda 2030, in a system-changing and transformative way.<sup>40</sup>

## 6. Lack of target group participation prevents social innovations from becoming useful and creating value

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<sup>38</sup> Mötesplats Social Innovation, 2022

<sup>39</sup> Ashoka & Reach for Change, 2021; Region Stockholm, 2020; Vinnova, 2018

<sup>40</sup> Mötesplats Social Innovation, 2021

Research shows that the knowledge and experience that target groups have about their own situation is central to social innovation.<sup>41</sup> Among other things, it is said that a social innovation needs to be useful, accessible and value-creating for both the target group and the context. The people who are directly affected by the addressed social challenge therefore need to be actively involved in the entire process from problem description to solution design and implementation. Here, non-profit/idea-based organizations can play an important role, thanks to their habit of involving people in the identification and solution of the societal challenges that directly affect them (Ibid).

Often, however, the target groups' own voices are missing in both problem descriptions and in the design and implementation of social innovations within ESF projects.<sup>42</sup> This means that the projects do not capitalize on experiences and perspectives that can enable effective, lasting and value-creating social innovations. It also means that the horizontal principles of equality, accessibility and non-discrimination are not used as an innovative lever to include underrepresented groups in the processes.

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<sup>41</sup> Lindberg, 2021

<sup>42</sup> Lindberg et al., 2018

### 3. What the competence center will do

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#### Overarching focus of the Swedish competence centre

Based on the call from the Swedish ESF-council and the approved application, the Swedish CCSI will focus its work on the following areas:

- Support of projects funded in Program Area E (PAE) – social innovation.
- Analysis and evaluation for scaling of innovations in PAE.
- Support of the ESF council and other key actors in the implementation of the ESF+ program.
- Support of the Ecosystem at large.

#### Vision/mission

A support function that furthers efficient, lasting and value-creating innovations in the implementation of the ESF+. that creates additional value in the implementation of ESF+.

In order to support the ESF-funded projects in their innovation processes, a Swedish competence center for social innovation in the ESF has been established by Forum for Social Innovation Sweden (FfSIS) (in Swedish Mötesplats Social Innovation, MSI) and the National Network for Coordination Associations (in Swedish Nationella Nätverket för Samordningsförbund, NNS) on behalf of the Swedish ESF Council. In the competence center, FfSIS and NNS will provide coaching, coalitions and evaluations to the funded projects, learning exchanges and analysis support for the Swedish ESF Council. As described above, this was preceded by the international project "Building Capacity for a Sustainable Society" (BuiCaSuS) funded by the EU Program "Employment and Social Innovation" (EaSI) during 2021-2023, where a Swedish competence center for social innovation in ESF was established by FfSIS.

## Beneficiaries, stakeholders and target groups

The project's primary target groups are the ESF projects financed within PAE, the Swedish ESF Council as the managing authority, and central actors in the ecosystem for social innovation.

The target groups' needs for the proposed initiative of strategic importance have been identified partly through the EU Commission's call for competence centers and the ESF Council's call for projects of strategic importance, partly through research reports on social innovation in Sweden<sup>43</sup>, surveys made by the Swedish CCSI<sup>44</sup> as well as reports from previous support efforts within the ESF (e.g. theme groups).

As a knowledge and collaboration platform for social innovation, since 2010, FfSIS has conducted ongoing monitoring of the environment and exchange of knowledge about needs and efforts when it comes to supporting social innovation. The collaboration around social innovation that FfSIS has established between five universities in Sweden has also made it possible to safeguard and strengthen research in the field.

Through the mapping of Sweden's ecosystem for social innovation done by FfSIS within the framework of the CCSI, needs and challenges among both innovators/entrepreneurs and support actors have been mapped and analyzed. As a center of competence, FfSIS has also maintained an ongoing dialogue with a wide range of actors from the ecosystem for social innovation, including idea carriers, financiers, support actors, researchers and civil society. Overall, this has given a good insight into and understanding of what support needs exist and laid a good foundation for continued work through the proposed project of strategic importance.

Through the transnational exchange between competence centers for social innovation in Europe, FfSIS has also received a good description of needs for work as a support actor to promote social innovation in the implementation of ESF+.

The coordinating associations, which are collaborating parties in this application, also have extensive experience in mapping and meeting the needs of their target groups and stakeholders. It is partly about a good insight into the needs of unemployed and sick individuals who are far from the labor market. It is also about

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<sup>43</sup> e.g. Gawell et al., 2020; Lindberg et al., 2018

<sup>44</sup> e.g. Mötesplats Social Innovation, 2022

a good insight into the needs of the public actors who have the task of supporting these individuals' entry and establishment in the labor market.

All of the inputs above have contributed to the design of the application, and to ensuring that the application is in line with the needs of the target groups.

## **SUPPORT EFFORTS**

The overall solution to the main problem – the lack of systematic support for creating effective, lasting and value-creating social innovations in the implementation of ESF+ – is to strengthen the started establishment of a national competence center for social innovation in Sweden. The competence center shall provide support to projects and managing authorities in terms of gearing up, owning and operating ESF projects within PAE, aggregating, analyzing and disseminating results and good examples, as well as promoting the ecosystem for social innovations. It must also lay the foundation for a long-term establishment of the competence center through an elaborate and proven collaboration structure. Selected methods and approaches are:

### **1. SUPPORT FOR PROJECTS**

The methods described below are selected and designed to respond to the formulated problem of lack of and knowledge and with ESF projects to be able to create lasting innovation processes and Target groups rarely participate, which reduces the conditions for social innovations to meet their needs and conditions . The methods must contribute to achieving result objective 1 (PAE projects must receive support to reach the requested results, strengthen target group involvement and that methods and materials must be tested, valued, disseminated and implemented). The methods also contribute to part of result objective 3 (Transnational collaboration and exchange between projects has been carried out for the benefit of dissemination and replication. Methods and materials have been tested, evaluated, disseminated and – when possible – implemented).

#### **Cluster coalitions**

Cluster coalitions must be created and implemented to support the development, dissemination and scaling up of social innovations in the implementation of the ESF projects financed within PAE. A cluster coalition is a support format that brings together project owners who have been awarded funding within the same call. This is done through a series of process-supporting workshops during the project's "life cycle" from start to finish. The format enables joint competence development and cross-sector collaboration with the aim of strengthening the project owners'

capacity to develop, spread and scale social innovations in project implementation - which are central elements in social innovation according to previous research.<sup>45</sup> The cluster coalition will also build on the learning from the forms of project support efforts that the ESF Council perceives to work well in previous program periods (workshops for steering groups, project manager training, etc.). The coalition ethos has been developed and tested by FfSIS, in areas such as the innovative power of young people, equal and complete schooling for young people, young people in working life.<sup>46</sup>

The coalitions must support the various parts and levels that research has identified as central to social innovation processes, see figure 4. The aim is to follow and strengthen the projects' process in the coalitions from social challenge to lasting value creation.

The coalition gathers representatives from the project's project management, steering group and other central partners at 3-5 coalition meetings during the project's life cycle to achieve co-creation and effect/impact around the call's theme. The layout and content of the cluster meetings will be developed in dialogue with the Swedish ESF Council. The coalitions also focus on knowledge accumulation and policy influence through learning, evaluation and aggregation, which are described in their own area of effort below. Suggested content:

- What does social innovation mean in our projects? Theory of change
- Cross-sector collaboration – from conversation to collaboration
- Meaningful target group participation
- Implementation, scaling and value creation – in the short and long term
- Exchange of experience between Sweden and the rest of Europe
- How can the horizontal principles be used as an innovative lever?

### **Coaching support for projects**

As a complement to the coalitions, each project manager is offered individual coaching to support the project's work with social innovation, cross-sector collaboration, target group participation and horizontal principles. In a report on the experiences from external project support in the ESF's last program period found that individual coaching of project managers was appreciated by both project owners and the ESF Council's coordinator.<sup>47</sup> In addition to learning from previous support efforts, we will also supplement with methods in the area of social innovation. For example, tools from The Joint Way's toolbox to support social

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<sup>45</sup> Lindberg, 2021; Mulgan & Pulford, 2010; Westley et al., 2017

<sup>46</sup> <https://socialinnovation.se/koalitionsmodellen/>

<sup>47</sup> [2016-00665-160 Final report ESF external project support 2021 995425 1 1.PDF](#)

innovation can be used to support the projects' innovation processes with tools that are suitable for their specific needs.<sup>48</sup>

### **Annual Conferences for Learning and Dissemination**

By participating in annual conferences for learning and dissemination in Sweden and internationally, the projects will be inspired and able to sharpen their project approach in terms of developing effective, lasting and value-creating social innovations. The annual conferences include exchange of experience and skills development.

### **International exchange of experience**

By being invited to exchange experiences with ESF projects in other countries, the projects will be able to further sharpen their project approach in terms of developing innovations. This can take place in existing coalition meetings, annual conferences or in separate activities. Exchange of experiences regarding support for social innovation in ESF projects takes place on an ongoing basis with other competence centers in Europe, as well as with the European competence center for social innovation with the aim of further developing support efforts.

## **2. SUPPORT - KNOWLEDGE ACCUMULATION, DISSEMINATION AND SCALING**

The methods and approaches described below face the problems: There is a lack of forms to show aggregated learning and measure the benefits of innovative ESF projects and Innovative results are not taken advantage of and aggregated, and therefore do not permanently affect structures and regulations. The methods are chosen and designed to make it possible to reach result objective 2 - Results have been measurably gathered, analyzed, evaluated, disseminated. Results of the project have contributed to new investments and increased knowledge level within the managing authority as well as other relevant stakeholders. It also contributes to part of result objective 3 - There are clear descriptions of what works/doesn't work when it comes to creating the conditions for lasting innovation.

### **Cluster evaluations**

Evaluators with the skills requested in the ESF's call for action of strategic importance will lead and carry out cluster evaluations of the ESF projects financed within PAE. This means that efforts and results within each call are followed, analyzed, aggregated and related to hindering and enabling structures, in the light

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<sup>48</sup> <https://www.thejointway.se/>



of previous knowledge and experience of social innovation and evaluation of ESF projects. The cluster evaluations will be quality assured with the help of a scientific reference group with expertise in social innovation, evaluation and the labor market.

The cluster evaluations must be based on research and knowledge of theory-based and counterfactual evaluation linked to the ESF's direction. The evaluation will build on competence in following up and demonstrating the value of social innovation. An example is a model for identifying and making visible the values of social innovation, which is used to monitor and assess which social, economic and environmental values the projects have the potential to and have succeeded in creating.<sup>49</sup>

The evaluations can contain forms of self-evaluation where the participating projects themselves are allowed to assess a number of counterfactual statements regarding changes and results they believe are solely due to the project and results they believe would have been achieved anyway - does the change/movement depend on factors, circumstances or efforts other than the project. The model must also contain an element of so-called shadow control. This means that an expert group of researchers and practitioners can externally assess the various cluster projects. The assessment must then be made based on theories and experience-based knowledge of projects that aim to strengthen social innovation and how these can be developed. Finally, the cluster evaluation must contain an evaluation phase that involves conducting a quasi-experiment. A quasi-experiment is an evaluation of effects (counterfactual ones) where it is not possible to create a random division – control group – of, in this case, exactly similar ESF projects (randomization). In a cluster evaluation, we will, for example, let the different cluster coalitions be each other's control groups. The overall purpose of our counterfactual perspective is to further evidence-based, for example, which models and working methods work/respectively do not work.

The experiences and lessons learned from the cluster evaluations will play a role in the model that the project intends to develop (see also the section "Model for evaluation of social innovation in ESF projects" below).

The cluster evaluations are coordinated with the meetings in support coalitions for projects. In this way, the evaluation gains access to cross-sector perspectives and experiences that contribute to increased learning and exchange around the different parts of the innovation process. Here, initiatives and experiments are handled, aggregated and analyzed in the early phase, in order to find out the potential for strategic influence and dissemination of results that can influence and develop existing structures and regulations, and in the long term increase the

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<sup>49</sup> <https://www.ltu.se/research/subjects/Design/Forskningsprojekt/Modell-som-visar-vardet-av-sociala-innovationer-1.178357?l=en>

possibility that new solutions are implemented and long-term effects are achieved regarding social inclusion, the labor market, training and capacity building. The evaluation must particularly follow and make visible the horizontal principles and be based on meaningful target group participation. The results from the evaluations are disseminated and further developed at the annual conferences.

### **Annual analysis reports**

A summary analysis report is produced annually to compile and communicate accumulated knowledge about opportunities and challenges when it comes to creating conditions for effective, lasting and value-creating social innovations through calls for proposals and projects in PAE. The reports are based on experiences and results from the cluster coalitions, the cluster evaluations and other project activities. The reports are produced in collaboration with experienced researchers in social innovation, the social fund and other relevant areas of expertise. The reports are launched and presented in connection with the annual conferences held in the project. They will also form a possible basis for new investments and for competence development at the managing authority and other central actors in the ecosystem for social innovation.

### **Model for evaluation of social innovation in ESF projects**

The project develops a model for evaluation of social innovation in ESF projects, which connects knowledge and experience in social innovation and evaluation of ESF projects. With the help of the model, individual ESF projects, project evaluators and the ESF Council can assess and improve the prospects for effective, lasting and value-creating social innovations in the ESF. The model is to be developed in dialogue with the ESF Council's analysis unit, researchers and evaluators with competence in social innovation, labor market policy and working life policy, as well as the national competence centers for social innovation in France and Portugal. It must provide tools for evaluating results and goal fulfillment and contain suggestions on how projects can be evaluated counterfactually. The model must also contain suggestions on how to work with different forms of self-evaluation, where those who are evaluated themselves can assess a number of counterfactual statements concerning their social innovation project - how they judge that results follow from the project's efforts or whether the movement is due to other factors, circumstances, stakes. It must also contain an element of so-called shadow control - that, for example, an expert group of researchers and practitioners may externally assess the social innovation project. The assessment is based on theories and experience-based knowledge of projects that aim to strengthen social innovation and how these can be developed. Finally, the model must contain suggestions on how to evaluate the impact of projects aimed at strengthening social innovation. Since a so-called controlled control group will probably not be possible to create in many projects, the model must contain suggestions on how so-called quasi-experiments can be carried out when projects aimed at strengthening and

developing social innovation are to be evaluated. A quasi-experiment is a study/evaluation design where it is not possible to randomly create a trial and comparison group that exactly resembles the social innovation project to be evaluated. The lack of such a random division (randomization) is what distinguishes quasi-experiments from so-called randomized control studies.

#### **Annual conferences**

To enable and strengthen learning and dissemination about effective, sustainable and value-creating social innovations, annual conferences will be conducted. Through the conference, good examples of results and process are spread between ESF projects, the ESF Council, the ecosystem for social innovation (including policy level), and international actors. The conferences must particularly highlight target group participation, cross-sector collaboration and the horizontal principles of equality, accessibility and non-discrimination. The conferences may be held as joint arrangements with the ESF Council but also other national actors such as Sweden's coordination association, Forte, Reach for Change and others. One possibility is that some of the conferences are held regionally in collaboration with FfSIS's regional nodes in northern, central and southern Sweden.

#### **Transnational exchange of experience**

Transnational exchange of experience must be carried out to promote knowledge accumulation, dissemination of results and scaling. It will take place with other national competence centers for social innovation in EU member states and the European competence center for social innovation, but also between ESF projects and support actors in different EU countries.

### **3. SUPPORT TO THE ESF COUNCIL AND OTHER KEY ACTORS TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL INNOVATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ESF+**

The methods and approaches described below meet the formulated needs regarding increased cooperation and more innovative working methods with the managing authority and other key actors, and Innovative results are not taken advantage of and aggregated, and therefore do not permanently affect structures and regulations.

The methods and approaches described are chosen and designed to make it possible to reach result objective 4 "Socially innovative elements have increased

within the ESF and other PAs". The measurably increased level of knowledge about the importance of social innovation has increased in the managing authority and with other relevant stakeholders. The development of knowledge has meant that models/tools - based on those of the managing authority/the relevant stakeholders - have been put into use. Analyzes and announcements contain a social innovation perspective in background descriptions, goals and means.

Below, efforts are described to further develop the working methods of the ESF Council and other key actors, to ones that contribute to projects reaching lasting innovations. Competence development and initiatives for increased cross-sector cooperation can take place in the following way:

**Workshops and analysis support** before calls to strengthen social innovation, cross-sector collaboration and target group participation in project implementation. These workshops can be both internal and open, depending on what is requested by the ESF Council.

**Skill-developing learning opportunities** with a focus on promoting socially innovative working methods for staff at the ESF Council, nationally and regionally. An inventory is made of which working methods the ESF Council wishes to further develop, with subsequent adapted efforts. Focus on how funds can strengthen each other through aggregation of innovations (for example in relation to the EaSi fund) but also on how working methods such as analyzes and calls for proposals, background descriptions, formulations of goals and means, assessment criteria can strengthen social innovation in projects.

The ESF Council's staff is given scope for **environmental monitoring** and **competence development** through participation in coalitions/support efforts for projects, as well as the development work of a model for evaluating social innovation in ESF projects.

**Learning exchanges in the form of meetings/workshops with other financiers** of social innovation, for example Forte, Vinnova, Tillväxtverket, MUCF, Allmänna arvsfonden. These can be carried out separately or as part of coalition meetings or annual conferences.

**Through the above activities, the ESF Council's staff get a closer connection to the ecosystem for social innovation**

**Annual conferences** contribute to learning for ESF staff

**Transnational exchange of experience** for ESF staff, integrated in the above efforts.

## 4. SUPPORT TO THE ECOSYSTEM FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ESF+

As described in previous studies, the ecosystem for social innovation in Sweden is fragmented and lacks sufficient policy and financial support to function effectively.<sup>50</sup> The ecosystem includes both innovators and support actors, financiers, academia, civil society, the public sector, business and more. To strengthen the ecosystem, and to meet the lack of (the described background challenge) contacts between ESF projects and the ecosystem for social innovation as well as Lack of structural support for cross-sector collaboration in social innovation suggests the methods and approaches described below. They are chosen to contribute to achieving part of performance objective 4 - "Socially innovative elements have increased within the ESF and other PAs." The measurably increased level of knowledge about the importance of social innovation has increased in the managing authority and with other relevant stakeholders. The development of knowledge has meant that models/tools – based on those of the managing authority/the relevant stakeholders – have been put into use.

Regarding activities to strengthen the ecosystem for social innovation, the competence center plans to build on the extensive knowledge that already exists about challenges and needs for the ecosystem, while at the same time the ambition is to start this work with an open, cross-sectoral process, where many actors are given space to be involved. The ESF Council and the implementation of ESF+ are at the center of the process.

**Roundtable discussions** are held to develop a strategy to strengthen the ecosystem for social innovation in Sweden, and the competence center's role in this.

**Ongoing dialogue** to coordinate the ecosystem's actors around the long-term establishment of a competence center/support function that enables effective, lasting and value-creating social innovations in the ESF and the rest of the ecosystem.

**The ecosystem's central actors are involved in the annual conferences**, in the planning and implementation of cluster coalitions, as well as in transnational exchange of experience.

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<sup>50</sup> See e.g. Mötesplats Social Innovation, 2022

**Cross-sector networking** , collaboration, at national and transnational level.

**Transnational exchange of experience** around strengthening the ecosystem takes place on an ongoing basis with other competence centers for social innovation in Europe, as well as with the European competence center for social innovation.

The ecosystem for social innovation **helps to ensure the involvement of target groups** .

An ongoing process must be linked to the **steering group work to involve the project's partners** in long-term ownership of the project's results.

In the EaSI call for funding of national CCSIs, EU stated that the ambition is to achieve long-term coherence among countries and more effective use of the EU Target group financing. The CCSIs functions defined by the EU could be a benchmark baseline for the CCSI strategy options and operations (see Table 12).

Table 1 CCSI functions identified in the EaSI call.<sup>51</sup>

Capacity building	To build the capacities of key social innovation stakeholders, notably the ESF Managing Authorities, funders and donors, intermediaries, social innovation initiatives, and practitioners alike. This is to be pursued, by providing professional support services ranging from design and development to the assessment, upscaling, and mainstreaming of social innovations through effective public policies and actions, thereby creating a conducive environment for social innovation in a particular Member State
Networking	To network and cooperate with other selected competence centers, using mutual learning as well as jointly developing, assessing, and optimizing suitable tools and methods, and collecting and disseminating inspiring examples, models, and practices
Transnational transfer of knowledge	Know-how and tools for the support of social innovation from ESF Managing Authorities, social innovation competence centres, and social innovation stakeholders with long-standing and extensive experience, to organizations in the Member States

<sup>51</sup> Source: [Calls for proposals – Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion – European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/easip/calls-for-proposals-employment-social-affairs-inclusion)

	with a shorter and less developed or less comprehensive experience and competence in this field
Creation of synergies	To create further synergies between the EaSI Program and the ESF, especially given the designing, supporting, monitoring, and mainstreaming of innovative actions that could be extended, enlarged, and/or replicated using ESF+ Target group financing in subsequent years

## 4. Goals, tasks and services provided by the competence centre

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This chapter describes the goals of the Swedish CCSI during 2023-2025.

### Overall project goals

The overall goal of the project is that a support function has been established that promotes effective, lasting and value-creating social innovations on work life-related societal challenges in the implementation of ESF+.

This means the following (further developed by FfSIS based on ESF's descriptions in the call):

- The existing competence center for social innovation in Sweden has been further developed and strengthened, which leads to ESF+ being implemented in a more efficient and successful way.
- Cross-sector cooperation in the implementation of ESF+ has strengthened the national ecosystem for social innovation in Sweden.
- The ESF projects have increased their ability to run their projects in an effective way, create synergies and gear up their innovative solutions, as well as connected with other relevant actors in the ecosystem for social innovation nationally and transnationally.
- Individuals have gained access to more effective, lasting and value-creating efforts to approach, establish themselves and develop skills in the labor market, in a way that meets their needs regarding social inclusion, labor market, education, financial vulnerability, etc.
- The horizontal principles of equality, accessibility and non-discrimination have been integrated into the implementation of ESF projects within PAE, thereby improving the employability and development potential of disadvantaged groups on the labor market.
- A national support function for social innovation has been established and lives on after the end of the project in cooperation between the project parties and other relevant actors.

### Performance goals

The project has five impact goals. These are:



- The implementation of PAE has been made more efficient as a result of the effort.
- Changes at the systemic, regulatory and policy level that facilitate social innovation regarding cooperation, collaboration and financial challenges have been achieved or initiated.
- Diffusion and replication have arisen as a result of transnational collaboration and exchange between projects.
- Actors within social innovation have gained strengthened capacity.
- The social innovation ecosystem has been strengthened.

## Performance goals

The project has six performance goals. These are:

- Projects within PAE have received support in achieving the requested results.
- Methods and materials have been tested, evaluated, disseminated and, where possible, implemented.
- Target groups have been involved in the identification of needs and the design of interventions.
- Results have been collected, analyzed and evaluated, disseminated and contributed to new initiatives as well as increased knowledge level within the managing authority and with other relevant stakeholders.
- Transnational collaboration and exchange between projects have been implemented for the benefit of dissemination and replication.
- Socially innovative elements have increased within the framework of other program areas within ESF+ (PA A-D).

## Outcome and activity goals

A number of outcome and activity targets have been drawn up which link to the result and effect targets. These are presented in point form below (See also the attached change logic and the attached strategic and operational plan):

### SUPPORT FOR PROJECTS

- At least four coalitions with ESF projects have been implemented, with support for projects in coalition form within each call.
- All funded projects within PAE have been offered coaching support in project implementation.

- Target group involvement and integration of horizontal principles have been strengthened in all coalitions.
- Transnational and national exchange of experience has been carried out between projects to enable and strengthen learning and dissemination.

#### KNOWLEDGE ACCUMULATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

- At least four cluster evaluations have been conducted and resulted in reports with lessons learned and recommendations.
- A model for evaluation and analysis of social innovation in the ESF has been developed, communicated and disseminated.
- A summary, aggregated analysis has been produced annually.
- Three annual dissemination conferences have been held.
- Three exchanges of experience between competence centers in the rest of Europe and competence centers for social innovation in the EU have been carried out to enable and strengthen learning and dissemination.

#### SUPPORT TO THE ESF COUNCIL TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL INNOVATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ESF+

- ESF staff have participated in at least 4 coalitions.
- At least three cross-sectoral workshops have been carried out linked to upcoming calls for proposals in PAE.
- At least three exchanges of experience between Swedish financiers of social innovation have been carried out.
- At least three transnational exchanges of experience with other national competence centers and Managing Authorities in Europe have been carried out.
- At least three new models, methods and materials for social innovation in the ESF have been developed together with the ESF Council and ESF projects.

#### SUPPORT TO THE ECOSYSTEM FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ESF+

- At least three meetings have been held with central actors to design a joint strategy to strengthen the ecosystem for social innovation in Sweden, with connection to the implementation of ESF+.
- At least three policy initiatives have been formulated and presented to relevant social actors to strengthen the ecosystem for social innovation.
- At least three transnational exchanges of experience have been carried out between support actors to strengthen the ecosystem for social innovation in Sweden and the rest of Europe.
- 3 annual steering group meetings have been conducted for to involve the project's partners in long-term ownership of the project's lessons learned and results.

- An organizational model, job description and financing model have been drawn up and entered into between the project parties and other central actors for the long-term establishment of the national competence center for social innovation.

## Indicators for follow-up

Performance goals	Indicators
<b>The implementation of Program Area E has been made more efficient as a result of the effort</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurable satisfaction of the projects concerning ESF's handling of calls, reporting etc. between T1 and T2 (measured in connection with the work with the cluster coalitions).</li> <li>• Measurable difference in satisfaction between the projects participating in early tenders compared to those participating in late tenders.</li> </ul>
<b>Changes at the systemic, regulatory and policy level that facilitate social innovation regarding cooperation, collaboration and financial challenges have been achieved or initiated</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurable change in the view of social innovation as a tool in the ESF, the Agency for Growth and Vinnova's regulatory letter between T1 and T2.</li> <li>• Measurable change in the view of social innovation as a tool for change in the regional development actors' steering documents.</li> <li>• Measurable change in the view of social innovation as a tool in the ESF, the Agency for Growth and Vinnova's regulatory letter between T1 and T2.</li> <li>• Measurable change in the view of social innovation as a tool for change in the regional development actors' steering documents</li> </ul>
<b>Diffusion and replication have arisen as a result of transnational collaboration and exchange between projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurably experienced enhanced learning between T1 and T2 in the projects linked to new tools/models implemented thanks to transnational collaboration.</li> <li>• Measurable satisfaction with the transnational cooperation of the international partners.</li> </ul>
<b>Actors within social innovation have gained strengthened capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurably experienced enhanced learning between T1 and T2 in the collective ecosystem's actors.</li> </ul>

<p><b>The social innovation ecosystem has been strengthened</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurably perceived increased level of knowledge between T1 and T2 among the actors of the combined ecosystem.</li> <li>• Measurably increased formalized collaboration T1 and T2 between actors in the collective ecosystem.</li> <li>• Measurably clearer occurrence between T1 and T2 of social innovation as a tool in strategy documents and action plans.</li> <li>• Measurably experienced reduced sinkhole logic between T1 and T2 in actors in the collective ecosystem.</li> <li>• Measurably clearer occurrence between T1 and T2 of social innovation as a tool in calls for proposals.</li> </ul>
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Performance goals	Indicators
<p><b>Projects within Program Area E have received support in achieving the requested results</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurable satisfaction and benefit from the project support from FFSIS (organization, knowledge and methods.)</li> <li>• Measurable movement in terms of target group involvement in needs identification.</li> <li>• Existence of competence centers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Methods and materials have been tested, evaluated, disseminated and, where possible, implemented</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurable change in the level of knowledge from T1 to T2 in the managing authority, other authorities and relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>• Measurable spread of results from T1 to T2</li> </ul>
<p><b>Target groups have been involved in the identification of needs and the design of interventions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurable change in target group involvement in the projects between T1 and T2.</li> <li>• Measurable change in the implementation of methods and models to strengthen target group involvement between T1 and T2.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Results have been collected, analyzed and evaluated, disseminated and contributed to new initiatives as well as increased knowledge level within the managing authority and with other relevant stakeholders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurable increase in socially innovative elements within ESF and other POs.</li> <li>• Measurable change in the level of knowledge from T1 to T2 in the actors with whom the project collaborates internationally.</li> <li>• Measurable change in the level of knowledge from T1 to T2 of the projects, managing authority, other authorities and relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>• Measurable change from T1 to T2 in analyzes and investigations that contain a social innovation perspective.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Transnational collaboration and exchange between projects have been implemented for the benefit of dissemination and replication</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurably experienced enhanced learning between T1 and T2 in the projects linked to new tools/models implemented thanks to transnational collaboration.</li> <li>• Measurable change in the level of knowledge from T1 to T2 in the actors with whom the project collaborates internationally.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Socially innovative elements have increased within the framework of other program areas within ESF+</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of descriptions of methods and materials.</li> <li>• Measurable change in the level of knowledge from T1 to T2 of the projects, managing authority, other public authorities and relevant stakeholders regarding the conditions for lasting innovation.</li> </ul>

Outcome and Activity Goals	Indicators
<p><b>Support for projects</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of coalitions completed.</li> <li>• Number of projects offered coaching support.</li> <li>• Number of coalitions evaluated.</li> <li>• Total number of transnational collaborations</li> <li>• Number of transnational collaborations involving the projects</li> <li>• Degree of target group involvement in the support for the projects</li> <li>• Degree of accessibility adaptation in the support for the projects</li> <li>• Distribution of men/women who participated in target group involvement activities.</li> <li>• Integration of challenges linked to horizontal principles in the coalitions.</li> <li>• Distribution of men/women in the projects that received support (project management).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Knowledge accumulation and dissemination of results</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of completed cluster evaluations.</li> <li>• Number of reports produced with clearly communicated lessons learned and recommendations.</li> <li>• Developed model for evaluation.</li> <li>• The number of analysis reports produced annually.</li> <li>• Number of conferences.</li> <li>• Number of transnational learning initiatives with a focus on knowledge accumulation and dissemination.</li> <li>• The work of selecting knowledge-accumulating and results-disseminating FFSIS activities is guided by questions about the relevance for men and women, respectively, to ensure that gender equality aspects are continuously taken into account.</li> <li>• The work of selecting knowledge-accumulating and result-disseminating FFSIS activities is guided by questions about the relevance for accessibility/inclusion to ensure that gender equality aspects are continuously taken into account.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Support to the ESF Council to strengthen social innovation implementation of ESF+</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of annual steering group meetings.</li> <li>• Number of annual steering group meetings that included a strong focus on long-term ownership of the project's results.</li> <li>• Number of relevant coalitions and learning opportunities with participating ESF staff.</li> <li>• Number of analysis efforts for upcoming POE announcements.</li> <li>• Number of completed knowledge exchanges between Swedish. existing/prospective funders of social innovation.</li> <li>• Number of completed case exchanges between the Swedish CCSI and the EU.</li> <li>• Number of learning forms, methods and materials for social innovation developed together with ESF staff.</li> <li>• Carried out efforts aimed at supporting the ESF Council with analyzes for upcoming calls for proposals.</li> <li>• Distribution of men/women invited to activities.</li> <li>• Degree of support aimed at strengthening accessibility/inclusion.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support to the ecosystem for social innovation in the implementation of ESF+</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of meetings to design a common strategy for the social innovation ecosystem.</li> <li>• Existence and degree of organizational model, job description and financing model between FFSIS and other partners.</li> <li>• Organizational model, job description, financing model and agreement in place between FFSIS and other partners regarding a national competence center.</li> <li>• Number of implemented policy initiatives aimed at strengthening social innovation.</li> <li>• Measurably increased contacts (measures) between central actors in the ecosystem and the ESF Council between T1 and T2.</li> <li>• Distribution of men/women invited to activities.</li> <li>• Distribution of societal sectors participating in FFSIS's project-related activities.</li> <li>• Degree of support aimed at strengthening accessibility/inclusion.</li> </ul>

## 5. Mandate, governance and organizational structure

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### Mandate of the CCSI

As of today, the Swedish CCSI works on the mandate of the Swedish ESF-council, guided by the intention that was formulated in the call from the EC to strengthen and start national competence centers in member states.

### Governance

Forum for Social Innovation Sweden (FfSIS) has existed as a collaboration platform at Malmö University since 2010. Over the years, the university has made a series of strategic investments to strengthen work with social innovation. FfSIS has a steering group that is responsible for the strategic management of FfSIS's operations, and this is led by the vice-rector for cooperation at Malmö University. Thanks to the fact that the vice-rector for collaboration is part of the rector's management team, there is a clear channel to the university management for matters relating to FfSIS's operations and development.

The competence center's steering group represents actors who are central to the project's interest and continued ownership. The steering group will meet 3-4 times a year and consists of:

- Johnny Karlsson, Swedish ESF Council
- Charlotte Ahlgren Moritz, Vice Chancellor, Malmö University
- Sara Bjärstorp, operations manager FfSIS
- Mattias Bergström, NNS, Östergötland Coordination Association
- The Ministry of Labor and Employment - a representative must be appointed
- Anna Tengqvist, coordinator for the competence centre.

1. **Scientific reference group.** The purpose of the reference group is to ensure the scientific basis for the cluster evaluations. They will contribute a scientific basis for knowledge accumulation, evaluation and learning. The scientific reference group is linked to all cluster evaluations. Researchers with in-demand skills participate here.

2. **Policy and Scaling Reference Group.** The purpose of the reference group is to contribute expertise and also an interdisciplinary basis for the work of developing strategies for policy influence and aggregation of innovations. Here, cross sectoral participation will be central, ensuring both private, public, civil society and academia as participants.

### **Regional representation**

At present, regional representation is established through the regional nodes of FfSIS, in Malmö, Luleå, Umeå, Jönköping and Örebro. The plan is to strengthen the regional representation during the years 2023-2025, through the establishment of regional and local platforms for support of social innovation and co-creation. This will be done in cooperation with the FfSIS nodes and key stakeholders in the ecosystem for social innovation. This process starts through a round table process, including a meeting on April 18<sup>th</sup> 2023, where key actors of the ecosystem are invited.



## 6. Resources

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### Resources in terms of competence and collaborations

The cross sectoral partners described in the reference group will be important networks. Also, all MSI networks of relevance will be build upon, also that of our partners. The collaboration with other EU Competence centres are also key resources, as is the Community of Practice for Social Innovation

### Resources in terms of funding

The competence center has funding from the ESF in Sweden, 1.5 M Euro for the period 2023-2025 (three years). 5% of this funding comes from Malmö University.

Staff in the competence center will be employed at FfSIS:

- Coordinator 75%
- Project Manager 75%
- Communication 40-50%
- Analysis 40%
- Project staff 30%
- Economist 15% (6 months?)

In addition, NNS will have 20% working time in the project.

There is also space in the budget for target group involvement and the involvement of civil society organizations/others who cannot attend meetings due to lack of funding.

All the above will, with some additional service providers, work in the areas of:

- Support to projects
- Analysis, learning
- Support to the ESF staff and other key actors
- Support to the ecosystem
- Communication

## 7. Action plan

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The strategic and operational plan is under development and will be included as an attachment to the strategy.

## 8. Reference list

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Bui  
Ca  
SUS

Building  
Capacity for a  
Sustainable  
Society

"BuiCaSuS is a transnational project aimed at strengthening the capacities of national competence centers for social innovation. Partners come from Spain, Sweden, Latvia, and France. It is one of six consortia funded by the European Commission. Amongst its tasks is to map current social innovation systems, support piloting and upscaling schemes, foster transnational learning on tools for innovation, and develop policy propositions for National competence centers."



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