

Call for applications 2020

Revised key dates due to the COVID-19 crisis



The European Social Catalyst Fund (ESCF) is a new initiative designed to have significant impact on some of Europe's most pressing social challenges. The objective of the ESCF is to bring together public and private resources to improve social services to enable people who need support to live as valued and participating members of their communities.

The ESCF will provide financial and capacity building support to develop plans to scale proven social service innovations. It is anticipated that these plans will provide details of how public and private resources (philanthropy and/or social investment) can be brought together in a range of collaborations to help re-focus public spending in a more effective direction in the interest of European citizens. It is intended that during the project a further phase will be designed, based on learning obtained, which will include a focus on supporting implementation of plans to scale proven social service innovations.

The ESCF has been established and co-funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, Genio, the Robert Bosch Stiftung and the King Baudouin Foundation. It will award planning grants across a range of priority social challenge areas within, or across, European Union Member States. The purpose of the grants is to support the development of detailed implementation plans aimed at reducing, or overcoming, social challenges. Innovations will be identified through a pan-European call and all eligible applications will be evaluated against published criteria. Preference will be given to innovations that have the most robust evidence of success and that aim to reach the most significant scale. Each selected application will receive a planning grant of up to €100,000 along with capacity building support. A minimum of €600,000 will be allocated to support at least 6 plans.

Key dates

- **Launch:** 16 January 2020
- **Applications close:** 11 September 2020
- **Successful applications selected:** 21 December 2020
- **Plan development:** February 2021 – September 2021
- **Plans submitted:** 30 September 2021

Information available at www.EUSCF.eu from 16 January 2020



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 870757.



Objectives of the ESCF

1. To provide financial support, guidance and information to proven social service innovations selected through a pan-European competition to develop implementation plans to upscale.
2. To stimulate a broader range of public sector, philanthropic and social investment collaborations that foster the scaling of social service innovations to meet social challenges across EU Member States aligned with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights.
3. To produce exemplar plans across a range of priority social challenge areas that can be implemented to a substantial level of scale within two years.
4. Plans also must be relevant to the social and implementation challenges in at least five EU Member States, two of which will be Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs).
5. To develop and disseminate knowledge and skills on how to successfully plan the scaling of social service innovations.
6. To design a further phase of the European Social Catalyst Fund based on learning obtained in the process of achieving these objectives.

Eligibility Criteria for European Social Catalyst Fund

Applications can be made to the ESCF for support to **develop plans** to scale social service innovations that meet the criteria set out below:

1. Applications can be made by **a) collaborations involving public and private agencies (lead applicant must be a non-profit); b) public agencies; or c) private non-profit agencies**, in EU Member States, that aim to scale proven innovations that can effectively contribute to reducing, or overcoming, social challenges within or across countries.
2. The application must address **social challenges** within at least one of the listed focus areas below that align with the Sustainable Development Goals and align with the three main categories of the European Pillar of Social Rights: equal opportunities and access to the labour market; fair working conditions social protection and inclusion.
 - i. ageing
 - ii. poverty and marginalisation
 - iii. homelessness
 - iv. disability
 - v. mental health
 - vi. migration
 - vii. promoting gender equality
 - viii. dementia
 - ix. digital inclusiveness
 - x. employment and job creation
 - xi. inequalities
 - xii. education and training, skills
 - xiii. community development
 - xiv. the role and place of young people in society
 - xv. inter-generational solidarity
 - xvi. ecological and social transition
3. Applications must relate to **evidence-based models of intervention** that have been tried and tested. Preference will be given to innovations that have the most robust evidence of success (*Appendix 1*).
4. At least one member of the organisation(s) applying must have **prior involvement in implementing the innovative model** under proposal (*Appendix 2*).
5. Plans also must be **relevant to the social and implementation challenges in at least five EU Member States**, two of which will be CEEC's - acknowledging the need for tailoring to meet the specific requirements determined by varying cultural and operational environments.

1. After the initial assessment of applications, shortlisted organisations or lead organisations of shortlisted consortia applying shall:
 - Provide **audited financial statements** (or equivalent available documentation in-line with the financial regulations of the lead applicant's country) for the previous 2 years and shall complete a declaration that they do not have any 'going concern' issues.
 - Provide **evidence of adequate management and financial systems.**
 - Be **GDPR** compliant.
 - Ensure processes are compliant with **EU ethical standards.**
 - Demonstrate a commitment to **gender equality.**
2. Funding from the project is **intended to support the planning process** and will not be given for capital costs. **The lead applicant receiving funding must be a non-profit public purpose organisation.**

Evaluation Criteria for European Social Catalyst Fund

Each criterion below is weighted. Applications will be shortlisted for consideration based on an overall minimum threshold score of 60% and the thresholds indicated below. Genio will be responsible for the initial shortlisting of applications that meet the eligibility criteria. Decisions regarding the allocation of grants will be made by the consortium of philanthropic organisations contributing to the ESCF. During the assessment process, the ESCF may revert to applicants for clarification purposes.

Scoring:

Potential Impact - minimum threshold 42%

- a) Relevance and extent of the specific social challenge - *What is the scale of the social challenge in the geographic area where the planning will take place?* (15%)
- b) Potential impact on the challenge - *What is the extent of the potential impact of this innovation on this social challenge in this geographic area?* (15%)
- c) Evidence - *What robust national and international evidence exists to support the model or innovation in terms of its effectiveness? What is the evidence on the cost implications of the model compared to alternative approaches?* (20%)
- d) Scope of potential impact geographically - *What is the evidence that the innovation is relevant across EU Member States? What evidence is there that the approach is relevant in Central and Eastern European Countries? To what extent has the innovation been applied in other countries in Europe?* (10%)
- e) Promotion of citizen-centred approaches - *Does the innovation support service users and end beneficiaries to be self-directed and to be involved in plans to scale social service innovations?* (10%)

Capacities - minimum threshold 12%

- a) Capacities of the applicants - *Do the organisation(s) applying have the capacities to produce the plan for scaling the innovation?* (10%)
- b) Networks and linkages - *What is the evidence that key partners (public, private, non-profit, philanthropic) are open to collaborating on developing the plan in the geographic area where the planning will take place and what are the current linkages between the proposers and these organisations? Do the applicants have strong international linkages that could assist with this planning?* (10%)

Quality of the application to develop the plan - minimum threshold 6%

- a) Activities - *Description of activities, timeframe, methodology, risk management.* (5%)
- b) Budget - *Are expenditures associated with the proposed planning activities reasonable and well-substantiated?* (5%)

Appendix 1 – Evidence Base

To be eligible to apply for ESCF funding, the organisation/consortium must propose an innovation which is evidence-based - with preference being given to innovations that have the most robust evidence of success.

Definition of Evidence-Based Practice

Evidence-based practice (EBP) is the purposeful and judicious use of current best evidence in conjunction with relevant expertise and values to guide social decisions.

Best evidence includes empirical evidence from randomised controlled trials (RCTs); evidence from other scientific methods such as descriptive and qualitative research; as well as use of information from case reports, scientific principles and expert opinion.

Hierarchy of Evidence

The hierarchy of evidence is a core principle of EBP. This allows a top-down approach to locating the best evidence whereby you first search for a recent well-conducted systematic review and, if that is not available, then move down to the next level of evidence. EBP hierarchies rank study types based on the rigour (strength and precision) of their research methods.

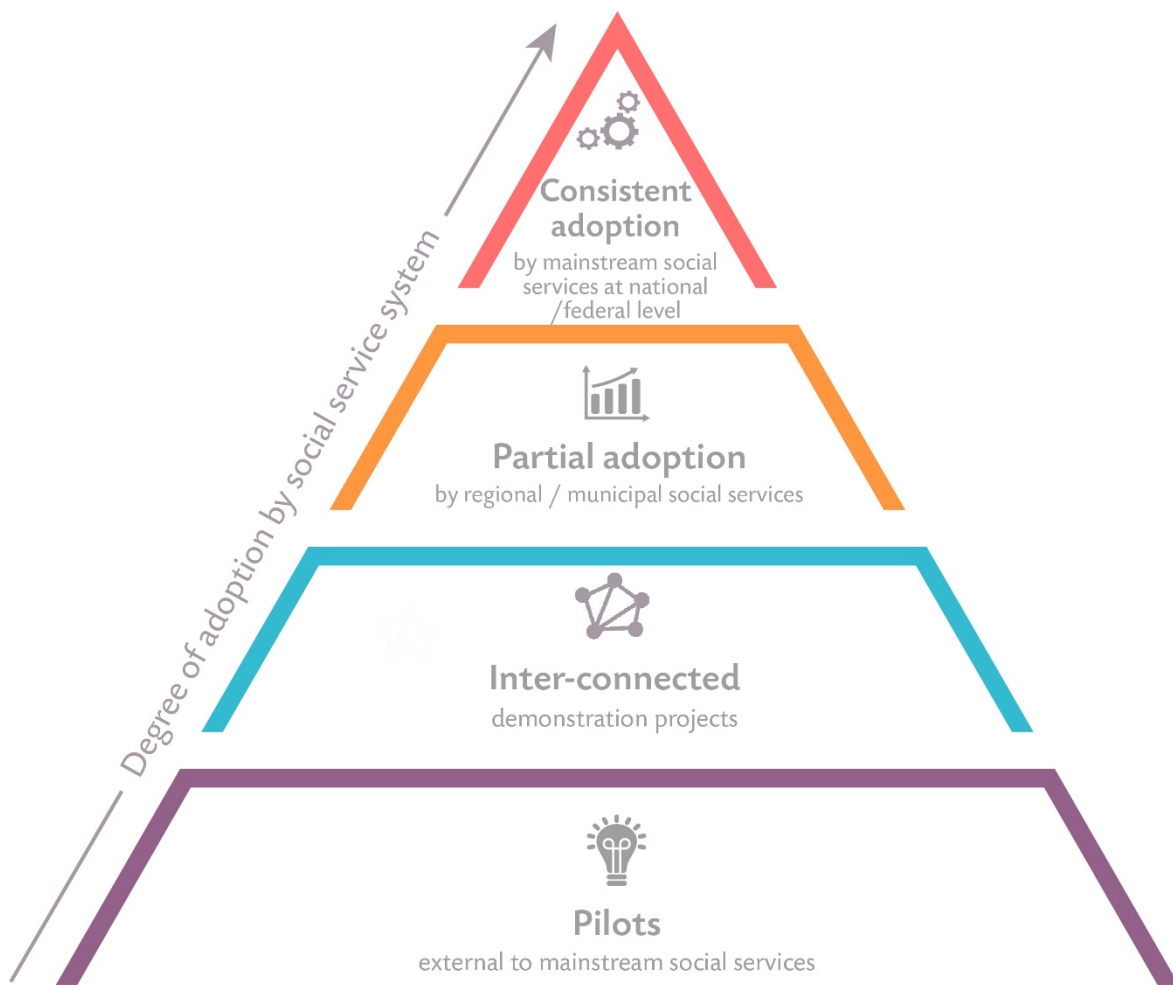


Rating scheme for evidence based practice

Level of evidence (LOE)	Description
Level I	Evidence from a systematic review or meta-analysis of all relevant RCTs or evidence-based clinical practice guidelines based on systematic reviews of RCTs or three or more RCTs of good quality that have similar results.
Level II	Evidence obtained from at least one well-designed RCT (e.g. large multi-site RCT).
Level III	Evidence obtained from well-designed controlled trials without randomisation (i.e. quasi-experimental).
Level IV	Evidence from well-designed case control and cohort studies.
Level V	Evidence from systematic reviews of descriptive and qualitative studies (meta-synthesis).
Level VI	Evidence from a single descriptive or qualitative study.
Level VII	Evidence from the opinion of authorities and/or reports of expert committees.

The image above represents a hierarchy adapted from work of *Ackley, B. J., Swan, B. A., Ladwig, G., & Tucker, S. (2008) and St. Louis, MO: Mosby Elsevier.*

Appendix 2: Social Service Adoption



© Genio, 2019

Rating scheme for adoption of social innovations

Level of Adoption	Description
1	Consistent Adoption by mainstream social services at national/federal level
2	Partial adoption by regional/municipal social services
3	Inter-connected demonstration projects
4	Pilots external to mainstream social services
	None of the above