

Financial Instruments for delivery of the ESF

Seminar

21 October 2015

Rome, Italy

Programme



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The Europe 2020 Strategy for Growth and Jobs called for a stronger role of Financial Instruments in 2014-2020. The European Council subsequently gave a mandate to the European Commission that the programming of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) should be used to significantly increase the overall EU support from these funds to leverage-based Financial Instruments, in particular for SMEs. An increase in the use of ESIF Financial Instruments, to a level almost double that of the 2007-2013 programming period, is also set out in the Investment Plan for Europe. To achieve this, the new legal and policy framework has widened the scope of Financial Instruments to include all thematic objectives and all five ESI funds. The framework also gives Member States more implementation options.

Within this framework, the European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) aims to increase the use of Financial Instruments under the European Social Fund (ESF) in terms of budget, territorial coverage and types of investment.

In the 2007-2013 programming period, a total of 53 Financial Instruments, primarily limited to supporting SMEs, were implemented across 7 Member States to finance ESF interventions. This modest take up indicates that ESF stakeholders lack experience using these instruments and are less accustomed to dealing with market mechanisms, yet this also implies great potential in using revolving funds to effectively tackle social issues.

Financial Instruments can be co-funded by the ESF to support the investment priorities outlined in the ESF Operational Programmes (OP) of the Member States. Provided that they address an identified market gap, i.e. areas where banks are unwilling to lend, and/or where the private sector is unwilling to invest or finds access to financing difficult, Financial Instruments can contribute to the achievement of the following thematic objectives of the ESF:

- promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility;
- promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination;
- investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning; and
- enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders, as well as efficient public administration.

Managing Authorities also have the possibility to contribute ESF resources to the EU Programme for Employment and Social Entrepreneurship (EaSI). In this way, Managing Authorities can make use of an already existing vehicle that invests ESF resources in the territory covered by a programme. Synergies between the ESF and EaSI are to be explored and developed further.

To allow the use of ESF resources for Financial Instruments, Member States have to plan these into their OPs and implement them in their programme areas. Financial Instruments may have various types (such as loans, guarantees and equity) and cover either all economic sectors supported by the programmes or some sectors/sub-sectors, or types of investments, which face restricted access to and/or unfavourable conditions for funding from private resources.

To support Member States in increasing their use of Financial Instruments, DG EMPL set up, together with other Commission Services responsible for ESIF, the *fi-compass* integrated advisory platform on Financial Instruments, which provides comprehensive advice and learning opportunities to the benefit of Member States, their Managing Authorities but also for the wider public. The *fi-compass* platform has been set up in partnership with the European Investment Bank (EIB).

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Audience

The target audience for this seminar are ESF Managing Authorities who are directly involved in the design, implementation and promotion of Financial Instruments established under ESF OPs, as well as bodies implementing or considering the implementation of a fund of funds, and financial intermediaries. If capacity allows, final recipients and other actors supporting the implementation of Financial Instruments are also welcome.

Venue

Rome, 21 October
Hotel Massimo d'Azeglio
Via Cavour, 18
00184 Rome

Language

The language of the seminar will be English.
Italian interpretation is provided.

Costs

Registration is free. Participants are expected to finance their own travel and accommodation costs.

What will the seminar offer?

Three identical *fi-compass* seminars are being organised in three locations in the EU Member States (Paris, Rome and Warsaw). Participants can expect to further their understanding of how Financial Instruments can help in their efforts to deliver ESIF 2014-2020 objectives, under the ESF in particular.

Case studies on Financial Instruments solutions developed by regions and Member States, the guidance by the European Commission and the support by *fi-compass* will be presented in these three seminars.

In addition, a training session on the ex-ante assessment in the context of ESF will be provided.

How to book your place at the seminar?

Please register via www.fi-compass.eu. The registration closed on **12 October 2015** due to high number of participants.

21 October 2015

Financial Instruments delivering ESI Funds

The purpose of the seminar is:

- to provide Member States and Managing Authorities with the opportunity to learn more about the advantages, features and suitability of Financial Instruments in delivering ESIF 2014-2020 objectives, in particular the ESF;
- to provide the opportunity to discuss in depth the technical challenges that the Managing Authorities and the Member States are facing at the moment in regards to the design and set up of Financial Instruments; and
- to present the regulatory framework and key novelties of the Financial Instruments and the *fi-compass* support available.

Structure of the seminar

The seminar will have plenary and training session

In the plenary session, the presentation of regulatory framework and key novelties of the Financial Instruments will be combined with the challenges faced and solutions found by various Managing Authorities. An introduction of the latest *fi-compass* advisory products will follow. The plenary session will end with a practical example of the Financial Instrument set up at the EU level, being one of the options to contribute ESF resources to Financial Instruments.

The training session will address the ex-ante assessment in the context of ESF. Both the guidance of the European Commission and the specific support documents drafted by *fi-compass* will guide the training. Participants will have the opportunity to work on practical examples and to discuss the details both in groups and in plenary.

Rome, 21 October
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Moderation: **Sabine Zillmer**, *fi-compass* expert

09:00

Registration and coffee

09:30

Welcome

Leonardo Colucci, European Commission
Pieter Coppens, European Investment Bank

09:50

Introduction – key features of Financial Instruments
Alessandro Valenza, *fi-compass* expert

10:15

State of play of Financial Instruments in the ESF 2014-2020 programmes
Case studies presented: challenges and solutions
Audrius Zobotka, INVEGA, Lithuania
Paolo Zaggia, Finlombarda, Italy
Mauro Terzoni, Marche region, Italy
Gianluca Palermo, European Investment Fund, Sicily JEREMIE ESF

11:45

Coffee break

12:15

The ESF programmes and the potential use of Financial Instruments
Andrea Da Pozzo, European Commission

The *fi-compass* support to ESF programmes
Bruno Robino, European Investment Bank

13:00

Lunch break

14:30

Financial instruments to support employment and social innovation: EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)
Riccardo Aguglia, European Investment Fund and
Christos Pouris, European Investment Bank

15:00

Training session on design of Financial Instruments under ESF
Alessandro Valenza, **Giovanni Familiari** and
Michele Alessandrini, *fi-compass* experts

16:45

Conclusions
Pieter Coppens, European Investment Bank

17:00

End of the seminar followed immediately by a networking opportunity

