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**Mid-term evaluation of the impact of the Motivation Programme and support measures regarding changes in the existing situation of the target group at risk of social exclusion and discrimination**

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**Summary**

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According to the Technical specifications, **the object of this evaluation** is the programme “Provision of motivation and support services to groups of persons at risk of social exclusion and discrimination” (hereinafter - Motivation Programme).The Programme is being implemented under the 9.1.4. specific support objective "To increase the integration of persons at risk of discrimination into society and the labour market" of Operational Program "Growth and Employment" within the framework of the project No. 9.1.4.4. "Promotion of Diversity" (hereinafter - the project) implemented via measure "Promotion of Diversity (Prevention of discrimination)". Project implementation is in accordance with the specific support objective No. 9.1.4. "To increase the integration of persons at risk of discrimination into society and the labour market" 9.1.4.4. implementing Measures for Promotion of Diversity (Prevention of discrimination), Regulations No. 102. Operational Program "Growth and Employment" of Cabinet of Ministers published in Riga, 9th of February 2016. The project is implemented by the Society Integration Foundation (hereinafter - SIF) in cooperation with the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs and the Provision State Agency. The project implementation is supervised by the Monitoring Committee established by the Ministry of Welfare (hereinafter - the MoW).[[1]](#footnote-1)

**The objective of the evaluation** is to evaluate the impact of the Motivation Programme and support measures regarding changes in the existing situation of the target group at risk of social exclusion and discrimination, as well as to evaluate implementation of the Motivation Programme and support measures, and to provide recommendations for their improvement. The evaluation contract was concluded between SIF and SAFEGE Baltija on 7th of June 2019.

**The methodological framework** of the evaluation consists of a theory-based model of impact assessment, which is based on the realistic evaluation approach developed by R.Pawson and N.Tilley.[[2]](#footnote-2) Theory of change developed within the model is a systematic description of the advised social change that serves as a basis for strategic planning, decision-making and evaluation planning.[[3]](#footnote-3) Choice of the evaluation methodology and design is related to its basic task of capturing an exact variable during the changes in the existing situation, which would reveal whether or not and to what extent the Programme activities have affected it, and the extent to which relevant variables have been affected by wider factors. The specificity of the methodology is largely defined by the Programme under evaluation, as it is the starting point of the evaluation. Programme success is determined by the degree to which implemented measures affect the target variables with sufficient strength. The main "mission" of the evaluation is to verify that the result of the programme is indeed the result of actions taken to solve the problem.[[4]](#footnote-4) The methodological approach chosen allows not only to determine the degree of achievement but also to understand the mechanisms and context of actions taken i.e. factors in which these mechanisms have or have not worked.

**The evaluation** included interviews with representatives of all stakeholders, including 39 service providers (regional coordinators, social change agents, NGO leaders, career counsellors, psychologists and lawyers); 22 representatives of the target group, responsible officials of the institutions involved in the management and supervision of the Motivation Programme (SIF, CFCA, MoW). The analysis additionally utilizes the experience and views of the 12 target group members regarding participation in the Motivation Programme and changes in the existing situation after its completion. It was obtained via publicly available information and written information received from the service providers. Two focus group discussions with the stakeholders were organized to validate the intervention logic and evaluation findings.

Within the framework of the Motivation Program, five contracts with the service providers were concluded in 2018 for the total amount of EUR 669 760 to provide motivation and support services to 931 disadvantaged people (Stages 1 and 2 of the Motivation Programme) in eight regions. The target groups of the programme are persons at risk of social exclusion and discrimination, including:

* persons at risk of discrimination on grounds of sex, including persons on parental leave, victims of violence, persons caring for another family member, members of the family of one parent;
* persons at risk of age discrimination (persons over 50 (50+))
* persons at risk of discrimination on grounds of disability, including the unemployed with disabilities, persons with disabilities and low level of education;
* persons at risk of ethnic discrimination, including Romani ethnicity and other ethnic minorities.

The Motivation Program is to be implemented in line with the results and specific criteria defined in the Report “Profiling of potential target groups for motivation and support services and the needs assessment study” (2017). Based on the information obtained during the study, the Motivation Programme was developed comprising 56 contact hours per person, including:

* no less than 20 individual consultations with social change agent (20h);
* 10 support / self-help group sessions with psychologist, career counsellor, lawyer or other specialist (one group session lasts two astronomical hours or 120 minutes) (20h);
* 10 individual consultations with psychologist (10h);
* 3 consultations with lawyer (3h);
* 3 consultations with career counsellor (3h).

At the time of the mid-term evaluation, 931 target group participants had been involved in the Motivation Programme, representing approximately 30% of the initially planned participants that need to reached by the end of the project. The result indicators to be achieved for the ESF investments are set out in Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund, which repeals Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 in Annex 1.[[5]](#footnote-5) The total defined immediate result indicators for the Motivation programme are:

* inactive participants who have started their job search after leaving[[6]](#footnote-6)
* participants in education / training after leaving
* participants in the qualification process after leaving
* participants in employment, including the self-employed, after leaving.[[7]](#footnote-7)

According to the data provided by the SIF, the result indicator has been achieved for 355 persons (19.72% of the initial target). The result indicator varies from region to region, with a very high range - from 5.83% in Northern Kurzeme to 77.5% in Southern Kurzeme. Differences in the indicators are also observed in between target groups. Those who are at risk of discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity have the highest score. The study found that regional differences in result indicators are influenced by several factors - the organisational culture of the service provider, motivation of the target group, work organization (team of professionals involved and form of cooperation) and what happens in the region as a whole (socio-economic situation in regions) affects result indicators of the Motivation Programme. In order to improve the performance of the result indicator, SIF proposed changes both in terms of cost per person of the Motivation Programme as well as placed emphasis on the importance of quality indicators for service providers. Representatives of the SIF believe that the service provider must think strategically about achieving the result indicators of the Motivation Programme, but at the same time, , the situation of their customer must not be worsened while achieving the result indicator.

The results of the evaluation show that most participants in the programme are unemployed with a very complex social portrait, with difficulties integrating into the labour market to earn a living for their basic needs. In addition to their social exclusion dimensions, these factors are often linked to other individual behavioural, financial, housing, etc problems, as well as lack of social skills and low employability. People who have been unemployed for a longer period have less confidence in their fellow human beings and in society as a whole and suffer from reduced self-esteem. It should also be noted that the link between unemployment and social exclusion is ambiguous. Having work does not guarantee an absence of social exclusion, i.e. the work must be stable, sustainable and well paid.

These findings emphasize the depth and complexity of the dimensions of social exclusion. This leads to conclusion that the result or the quality indicator of the Motivation Programme cannot be universal for all participants, since social situation, level of social functioning and distance from society and job opportunities will differ per individual. In most cases, the target group members (with exceptions) are not ready for immediate use of the support and services available due to the characteristics of the target group mentioned earlier. Individual work is required to stabilize and activate the client and to restore its employability. According to these considerations, the individual outcome for each individual programme participant over a six-month period will be different. If one individual of the target group may have an employment contract, the other individual may achieve the goal of ceasing the downturn of its social situation and maintaining existing social functioning level. Often, the result of a Motivation Programme is determined as positive when significant behavioural changes are visible. But these cases often do not fit the result indicators. From the point of view of both the Programme participant and the service provider, such situations, when the result of change is real but not formally attested, may discredit the Motivation Program itself on ethical level.

At the same time, it should be noted that integration into the labour market is not possible without the supply of suitable jobs. The data obtained during the evaluation show that in some Latgale municipalities the motivation programme looses its meaning because of the regional economic stagnation. It can be presumed that adaptation of labour demand to the specificities of certain groups of population could play an important role in reducing both social exclusion and labour shortages, if the Motivation Programme was implemented in synergy with other measures for reducing social exclusion and promoting employment. Information obtained in the “Profiling of potential target groups for motivation and support services and the needs assessment study”[[8]](#footnote-8) has already identified the risk that the support provided may not always guarantee the expected result, as disadvantaged people in Latvia in certain cases face very unfavourable socio-economic background and significant restrictions. The evaluation has provided information supporting this assumption.

1. The monitoring committee comprises representatives of the Recipient, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Welfare, the Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, representatives of the Committee for the Implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation between non-governmental organizations and the Cabinet of Ministers and representatives of other associations and foundations. Representatives of the Responsible Authority and the Recipient participate in the work of the Committee, but representatives of the Managing Authority may participate as observers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Pawson R. and Tilley W. (1997) Realistic evaluation, Sage. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Anderson A, The community builders’ approach to theory of change. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Laķe A. (2011) Novērtējuma pētījuma izmantošana Latvijas politikas veidošanas vidē: mērķa racionalitātes un komunikatīvās racionalitātes izpausmes, prezentācija, Rīga: Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Available: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/LV/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1304&from=LV> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The data indicated by \* are personal data within the meaning of Article 7 of Directive 95/46/EC. The processing of such data is necessary for the fulfilment of a legal obligation to which the data controller is subjected to (Article 7 (c) of Directive 95/46/EC). The definition of data controller is laid down in Article 2 of Directive 95/46/EC. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The data indicated by \*\* are special categories of data in accordance with Article 8 of Directive 95/46/EC. Subjected to the provision of appropriate guarantees, Member States may provide for exceptions to the requirements of Article 8 (2) of Directive 95/46 / EC, based on an overriding reason relating to the public interest, either by national law or by decision of the supervisory authority (Article 8 (4) of Directive 95/46/EC). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. “Profiling of potential target groups for motivation and support services and the needs assessment study” (Summary) (2017), available: [http://www.sif.gov.lv/images/files/nodevumi/ESF\_Da%C5%BE%C4%81d%C4%ABbas/Motivacijas\_paaugstina sana/Gala\_zinojums.pdf](http://www.sif.gov.lv/images/files/nodevumi/ESF_Da%C5%BE%C4%81d%C4%ABbas/Motivacijas_paaugstina%20sana/Gala_zinojums.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)