European Social Fund Plus 2021-2027
DENMARK

A Strong Denmark Through Education and Competencies

Abridged version focusing on areas of effort and activities

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Introduction

The purpose of this abridged version of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) *A Strong Denmark Through Education and Competencies* programme is to provide a shorter and more easily read version of the programme. The focus is thus mainly on the programme's efforts and activities. The target group for this version is primarily the Danish Board of Business Development, caseworkers and potential applicants who want an overview of the effort areas and activities in the programme. However, we expect that applicants read the full programme text before applying for co-financing from ESF+.

The overall objective of the ESF+ effort in 2021-2027 is to strengthen growth and development across the country by contributing to *achieving a high level of employment, fair social protection and a skilled and resilient workforce fit for the labour market of the future*.[1] In a Danish context, this will be done through the following strategic efforts aimed at:

- Increase the number of persons with a vocational education and training, and a higher education, thereby lifting the competencies of the workforce.
- Promote entrepreneurship.
- Expand the workforce by moving citizens marginally attached to the labour market closer to employment.
- Ensure the social integration of citizens at risk of homelessness and thus prevent the growth of homeless persons, especially among the young population.
- Enhance the skills of the workforce through targeted and flexible further education, as well as by attracting and retaining highly qualified labour domestically and internationally.

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[1] ESF+ Regulation

Main Target Groups

Efforts and activities in the programme are not targeted at specific sectors or specific target groups. Everyone has, in principle, equal access to apply for the funds.

No applicant will be prevented from applying for and obtaining funding according to the effort on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation. The Danish Board of Business Development may, if it should prove particularly relevant, invite applications aimed at special target groups, including, for example, women, young persons, persons with disabilities, persons with ethnic backgrounds other than Danish, socially vulnerable persons, etc.

Enterprises from the primary sector may participate in projects if the project involves cooperation between these enterprises and enterprises from other sectors. The primary sector cannot be the focus of the effort, and enterprises from the primary sector cannot be the sole target group for the efforts.

Ensuring Equality, Inclusion, and Non-discrimination

Project applications are examined by the managing authority based on a checklist, which, among other things, checks whether the project's activities comply with the principle of equal treatment. The Danish legislation that puts the programmes into effect, lays down the conditions for receiving support. Applications are submitted to the relevant authorities, which serve as the entry point to the Funds.

The websites of the Danish Business Authority and the Danish Board of Business Development comply with the rules on accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Non-discrimination and accessibility for persons with disabilities is a general principle of Danish society, and there are Danish legal rules on discrimination and accessibility that projects must comply with. Danish law prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex for any employer, authority, and organisation within public administration and general enterprise.

Public authorities must also comply with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which mentions, for example, accessibility not only to buildings but to products and services in a broad sense. No applicant will be prevented on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation from applying for and obtaining support under ESF+.

The Programme supports the European Pillar of Social Rights and the objective of ensuring equal opportunities and the right to education, training, and lifelong learning, to empower citizens to participate in society and cope with transitions in the labour market.

Interregional, Cross-border, and Transnational Actions

International cooperation shall take place in accordance with Denmark's strategy for decentralised business promotion and/or the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), which aims to respond to common challenges for the countries of the Baltic Sea Region. To be eligible, projects must be within the framework of the priorities and comply with the requirements and guiding principles of the programme.

Cooperation with actors in one or more countries may be part of projects to strengthen the achievement of the objectives of the projects. The macro-regional strategies of the EUSBSR can be used as a method to provide a framework for cross-actor cooperation on complex societal challenges requiring long-term cooperation. At the time of application, projects will be able to describe the partnership in both their own country and the countries with which they cooperate.

Cooperation with actors in one or more countries can also be added to already existing projects as needed. Projects which have already received funding from ESF+ will be able to apply for additional funding for a transnational superstructure, as this will typically entail higher costs for cooperation activities. There will also be the possibility of extending the duration of projects.

An extension with a transnational element would be relevant, for example, if it proves relevant, at the local or national level, to cooperate with similar projects in other Baltic Sea countries during the project.

Cooperation may be particularly in the field of education. The aim of cooperation may be to create coherent business, labour, and training areas in border regions. This could, for example, be through cooperation on labour mobility across the Fehmarn Belt. Cooperation may also focus on promoting cross-border cooperation, for example between South Jutland and North German educational institutions, including vocational schools and higher education institutions, for example in Flensburg, Kiel and Hamburg.

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Priority 1:
Qualified Labour for Enterprises

Efforts under priority 1 are selected and recommended by the Danish Board of Business Development.

Priority 1 (excluding social inclusion) focuses on up-skilling, education, and competence development to ensure that enterprises have access to qualified labour and that individuals have in-demand competencies and are well-qualified. These efforts will aim both at raising the level of formal education in the workforce and at improving employees' informal competencies and skills. The efforts may be aimed at solving specific challenges in the individual company, but they may also be broader efforts focusing on more general competencies.

1.1 Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education

Enterprises' access to competent and well-qualified labour is a key prerequisite for development and growth. Increased levels of competence and education contribute to raising the productivity and competitiveness of enterprises, just as higher levels of education are typically associated with higher income and increased job security for the individual employee, which supports in particular the objective of education and lifelong learning in the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Globalisation, internationalisation, and technological development, including the development of new green technologies and solutions, create new conditions for enterprises and require new competencies among employees as well as changes in the organisation of work. The competitive situation of enterprises will increasingly be determined by how they handle the green transition. Skills, knowledge, and competencies are essential to meet the demands of people in the workforce on the labour market. In the short term, enterprises must therefore have access to labour that can contribute to the company's growth. In the long term, both the individual industry and the enterprise must have access to competencies that can support

more long-term development of the enterprises, e.g., to realise green business approaches and strategies.

Enterprises across the country are experiencing challenges in recruiting the required labour, and it is estimated that by 2030 Denmark will lack approximately 99,000 people with a VET, 24,000 people with a short higher education and 13,000 with a medium-length higher education. At the same time, according to a report from the Danish Labour Movement's Business Council from April 2021, there will be a surplus of 59,000 unskilled workers, 51,000 with a college degree and a total of 25,000 with a university bachelor's degree or higher education.

Among other things, enterprises are experiencing a shortage of employees with digital and technical competencies as advanced green technologies and digital solutions become more widespread. One side of the challenge is that enterprises' demand for people with digital and technical skills is growing and that the number of searches for so-called STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) programmes is not at a sufficient level to meet the needs of enterprises. The other side of the challenge is that some groups of workers will find that their jobs disappear with the increased digitalisation and green transition and that their competencies are not in demand. The efforts will support the EU's objective of a population with good digital skills and the digital transformation of enterprises.

Building on the above challenges and the European Commission's country-specific recommendations in the "Investment Guide on Cohesion Policy Financing 2021-2027 for Denmark" to "*promote VET as access to a quality career path and ensure its attractiveness to learners*" and "*building the capacity of VET providers to respond to employers' needs by promoting innovation and entrepreneurship*", efforts under this specific objective shall contribute to increasing the number of people with a VET and higher education.

This could be through initiatives to encourage more people to start and/or complete a VET or higher education.

It is possible to implement efforts, e.g., in cross-professional collaborations between actors that can help overcome the three identified barriers: choice of and admission to VET, training at a relevant enterprise, and retention in the educational process. The area of effort can, among other things, support activities that motivate young people to begin and stay enrolled in VET programmes. For example, the focus may be on ensuring that the content of a VET is relevant and of the right quality, that students have access to well-functioning training courses for more people to seek and complete a VET, and that the programmes meet enterprises' needs for qualified labour, e.g., in the STEM area.

There is a need for upskilling efforts targeted at small and medium-sized enterprises, e.g., in specific geographical areas or industries, or for specific local or regional needs. These efforts support the upskilling of unskilled workers within their industry sector or their transition to a new field through VET or other programmes, resulting in a skilled-level vocational qualification.

The area of effort addresses the barriers that prevent adults already in the labour market from completing a VET that provides vocational competencies at the VET level or higher. Based on the needs of enterprises, including shortages within specific industries, for example in the service or construction industry, efforts for the unemployed can be carried out in continuation of employment efforts, among other things, focusing on competence clarification and matching between enterprise and unemployed.

Within special professions or industries, there may be people with outdated education, or employees who cannot perform their original field of work for various reasons, e.g., job assignments due to automation or physical degeneration. They may need retraining for other skilled education or higher education so that they can continue to be a qualified workforce with relevant training when enterprises need new competencies for new types of job tasks.

It is possible to implement efforts, e.g., across the actors in the business promotion, education, and employment system that support enterprises' strategic work with competence development, for example with a focus on green and digital transition, and which motivate enterprises to demand and invest more in the long-term competence development courses such as VET and higher education for all target groups. The effort may also include matchmaking courses between enterprises and apprentices, as well as guidance and support for both parties during the training process, for example through mentoring.

Cross-sectoral collaborations, e.g., through pilot projects, where coordination with relevant authorities and actors and coherence between the actors' other efforts within the area are ensured, can support increased enrolment and completion of a VET and higher education targeted at the needs of enterprises. Pilot projects to improve the quality, inclusiveness, efficiency and labour market relevance of education and training systems may focus, i.a., on accessibility and flexibility of education, relevant training offers targeted at local labour demand, attractive study environments, sectoral and geographical mobility, including social inclusion, flexible apprenticeship schemes and new models for improved school training. During implementation, the effort should make a measurable contribution to increasing the number of people enrolled in a VET programme and higher education.

1.2 Improving Competencies and Lifelong Learning

The enterprises' demand for qualified labour must be met both by raising the formal level of education of the workforce and through targeted upskilling and retraining of unemployed and employed persons arising from the enterprises' specific needs. Building on the above challenges and the country-specific recommendations to "*upgrade the basic qualifications of the adult population, including migrants, and create new opportunities for the low-skilled*" and "*develop and implement lifelong learning strategies in cooperation with social partners, civil society and other stakeholders*", efforts under this specific objective shall contribute to raising the competences of the workforce.

The effort is to raise the competencies of the workforce through targeted and flexible continuing training so that the qualifications of the workforce are adapted to the needs of the labour market and enterprises to a greater extent than previously.

Digital skills are in demand within all industries. SMEs, in particular, demand digital competencies both among employees and in management to effectively use new technologies, services, and the development of new data-driven business models, e.g., through efficiency improvements and major strategic transformation processes. Building digital competencies and technological understanding as well as a culture of digital transformation and responsibility, can be organised based on geographical and industry differences, as well as the digital maturity of enterprises.

As a result of investments in the green transition and the realisation of the climate target in 2030, efforts are needed to ensure that employees in the sectors that will contribute to implementing the green transition also have the right competencies to run the development. Access to highly qualified labour from Denmark and abroad is also a key part of enterprises' ability to increase internationalisation. Therefore, it will be relevant to focus on initiatives that can remove enterprises' barriers to export and international cooperation and give enterprises competencies to become export-ready and be able to enter international collaborations and networks, e.g., within sustainability and climate. Efforts can be adapted to the different needs of enterprises, e.g., within specific geographical areas or industries, or to certain local or regional needs as well as certain types of enterprises.

The effort focuses on competence development and competence acquisition in enterprises as an essential element of the enterprises' development, e.g., through systematic upskilling and retraining of employees for new job functions and technologies. This may be done through advising management on strategic competence development as part of implementing the green transition, where competence needs are linked to concrete initiatives on the green agenda, or through the employment of highly qualified employees, including getting more SMEs to hire academics, e.g., with a scientific, technical, or social science education. The educational activities themselves can be carried out, for example, as learning directly in the work processes, for more traditional courses with or without e-learning, targeted and adapted specifically to the needs of the individual enterprise.

In case of challenges with the recruitment of highly qualified and specialised labour, e.g., for green and digital transition, enterprises may need guidance to reorganise and identify tasks that could be advantageously solved by other competencies. Upskilling can help manage labour market transitions and increase job mobility of, among others, older employees and strengthen their foothold in the labour market. For example, efforts that support enterprises in reorganising work processes and tasks can be implemented, so that enterprises can replace skilled workers with

unskilled labour, thus freeing skilled labour for more competence-intensive tasks.

The enterprises' shortage of qualified labour can also be met by employing foreign well-qualified labour who possess the required competencies in specific industries and areas where the need cannot be met by the Danish labour market. The effort can supplement the initiatives that take place locally and nationally, e.g., through industry organisations, cluster organisations, universities and municipalities working with internationalisation and talent attraction. Among other things, the effort can focus on attracting, receiving, and retaining foreign, well-qualified labour or foreign students – as enterprises demand, including mature enterprises – to hire foreign labour and strengthen enterprises' competencies to integrate foreign labour. In continuation of the municipal employment efforts, initiatives for students and the unemployed can be implemented based on the needs of enterprises, e.g., in case of shortage situations in specific industries and areas, with a focus on competence clarification and matching between the unemployed and the enterprises.

The area of effort can support pilot projects through strategic collaborations between local enterprises and local educational institutions on a systematic and co-ordinated approach to upskilling and continuing education targeted at the needs of enterprises. The focus may be on educating flexible workers who can adapt to changing tasks, for example in sectors where technological development will change tasks significantly. Pilot projects may also take place in cross-sectoral cooperation between industry associations, business promotion actors and educational institutions to promote occupational and sectoral mobility, strengthening labour market relevance and flexibility in training, e.g., developing educational opportunities targeted at specific geographical areas or sectors, including specific local or regional needs.

In many countries, the health and care sector is facing a new era, as there are relatively more elderly persons and more persons living with chronic diseases. At the same time, there is a requirement that welfare services continue to be carried out efficiently and with high quality for the individual citizen. This creates a unique opportunity for Danish manufacturers of welfare technology to take the lead and exploit successful implementations of new welfare technology products in the Danish health and care sector as an international "showcase" for welfare technology solutions that can subsequently be exported.

In this context, a minimum of DKK 20 million will be spent on the competence development of employees in enterprises and entrepreneurial enterprises producing welfare technology solutions to gain knowledge of the public sector's framework conditions and workflows, to enter into public-private collaborations, and partly of employees in the health and care sector, thereby improving the implementation of new welfare technology solutions. The competency development projects must support the implementation of solutions for enterprises as appropriately as possible. Therefore, it is important to ensure the necessary competencies in both enterprises and the parts of the health and care sector that will adopt the new solutions.

The target group of the welfare technology effort is employees in SMEs and entrepreneurial enterprises within welfare technology, which is one of Denmark's areas for intelligent specialisation, described in Denmark's strategy for intelligent specialisation, cf. the Act on Business Promotion. In accordance with the strategy, welfare technology is broadly defined as technological solutions that create welfare and freedom.

In addition, employees and management in public authorities, including municipalities, with a managerially anchored focus on welfare technology, where welfare technology is a priority in operations, are a priority target group, and applications with a clear element of public-private collaboration will be prioritised.

1.3 Social Inclusion and Strengthened Labour Market Participation

At the same time as enterprises across the country are experiencing challenges in recruiting the desired labour, a larger group of citizens with potential for employment is marginally attached to the labour market. Efforts under ESF+ can supplement the initiatives taken in response to the national reforms in the area, including, for example, efforts concerning unemployment benefits, early retirement benefits, integration and flexible jobs.

Especially in the group of young persons with certain challenges – who do not have a youth education or an outdated and/or non-useful youth education – persons with disabilities and the group of men with a non-Western background, who today have a lower
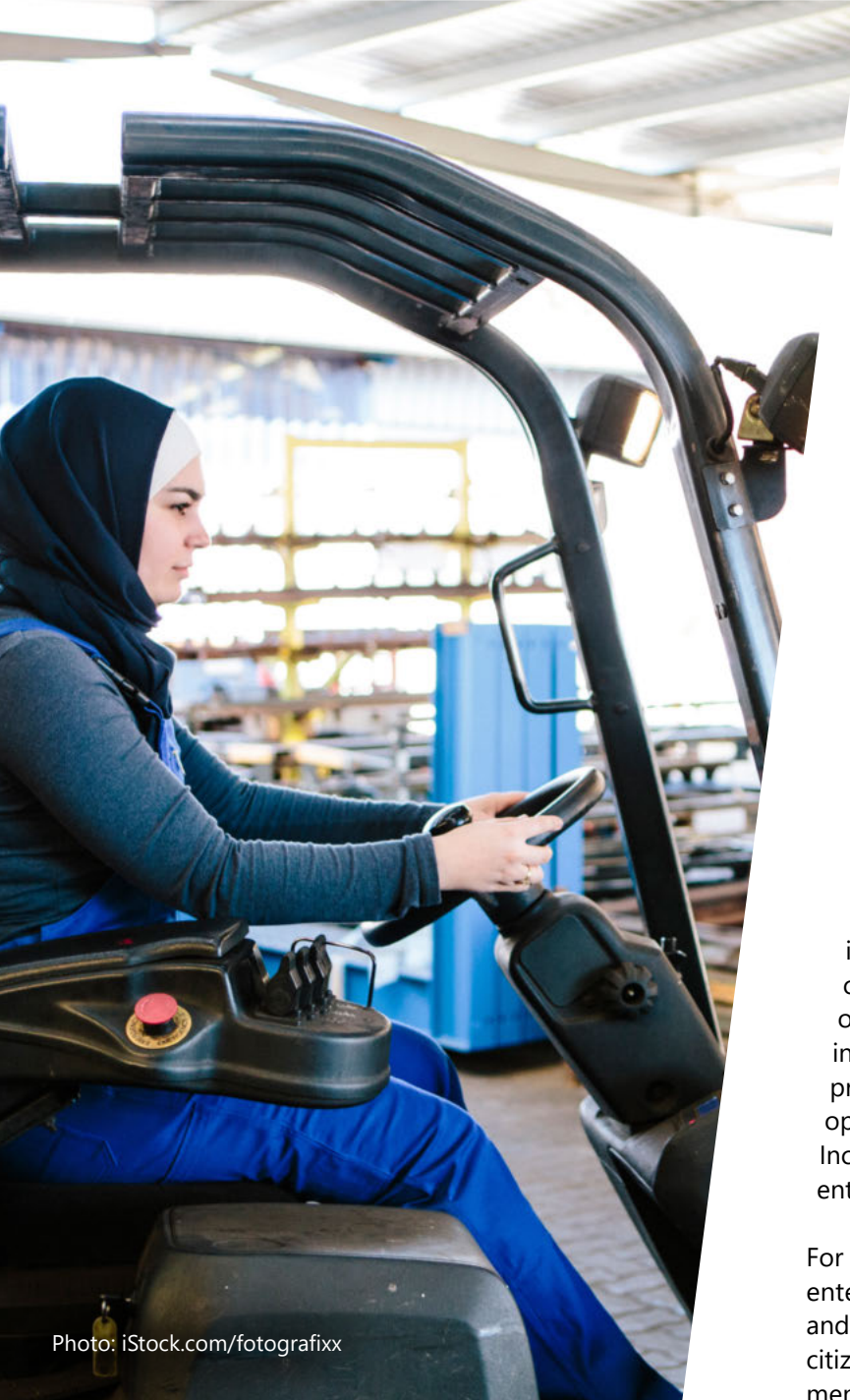
citizens marginally attached to the labour market can both contribute to the citizen's self-sufficiency and belonging to the labour market and contribute to enterprises' access to valuable labour and make the workplace more inclusive by helping vulnerable citizens on their way.

Building on the above challenges and the country-specific recommendations on "*improving the basic qualifications of all learners and in particular those from vulnerable groups*" and "*upgrading the basic qualifications of the adult population, including migrants, and creating new opportunities for the low-skilled*", efforts shall aim to increase the employment of persons at the margins of the labour market.

The efforts must be based on the needs and potentials of the individual citizen and support enterprises, including social enterprises, and educational institutions' opportunities, competencies, and incentives to include and retain citizens who would otherwise not be in employment or education. The induction must be based on the needs of the enterprise, the potential of the individual citizen and the opportunities to obtain training and employment. Increased social inclusion must take place through enterprises, including social enterprises.

For example, initiatives can be launched for mature enterprises to welcome socially vulnerable citizens and create the correct match between enterprise and citizen. This can be done through programmes and mentoring schemes that can disseminate knowledge to business executives and employees, about taking socially vulnerable persons into the company. Similarly, it may be relevant to implement efforts aimed at preparing vulnerable citizens to participate in induction processes in enterprises.

It may be relevant to associate activities that can maintain the relationship between citizen and enterprise after completion of an induction process, to obtain/retain employment, including flexible jobs, reduced hours and jobs with wage subsidies (formerly sheltered jobs). When the needs of both enterprises and citizens are considered in terms of social inclusion, the best match is achieved. In this way, the best social inclusion is achieved, as the match has proven to have a good permanent impact on the citizens and the enterprise's future cooperation.

attachment to the education system and the labour market than the national average, there is considered to be an untapped potential. This also applies to citizens who have either been part of the labour market and/or, for various reasons, have never really gained a foothold through a regular job, and who now find themselves in the group of vulnerable persons marginally attached to the labour market.

It is of great personal value to vulnerable citizens who are not on the labour market to gain a connection to the labour market, as even a few hours of employment can mean an increased quality of life and social belonging. It is assessed that a higher degree of inclusion of

Priority 2:
Regional Effort – Competencies for the Future and Education for all

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Efforts under priority 2 are selected and recommended by the regional councils.

Education is the key to equipping young people for the challenges of the future and contributing to sustainable development, allowing the regions to develop in a green, innovative manner, and to provide opportunities for all. Education is therefore a central theme in the regional development strategies adopted by the regional councils. The European Commission's 2020 country report highlights the need to boost investment in the green and digital transitions. In 2019, the report focused on the use and quality of VET programmes.

2.1.1 Sustainability and Green Competencies

Knowledge and competencies are crucial for succeeding in the green transition and sustainable development. According to UN Sustainable Development Goal 4.7, by 2030, all students must have acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development, for example through education on sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles.

Initiatives must be launched that equip young people with the competencies to act sustainably. Sustainability must be extended to more subjects and educational institutions, while new fields of study, information materials, etc. can be developed. Application-oriented teaching programmes can be developed and disseminated with cases in areas such as health, lifestyle/consumption, food, energy, transport, buildings, drinking water, raw materials, climate and environment, etc. as well as other initiatives that give young people knowledge and the opportunity to explore tomorrow's technological, digital, and green solutions.

In addition, there will be a need for upskilling and further training of teachers, active involvement of knowledge institutions, public and private partners, etc.

2.1.2 STEM

In all regions, there is a shortage of employees with STEM competencies (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). The government's goal over the next 10 years is to increase the number of people completing a VET or higher education in the STEM area by 20 per cent.

Initiatives are therefore needed to help guide more young people towards education in the digital, scientific, and technological fields. For example, special educational programmes, technology understanding, and a more application-oriented approach to teaching can be developed, along with improved guidance, the use of internships, and other forms of collaboration, to encourage children and young people's interest in STEM subjects. There may also be areas in the country where there is a particular need to work for access to good STEM education opportunities.

In 2020, women comprised 33 per cent of those admitted to STEM education. Here, too, further efforts are needed.

As part of the STEM efforts, innovative, creative, and language competencies can also be beneficially included, as the technologies must be considered in conjunction with the needs and ethics of society and people.

2.1.3 More Skilled Workers

Persons with a VET are an important group when it comes to a shortage of graduates with STEM competencies. These include, for example, skilled workers with knowledge of technology, mechanics, electronics, advanced tools, industrial machines, etc. But shortages of skilled labour are also expected in other areas necessitating a comprehensive effort. This also applies to important welfare areas such as health, cf. the recommendation from the Council of the European Union of 20 July 2020 that Denmark should continuously work to increase the resilience of the health system and strive to alleviate labour shortages in this area.

In 2021, just under 20 per cent of 9th/10th graduate students applied for a VET, despite a national target of 25 per cent in 2020 and 30 per cent in 2030.

Based on the above and the country-specific recommendation to "*promote VET as access to a high-quality career path and ensure its attractiveness to trainees*", initiatives must support that the content of the training is relevant and of the right quality concerning the needs of enterprises. This can be done, for example, through activities that aid in adapting the education programs available to the regional demand for labour. In addition, the effort should, among other things, also aim to improve participants' digital skills.

An effort is also needed to ensure more skilled workers. This can be done through educational guidance, improving the qualifications of teachers and counsellors for young people so they can provide accurate information about education, jobs, and career paths. It involves strengthening the transition from primary school or preparatory basic educational programmes (FGU) to VET also including efforts to keep students engaged and retained in education. There may also be a need for targeted information for students, teachers, and parents about what VET programmes can offer today and the career paths they can provide. In addition, measures can also be taken to support young people with a college degree in pursuing a vocational education.

Solving apprenticeship challenges is also crucial. In 2018, only 56 per cent of the students were in an enterprise apprenticeship within three months after completing their introductory course. The apprenticeship challenge is both about a shortage of apprenticeships and about challenges in matching the relevant apprentices to existing apprenticeships. For example, this can be remedied through initiatives that qualify the outreach work concerning enterprises and increase enterprises' knowledge of young people and their potential, as well as flexible training opportunities such as combination agreements.

It can also be done by supporting the work of the vocational schools (vocational schools are now responsible for providing apprenticeships for students who do not find an apprenticeship themselves through dialogue with enterprises), in matching available apprenticeships and apprentices/trainees as well as in putting together training courses, and, for example, establishing mentoring schemes and increasing the quality of individual guidance.

A significant part of the challenge in VET is also related to avoiding drop-out for other reasons. Here, competence development of teachers, content development of the subjects, well-being, good learning environments, and other initiatives can help retain young people. Many of the efforts described under Objective 2 may also be relevant in VET.

2.1.4 Flexible Education and Learning Methods, Development of Educational Formats, Didactics, Subjects, New Subject Combinations, etc.

New generations of young people, combined with technological and digital developments, climate challenges, and other current societal challenges, entail a need to develop the academic content of education as well as methods of education and learning.

This applies both in terms of content, where there may also be a need to work across subjects and didactic, as teachers must continuously develop and use engaging and effective teaching methods. This may, for example, result in flexible teaching courses, including different types of digital courses with a connection to gaming and VR, interaction with the surrounding society, etc.

Furthermore, there is a need for all young people to acquire an in-depth understanding of technology and the ability to critically engage with it. Far from everyone should have a deep, digital professionalism, but everyone should have digital competencies and knowledge of digital technology.

It is also important to exploit new technological opportunities such as open-source teaching offers, webinars, and interactive digital teaching methods. There is a

need to further develop the practices known so far and to recognise remote learning as a genuine alternative method of learning that can enrich traditional educational offerings and teaching formats.

With virtual solutions in teaching, there is a unique opportunity for flexibility, as technology offers opportunities to focus much more individually on the needs and motivation of individual students; something that will create an increased differentiation and is expected to contribute to reducing drop-out rates for vulnerable young people. There will be great potential in developing educational formats and courses in close interaction with young people by involving them as co-creators of the technological form of teaching of the future, while at the same time, it will be necessary to upgrade the qualifications of teachers.

2.2 Education for all: Regional Efforts to Promote Equal Access to and Completion of Education for both Young People and Adults

Education is an important starting point for a good life for citizens. Education offers every citizen the opportunity for a sustainable attachment to the labour market and a liveable income. A broad educational coverage makes a region more attractive in terms of settlement and regional development.

2.2.1 Good Education Coverage Throughout the Region

The range of educational offers is under pressure in many places. The number of young people facing the choice of an education programme is decreasing in large parts of the country, especially in sparsely populated areas, while at the same time, many young people are moving to larger cities.

But all young people must have access to good and attractive educational opportunities, no matter where in the country they live. Therefore, there is a need for efforts that promote access to a sufficient and varied educational offer for all young people. This applies to both college and vocationally-oriented youth education.

In addition to supporting a fundamentally well-covered decentralised educational offering, collaborations between and solutions across existing institutions can be augmented. For example, increased use of campus environments across institutions, mergers between smaller educational institutions or other forms of collaboration, sharing of teachers between several institutions, joint social student activities, study trips and retention initiatives.

Good educational coverage can often be seen in the context of flexible forms of teaching and attractive educational environments, cf. objectives 1.4 and 2.2. In combination, they can contribute to ensuring high-quality education in areas where there are signi-ficantly fewer young people, and where it may be difficult to maintain a broad range of education and training if no efforts are made. Therefore, there is a need to work with flexible forms of education, especially different types of digital teaching courses such as blended learning, which can help ensure offers to those who live far from the nearest educational institution, and potentially attract a larger volume of students to the individual educational institution. Flexible learning pathways may also include alternative educational establishments, e.g., decentralised learning centres, pop-up training, etc.

2.2.2 Attractive Educational Environments, Retention, Well-being, and Health

Today's young people do not choose youth education solely based on academic direction. The institution's environment and popularity with other young people are also very much a factor in their choices. Therefore, there is a need to work with good educational environments, social activities and gatherings, study trips, and more.

Attractive educational environments can help attract more young people to take an education and help support the young person during their education. For example, a strong sense of community in an education program can be an important tool for retaining more young people. It may also be relevant to consider stays at a residential school and activities around the programme, such as leisure activities like sports.

For example, experiments with joint events across institutions (mostly in smaller educational cities), shared cafeterias/dining, work on sustainability in the study environment, etc., can be carried out. It is equally important that attractive educational environments are also created when teaching takes place digitally.

At the same time, the environment at an institution is crucial for whether both young and adult students

thrive academically, personally, and socially. Well-being is crucial, otherwise, learning abilities are impaired. Approximately one in four young people drops out of an education, due to poor well-being. When young people do not thrive in their education – and perhaps more broadly in their youth – it is often due to several things, including performance pressure, loneliness, crisis in the family, etc. This discontent must be detected and acted upon so that discontent does not lead to drop out.

Students who do not thrive socially may find it difficult to develop academically, just as it can negatively affect their social well-being if they do not thrive in teaching and the academic communities. Therefore, it is recommended in several analyses to work with student's holistic well-being, addressing various factors that promote both academic and social well-being among students.

Examples of methods that make it possible to lift the group of vulnerable young people include working to stimulate academic and social communities, implementing new teaching and working methods that enhance students' well-being, developing new methods to quickly identify dissatisfaction among young students, and initiatives that increase retention. Furthermore, activities can be initiated to reduce stress levels and pressure on students, for example in the form of networking and counselling activities.

In the wake of the global pandemic, it may also be relevant to investigate how the COVID-19 crisis has affected young people concerning drop-outs, well-being, etc., and initiate follow-up activities that address this.

2.2.3 Disadvantaged Groups, Including Preparatory Basic Educational Programmes (FGU) and Lifelong Learning

All citizens have the right to a good life and can contribute something. Therefore, there must also be a focus on solving the challenge of the many young people who are without a job or education, as well as citizens with weak literacy and numeracy skills, dyslexics, etc., who must all have the opportunity to acquire the competences that enable them to be active citizens, both in work and leisure life.

Concerning young people without jobs and education, efforts aimed at getting more people

into, well through and on from an FGU course can be launched. This could include spreading the knowledge about FGU, developing competencies in an interaction between school and training, early testing of job functions with a view to motivating education, mentors who ensure handheld transition from primary school or FGU to youth education, and development of guidance efforts so that young people progress in education or employment. The areas of effort dealing with attractive educational environments, retention, well-being, and health, cf. objective 2.2, can also be effective for this target group.

Unfortunately, a large group of adults also have no education, as far too many pupils leave primary school without having obtained the prerequisites for completing an education. A large proportion of the adult population has serious challenges with basic competencies in Danish, mathematics, IT, English, etc. This is one of the reasons why 24 per cent of 25-69-year-olds in 2020 have not completed either a vocational or a higher education. This has serious consequences for their socio-economic status, as 38 per cent of citizens without a vocational qualification were outside the labour force, compared to 20 per cent of those with vocational education as the highest level of education, and 15 per cent of those with a higher education.

Furthermore, a large group of citizens who have completed an education, need upskilling and further education during their working lives if their original education becomes obsolete. Therefore, they should have access to continuous learning. Lifelong learning efforts can be supported by an increased focus on basic skills (literacy, numeracy, IT and English), so that many more people acquire qualifications in the form of preparatory adult education (FVU), dyslexic education (OBU), etc.

Supporting a broad geographical range and developing digital educational offerings can contribute to reaching a larger portion of the population.

Photo: iStock.com/Vadim_Key

Priority 3:
Efforts for Citizens in Homelessness and in Risk of Homelessness

Photo: iStock.com/Srdjanns74

Efforts under priority 3 are selected and recommended by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Elderly at the National Board of Social Services.

ESF+ can be specifically implemented through initiatives that promote the social integration of citizens experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness through participatory activities. The initiatives must, among other things, contribute to the target group being included and participating to a greater extent in activities that can contribute to improving their living conditions. The Danish programme focuses on ending chaotic lifestyles, breaking isolation and, in the long term, alleviating homelessness, or the risk of homelessness, for those socially most disadvantaged.

Funds for the implementation of initiatives can be applied, with 90% co-financing from the ESF+. The applicant can cover the self-financing of 10 per cent by making employees available for the project.

In Denmark, municipalities are responsible for social efforts close to the citizens and for preventing social exclusion among vulnerable groups. Civil society is making important efforts to this end, for example by organising voluntary communities, which can provide an important arena for social inclusion. The public and

civil sectors complement each other, and together they can create more holistic and recovery-supporting offers for vulnerable citizens.

Although social efforts are multifaceted, a significant proportion of the most vulnerable citizens in Denmark experience that they do not receive the necessary help and support, according to a qualitative study of social exclusion and social participation conducted by VIVE – The National Research and Analysis Centre for Welfare. Applicants must therefore contribute to improving the living conditions of the target group with initiatives that supplement existing and future planned efforts in the area of homelessness.

The applicant can be both public authorities, civil society organisations, and cross-sectoral partnerships, including partnerships with foundations. Applicants are encouraged to support a strong cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration.

The results of the activities in the program should, among other things, be seen in the citizens' continuous utilisation of the available offerings, an improvement in the citizen's social situation and general health condition, increased motivation to participate in social communities, and the citizen's integration into existing offerings. Based on experience from efforts with the

most vulnerable citizens in homelessness from the latest FEAD programme, a success rate of at least 75 per cent is expected across the three possible target groups.

Success is measured by improvement in the citizens' overall life situation, for example, through continuous use of activities in the programme, increased motivation to participate in social communities and use of existing services.

3.1 Description of National and Regional Aid Schemes

The Social Services Act obliges municipalities to offer, among other things, counselling, support, and interventions to prevent social problems and to meet the needs arising from reduced physical or mental capacity or specific social issues. This involves offering temporary accommodations, as outlined in Section 110, for citizens experiencing homelessness, along with a cohesive and holistic effort aimed at enhancing the development opportunities for vulnerable individuals. At the same time, municipalities are obliged to offer a social safety net that reduces material poverty.

In connection with and in addition to the municipal obligations in the Social Services Act, Denmark has since 2009 worked with Housing First, which is a holistic approach to homelessness.

Evaluations and studies have provided solid knowledge about the efforts in the area of homelessness in Denmark. The results show, among other things, that Housing First works as intended, as citizens who receive Housing First efforts to a large extent get into housing and retain it.

However, challenges persist in addressing homelessness, particularly concerning segments of the target group that may have certain needs that are not sufficiently taken care of in the existing efforts. This applies in particular to three target groups; 1) young people in homelessness or at risk of homelessness, 2) homeless people who are discharged to the streets and 3) homeless people sleeping on the streets.

3.2 Criteria for the Selection of Operations

To be eligible for support from the ESF+, applicants' initiatives must fall within one of the three areas of effort:

1. Preventing vulnerable young people from ending up in homelessness and helping young people who are already in a situation of homelessness. In efforts aimed at the target group, it is important to be aware that this target group may have a different view of their need for interventions than the professionals, as they often do not identify themselves as vulnerable or as being in a situation of homelessness. In addition, systematic attention to the transition from placement to independent adulthood is crucial in the work on prevention, as it is associated with risks of homelessness. According to a memorandum from the National Board of Social Services on young people and homelessness, a trauma-informed approach in the effort may be beneficial, as young people in care have often been exposed to trauma.

Activities can include:

- Prepare placed and vulnerable young people aged 15-18 years for independent adult life after placement, for example through learning programmes.
- Advise and support previously placed vulnerable young people on economic, social, and legal issues.
- Strengthen the networks of vulnerable young people, including their relationships with family and like-minded and/or more resourceful young people, depending on their needs. For example, through bridge-building activities and voluntary communities.
- Strengthen young people's mental health with a focus on treating trauma.
- Detect young people at risk of homelessness across administrations, professional domains, and civil actors through targeted actions, focusing on the part of the target group that risks being lost in existing efforts and providing them with the necessary help and support.

2. Citizens experiencing homelessness who have received medical or psychiatric treatment and are discharged to the street. In this effort, it is important to be aware that discharge is coordinated properly with relevant actors so that citizens receive a relevant housing solution and social efforts immediately after admission. This requires close cooperation between actors across sectors and disciplines such as municipal departments/administrations, regional treatment services, addiction treatment, general practitioners, accommodation facilities - as outlined in Section 110 - and voluntary organisations.

Activities and offers may involve:

- Seek out and communicate with hospitalised citizens about their wishes and needs after discharge, in close cooperation with relevant partners.
- Advise and support the part of the target group that does not get the help and support they need in the current efforts, in the form of care, recovery, and support to participate in and follow outpatient and/or psychiatric treatment after discharge.

3. Homeless people sleeping on the streets. It is essential to offer intensive, specialised and flexible social, therapeutic and administrative support, adapted to the needs of individuals, to strengthen their opportunities for social participation and cover their basic support needs. This requires well-integrated collaboration between actors across sectors and disciplines such as psychiatrists, nurses, addiction therapists, housing support workers, social workers, and job consultants.

Activities may include:

- Seek out, advise, and support the part of the target group that is not taken into account in the existing efforts. For example, for harm reduction and to support the target group's communication with the municipality on legal and financial matters.
- Include the target group in activities aimed at, among other things, expanding their network, allowing them to contribute to communities through volunteering, enabling them to use existing offers, and bringing them closer to education and employment.

Primary target groups

1. **Young people aged 15-24 in homelessness and at risk of homelessness:** Young people between the ages of 18 and 29 make up a third of the citizens experiencing homelessness. They typically spend the night with family, friends, and acquaintances, which may indicate that they are trying to draw on their network to avoid the use of, for example, shelters. Young people in homelessness with mental disorders and substance abuse problems are overrepresented in the statistics. Approximately one in ten of the placed young people is affected by homelessness in their youth.

2. **Homeless people who are discharged from treatment facilities to the streets:** Discharge after acute hospitalization can be a critical transitional situation, where social support and housing solutions play a crucial role in avoiding readmission and relapse. Nevertheless, only two per cent of those enrolled in a treatment programme have a housing solution one month before they are discharged.

3. **Homeless people sleeping on the streets:** About one in nine citizens experiencing homelessness, sleep on the streets. This target group is typically middle-aged and elderly, and among the most vulnerable citizens in Denmark. They have complex psychosocial problems, which, among other things, mean that they cannot get sufficient help and support in the primary services for citizens experiencing homelessness.

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Priority 4: Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurs form the foundation of the future business world. They contribute to creating growth and jobs, just as they contribute with innovation and renewal that can challenge the established business community and thus sharpen the competitiveness of existing enterprises. It is therefore important that there is a continuous influx of new enterprises. The most important challenges regarding entrepreneurship in Denmark relate to establishment rate and growth.

An important prerequisite for an entrepreneurial environment is a strong entrepreneurial culture. In the World Economic Forum's global competitiveness report, Denmark ranks tenth overall but only ranks 34th in terms of public attitudes towards entrepreneurial risks. Strengthening entrepreneurship is closely linked to education, the supply of knowledge and competencies, as well as networking. Thus, there is a potential in promoting a stronger Danish entrepreneurial culture and the opportunity to acquire the necessary entrepreneurial skills, for more people to choose entrepreneurship as a career path and succeed in it. It starts as early as in the education system and must be cultivated at all levels.

Another challenge is that a relatively small number of women start a business (only one in four is started by a woman). Therefore, there may be a need for efforts that increase diversity among entrepreneurs, so that more people choose this career path. People of other ethnic origins and vulnerable people may need certain efforts to strengthen them in choosing a career as an entrepreneur. Building on the above challenges, and the country-specific recommendations to address employers' needs by promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, efforts under this specific objective shall contribute to increasing the start-up and survival rates of new businesses.

Efforts that strengthen entrepreneurial environments and promote a positive attitude towards entrepreneurial risks can, among other things, take place at educational institutions, e.g., through strategic initiatives for entrepreneurial environments at universities, where research, innovation, and entrepreneurship are more closely linked. The role of educational institutions in building entrepreneurship can be strengthened by qualifying and anchoring entrepreneurship education through competence development of teachers in upper secondary and higher education, as well as testing and implementation of improved teaching. Cross-disciplinary and inter-faculty teaching programmes, along with innovative, practice-oriented courses in collaboration with enterprises – such as innovation camps in student incubators – can help strengthen students' entrepreneurial skills, for example, within sustainable business opportunities.

Students' entrepreneurial competencies can be strengthened through collaborations between vocational education and enterprises, e.g., on entrepreneurial STEM courses, as well as training in their own businesses, where well-established entrepreneurs can be role models and contribute with experience and inspiration. For students setting up a business while in education, business promotion actors can contribute to a smoother transition from education to entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurial activities can take place in incubator environments that can collect knowledge about green business potentials, e.g., low-carbon economy, solutions for climate adaptation, and circular economy. Student incubators, incubator environments, and other types of co-location, such as startup hubs - whether run by public, private, or public-private collaborations – are an important part of the entrepreneurial ecosystem as they can provide entrepreneurs with relevant networks and competencies. Activities such as competence development of mentors, network meetings, knowledge building, etc. can enhance the guidance and feedback quality made available to entrepreneurs and create coherence with the rest of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The target group for initiatives can encompass both the broader group of entrepreneurs, including, for example, skilled entrepreneurs, as well as specialised

growth entrepreneurs - and the group in be-tween with a certain growth potential.

It is possible to implement efforts that focus on women in entrepreneurship, for example through female role models as well as relevant partnerships, environments, and networks. Young people outside the formal education and training system, as well as the long-term unemployed, can be motivated to see entrepreneurship as a career path, for example, through training courses for edu-cators with expertise in targeted communication, and mentoring programmes that address individual needs for professional and personal competencies in the early stages of their entrepreneurial development.

Efforts may also be aimed at promoting socio-eco-nomic, democratic, and sustainable entrepreneurship, such as competence development in business forms, including community-based forms of ownership, and business models combining economic and societal value creation.

Efforts targeted at a broad group can, for example, take place in thematic startup hubs, where there is both an entrepreneurial environment and technical know-how, e.g., for tech entrepreneurs. Within the growth seg-ment, there is a need for specialised, targeted advice for the further development of business ideas, e.g., through training camps, mentoring, and specialised advice from professional entrepreneurs in the indus-try, as well as access to a network of resources and experts, including international networks. The compe-tence needs of entrepreneurs vary, typically depending on the entrepreneur's stage of development, as well as the type of entrepreneur.

The courses may take place collectively, e.g., through joint counselling and training courses and networking, as well as individually, e.g., via a voucher for advice with private consultants, based on the individual develop-ment of entrepreneurs' barriers as well as industry-re-lated differences. Competence development, including education and courses in entrepreneurship, for exam-ple in topics such as business planning, strategy, sales, finance, legislation, and marketing, can strengthen the competencies and networks of the self-employed. Both personal and professional competencies may be needed. Professional themes may include green and sustainable business ideas, digitisation, automation, service solutions, and internationalisation, including export.

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Cooperation with public institutions and access to research can strengthen entrepreneurs' research and innovation capacity, as well as competencies to exploit the potential of the business opportunities that the green transition entails, e.g., competencies in efficient use of resources, development of sustainable solutions and new green products and services.

Cooperation and networking with established enter-prises and matchmaking with investors can strengthen entrepreneurs' development. For example, mentoring between an established enterprise and an entrepre-neur as well as facilitated dialogue and testing with investor networks, e.g., business panels. This may be through specialist advice from consultants from in-novation environments like universities, or through an effort anchored in the public business promotion system, including local business offices, municipalities, and business houses.

It may be relevant that cluster organisations, or more established enterprises within the cluster, act as links between startups and knowledge institutions. Spin-offs originating from the research community, such as tech entrepreneurs, may need access to venture capital and an innovative environment. For many entrepre-neurs, funding from, for example, business angels and venture capital funds is crucial for their development. Access to external capital requires entrepreneurs to understand investors. Efforts that strengthen entre-preneurs' competencies to attract external financing can, for example, include financing strategy, commu-nicating proof-of-concept to investors and building an understanding for investors, e.g., about sustainability and social responsibility requirements.

Priority 5: Social Innovation

Sustainability is not only green but also social. Social innovation is part of the work on social inclusion and social enterprises. Social innovation is about the development and implementation of new ideas that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social contexts and cooperative links between different actors and cultures. The focus is on creating socially sustainable and inclusive solutions that, in addition to solving social needs, also create a positive change in the living conditions of those in need.

Social innovation is also about collaborations across societal sectors and cultures, intending to create more efficient and inclusive solutions through the exchange of knowledge and ideas, thus creating socially sustainable and scalable solutions to defined needs.

ESF+ aims to promote capacity building for social innovation, including supporting mutual learning, fostering networks, and promoting good practices and methodologies.

To this end, the Danish Business Authority has in 2021 entered a collaboration with the Academy for Social Innovation. In 2021, the Academy of Social Innovation received, together with the Danish Design Centre, a two-year grant from the EU Commission's EaSI (Employment and Social Innovations) programme to create a national competence centre for social innovation concerning ESF+. The Danish Business Authority follows and participates in this work as the managing authority of ESF+.

Activities include:
- Partnerships between public authorities, the private sector, and civil society. Possibly through bottom-up approaches.
- Social experiments.
- Upscaling of innovative concepts developed and tested.
- Innovative solutions for adapting to the employment, education, and business promotion system, and for social inclusion.
- Involvement of social enterprises and other social economy actors, as they can contribute to the development of innovative solutions regarding social problems.

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Technical Assistance

The target group for technical assistance is the managing and audit authority.

In general, this will involve carrying out the necessary activities that the Member State is obliged to do under national rules and regulations.

For example:

- To establish selection criteria and eligibility rules.
- To offer the funds in potential application rounds, to receive applications.
- To review applications and prepare case reports to the Danish Board of Business Development so that selection and recommendation can be made to the managing authority, or a decision made by the managing authority, even without submission from the Danish Board of Business Development.
- To decide on cases submitted for support or rejection.
- To carry out checks on incoming financial statements from projects, including follow-up on activities and milestones, as well as dissemination of subsidies to final beneficiaries.
- To provide guidance to applicants and beneficiaries on rules (including State aid and procurement rules), documentation requirements and business procedures.
- To maintain and develop IT systems for use in applications, case management, financial management, performance measurement, information, and control of projects.
- To carry out checks, possibly with external assistance, on the projects supported and the administrative systems/authorities.
- To support authorities or those to whom parts of the management task are delegated, e.g., parts of the work with information, assessment, and submission of applications, as well as follow-up and evaluation of results. It may also be secretarial support for committees working locally on project strategies/ideas or helping to increase the capacity of others in the partnership if the need arises.
- Formulate material for the mandatory implementation and annual reports, including material for the annual meeting with the European Commission.
- To provide secretarial services to the Monitoring Committee and the Danish Board of Business Development regarding the implementation of the programme.
- To follow up on and, if necessary, request changes to the programme or plan and discuss content for programmes in future programme periods.
- To review the evaluation plan and ensure support for and implementation of evaluations.
- To ensure the basis for payment requests and apply to the European Commission for the funds.

The expenses will include salaries, external consultancy, expenses for meetings, seminars, conferences, and the like, expenses for courses and education, travel and accommodation, purchase of materials and equipment (including IT equipment), as well as additional operating expenses.

The procurement of the managing authority is covered by the government's *Green Procurement for a Green Future* (2020) strategy. The initiatives in the strategy contribute to the government's work with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Among other things, eco-labels are used, which set requirements for sustainable production. The managing authority focuses on energy efficiency using total cost tools.

Partnership

The regional efforts are formulated based on the regional development strategies prepared by the five regions, all of which have education as a central focus area. The strategies have been approved by the Danish Board of Business Development and, per the Business Promotion Act, have been prepared in collaboration with local, regional, and state stakeholders, just as the regional councils have conducted a public consultation of draft strategies before the adoption of the strategies. Cf. below, dialogue meetings, workshops, etc. have also been held in each region. The Regional Labour Market Councils must be consulted before the regions' submission, to achieve coordinated action with the support of the social partners.

In the North Jutland Region of Denmark, an administrative steering group with broad representation has been established. Dialogue meetings have been held with business organisations, trade unions, Aalborg University, University College North Jutland, vocational schools, labour market councils, Business Region, and all municipalities as well as a youth event at four youth education programmes with a total of 500 participants. The public consultation held three public meetings throughout the region with approximately 200 participants.

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conference was also held in Vejle, Denmark.

In Region Zealand, the strategy has been prepared in close collaboration with the 17 municipalities, educational institutions, Business House Zealand, and other key actors. Workshops, seminars, and bilateral meetings have been held, including a series of workshops on regional challenges and efforts from strategic to operational level, as well as a workshop on green transition. More than 100 public and private actors – including educational institutions, municipalities, local action groups, and local business councils – were consulted.

In the Capital Region of Denmark, an advisory steering group was established, and meetings have been held with municipalities and other relevant actors as well as a series of discussions on the need for skilled workers. The involvement will continue through the Future Competence Council, where representatives from the education and employment area will discuss challenges and solutions in the field of education in the region. A total of 63 hearing statements were received from municipalities, businesses, employees and employee organisations, educational institutions, and others.

The programme has been subject to public consultation from 19 November 2021 to 17 December 2021.

The results of the consultation show that there is general support for the priorities of the programme.

The Danish Board of Business Development and the Monitoring Committee, both of which are secretarially served by the managing authority, are the focal points for ensuring the involvement of relevant partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme. With the involvement of the Danish Board of Business Development as the focal point for the implementation, prioritisation, and submission of funds from ESF+, coherence can be ensured between the EU-funded and the decentralised business promotion efforts.

In implementing the programme, the Danish Board of Business Development is tasked with initiating application rounds and similar procedures, while the Monitoring Committee approves selection criteria etc. per the Common Provisions Regulation.

In the Central Region of Denmark, workshops have been held with relevant actors and, at the end of the process, a large workshop for all actors. Stakeholder involvement also takes place regularly in the Council for Future Competences with representatives of the social partners, municipalities, the education chain from primary school to university, Business House Central Jutland, and the Labour Market Office Mid-North.

In the Region of Southern Denmark, a broad involvement of key actors and citizens has been carried out. Together with the municipal collaborations, four meetings were held, as well as four broad dialogue meetings with partners and stakeholders in the region. In addition, meetings have been held with key partners and the strategy has been regularly discussed at co-ordination committee meetings with the municipalities. As part of the public consultation, a consultation

The Monitoring Committee shall monitor the implementation of the programmes. This is done partly, and at least, through annual meetings, and partly by allowing the members of the Committee to propose evaluation and analysis measures to ensure the successful implementation of the programmes, as well as by requiring other forms of adaptation or revision of the programmes. When discussing selected topics, such as evaluations, selection criteria, or communication, committee members will be invited to participate in sub-groups that follow the work of the managing authority in more detail.

The Monitoring Committee brings together relevant ministries and regional and municipal partners, relevant stakeholder organisations, social partners, and the European Commission.

Finally, since the effort aimed at the social integration of the most disadvantaged is part of the programme, the Monitoring Committee will include relevant actors in this field." In this context, it should be noted that several relevant actors, such as the Council for Socially Disadvantaged People and the Danish Red Cross, have been involved in the creation of the programme.

Communication and Visibility

Acknowledging the results of EU co-funding is central to communication efforts.

The communication efforts have three main objectives. It shall:

1. Contribute to a broad awareness of the Funds in Denmark.
2. Support effective implementation of the programmes.
3. Ensure transparency in connection with investments and efforts of the Funds.

Communication activities targeted at the public highlight the value that the Funds create locally and regionally, thereby contributing to awareness and recognition of ESF+ efforts. The communication efforts of projects also contribute to this, and the managing authority therefore supports the efforts with initiatives and tools that equip the projects to handle the communication task.

Communication targeted at current and potential beneficiaries enhances impact-oriented thinking and

supports an efficient implementation of projects.

Trust is established through transparent and inclusive communication, ensuring that the Funds contribute to better conditions and provide added value for Danish businesses and workers, while also ensuring adherence to applicable rules.

Communication efforts are targeted:

- The general public.
- Current and potential beneficiaries, e.g., business houses, knowledge institutions, educational institutions, clusters, business offices, tourism destination companies, municipalities, enterprises, etc.
- Current and potential participants and partners in projects, e.g., SMEs, entrepreneurs, students, etc.
- Other stakeholders, e.g., trade associations, social partners, authorities, etc.

Communication targeted to the public – e.g., focus on projects of strategic importance – should contribute to a broad knowledge of the Funds and ensure transparency, while communication targeted at current and potential beneficiaries, as well as project participants, should primarily support the effective implementation of the programmes. Finally, communication targeted to other stakeholders shall contribute particularly to transparency regarding the investments and added value of the Funds.

The communication channel is determined based on purpose, content, and target audience.

Special Efforts for Local Business Lighthouses

The establishment and development of eight local business lighthouses will form the basis for future positions of strength in Denmark and require local involvement from a broad set of stakeholders.

The government wants ESF+ to invest at least DKK 100 million in the realisation of the eight local lighthouses. This will complement the funds allocated to the implementation of recommendations nationally and from REACT-EU. The following operations initiated in 2022 are expected to be carried out:

North Jutland will be an international pioneer region for the green industries of the future and show the world the great climate benefits, and growth and

employment opportunities that can be reaped by further developing, integrating, using, and exporting new green technologies.

Central Jutland will be a pioneering region for world-leading, innovative, sustainable, and efficient water technological solutions in the development, demonstration, production, and scaling of water technology, as well as solutions for an energy and climate-neutral water sector by 2030.

South Jutland will be an international, green energy metropolis that maintains and expands the existing position of strength within green energy, aiming to develop, test, and demonstrate the green technologies and sector coupling solutions of the future - including PtX.

Funen will be an international epicentre for the development of the industry of the future, which creates, tests, and produces new digital, robotic, and autonomous solutions.

Zealand and the Islands must be world leaders in the development of biosolutions that contribute to solving climate and environmental challenges while creating growth, jobs, and exports.

The Fehmarnbelt connection will create growth, jobs, and exports on Zealand and the islands by increasing the attractiveness for business and tourism. Knowledge from the construction industry will make local enterprises leaders in Europe in the development of green construction of large infrastructure projects.

The Capital will be a globally leading health capital that links growth in life science and welfare technology with better and more equality in health.

Bornholm will be the Baltic Sea's green transport hub, the centre for offshore wind, and the test island for green energy. Through the establishment of one of the world's first two energy islands and further development of the test and development environment, the lighthouse will make a significant contribution to the green transition.