



Pan-European Social Innovation Lab (PEnCIL)

PEnCIL is building up national competence centres for social innovation in Belgium, Czechia, Finland and Lithuania. It is helping to identify the visions, needs, opportunities, and priorities of social innovation stakeholders and promoters with a view of building a shared strategy and action plan specific to each country.

Building national competence centres for social innovation in the EU Member States

PEnCIL is one of the six projects supported by the European Commission in order to establish national competence centres for social innovation across the EU. During two years (May 2021-May 2023) social innovation organisations, research centres, ESF managing authorities and other partners design and develop competence centres, which can help their countries to promote social innovation, including with funding from ESF+ and other EU programmes.

The national competence centres will focus on several functions:

Capacity-building:

- Building capacity among a range of stakeholders: ESF+ managing authorities, local and regional authorities, practitioners, support organisations, donors, etc.
- Raising awareness of the social innovation concept.
- Developing tools and methods to achieve and scale-up impact.

Networking, synergies and resources:

- Collaboration between public, private and third sector organisations, academia, etc.
- Synergies between different EU funding schemes.

Transnational exchange

- Sharing knowledge: what does/does not work?
- Beyond sharing: cooperating in joint endeavours, active mentoring and partnerships.

Expected results for each country



Competence centre for social innovation



Blueprint for a strategy and action plan



Analysis of strengths, weakness and sources of inspiration

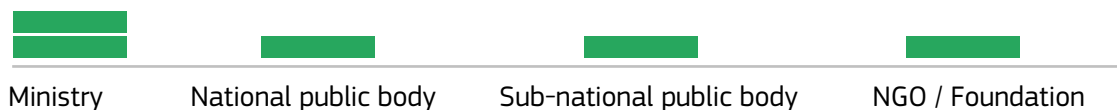


Collection of initiatives started or replicated

Each project will test the replication or scaling-up of one or two social innovations.

Overview of Pan-European Social Innovation Lab (PEnCIL)

5 organisations



Belgium

- ESF Flanders
- Social Innovation Factory

Czechia

- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Finland

- Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

Lithuania

- European Social Fund Agency

- Coordinator
- Co-applicant
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Key contact points

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Background

- Effective social innovation involves all actors within the system or quintuple helix (education and knowledge sector, business, government, non-profit and citizens/civil society). The project seeks to activate and engage all of these actors to promote, support and 'do' or co-create social innovation.

Activities planned at national level

Belgium

- The ESF Flanders and Social Innovation Factory will analyse the social innovation ecosystem to identify the visions, needs, opportunities and priorities of relevant social innovation stakeholders and promoters. They will then produce a shared strategy and action plan to boost social innovation.
- The Belgian partners want to help social innovators – committed citizens and/or social entrepreneurs – in finding the knowledge, resources and partners needed to turn ideas for a better future into impactful solutions. As bridge builders, ESF Flanders and Social Innovation Factory want to connect other actors who support social innovation (or who have the potential to do so) so that they can stimulate and accelerate social innovation together and from a common base. Belgian partners want to ensure that everyone can learn about social innovation.
- Central in this strategy is the development of a hub for social innovation (HUBSI). HUBSI will be a stimulating offline and online environment for social innovation. It connects, expands and unlocks the potential of existing networks and levers to the maximum. The platform is for and by all social players: knowledge institutions, companies, governments, citizens and civil society. Together they can stimulate and grow (the breeding ground for) social innovation.

Czechia

- The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will further elaborate on Ashoka's map of social innovators, with specific focus on public sector and regions. It will also update the analysis of barriers to social innovation to reflect a focus on the public sector and public policies.
- The competence centre will mount awareness-raising campaigns using blogs, websites and events, targeting social innovation promoters, public sector employees, and social service organisations to develop social innovation solutions.
- The Czech competence centre will provide practical workshops and seminars for public sector decision makers and officials. These will address means of changing public services to respond to 21st century needs and might include study visits to innovation labs in Europe.
- The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will facilitate events with academics, innovators and public organisations to exchange knowledge and good practices on social innovation.

Finland

- Under the auspices of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, an analysis of the social innovation ecosystem will be conducted. That analysis will identify the visions, needs, opportunities, and priorities of social innovation stakeholders and promoters. It will then be used to produce a shared strategy and action plan to boost social innovation in Finland.
- To identify and upscale social innovation best practice, the competence centre will collect, map and share suitable and successful tools, methods, approaches, practices and inspiring examples from social media, web platforms, conferences and seminars.
- The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment will foster the creation of thematic networks of social innovation promoters, academics and local bodies. The resulting mutual learning and exchanges will promote a coherent national approach to social innovation.
- The competence centre will organise transnational events and study visits between Finnish social innovation stakeholders and their peers in other countries to upscale social innovation practices

Lithuania

- The European Social Fund Agency will analyse the Lithuanian ecosystem on social innovation to identify potential cooperation between social innovation actors (academia, governance, business, citizens, civil society organisations) and promote a shared, systematic approach.
- Using traditional and digital media, the Lithuanian competence centre will organise an awareness-raising campaign to inspire social innovation promoters to strive for change and implement solutions.
- The competence centre will create and facilitate thematic networks of social innovation promoters, academic and local bodies to speed up mutual learning and exchange good practices. These networks will work through focus groups, workshops and publicity tools, using traditional and digital media.
- The European Social Fund Agency will monitor and assess public support for social innovation and publish draft recommendations to improve the responsiveness, effectiveness and governance of public policy in respect of social innovation.

Goals of the competence centre in Belgium

- ESF Flanders and Social Innovation Factory want a clear image of 1) the field of social innovation and the supporting ecosystem in which innovators look for knowledge, approaches, partners and (financial) support and 2) the profiles of social innovators and the needs/thresholds with barriers that different actors in this ecosystem experience.
- They want to achieve faster and better acceleration of social innovation in society, by unlocking existing knowledge, practices and tools and facilitating better collaboration between social innovation supporters – in every innovation phase. They are also looking for new models and actors to support social innovation.
- Ultimately, Belgian competence centre want to turn every citizen into a social innovator. They want to increase public support for social innovation by:
 - highlighting the potential of social innovation;
 - strengthening the competences of citizens and social entrepreneurs to make the challenges they experience visible and to be able to tackle them;
 - paying attention to citizen participation in the development of social innovation.

Activities planned at transnational level

- PEnCIL will use study visits, peer reviews and webinars to facilitate mutual learning and the exchange of knowledge and best practice in social innovation.
- Project partners will work together to scale up a jointly selected innovation project, with members setting an action plan and clear methodology for that scaling.
- PEnCIL will compile a handbook of good social innovation practices, national level training and lessons learned.
- They will hold a final event in Flanders where members will discuss lessons and share their views on social innovation practices.
- PEnCIL will provide full support to the Community of Practice on Social Innovation within the ESF Transnational Cooperation Platform and develop sustainable cooperation among the different competence centres.

Joint scaling-up

- The project partners will select an innovative social innovation project in one of the Member States and draft a plan to successfully scale up the project. Depending on the selection, some or all partners will work together to implement that scaling-up. The relevant partners will carry out regular follow-ups and share lessons in a final event with all European projects.

Want to know more about other competence centres for social innovation?

More factsheets available on the [ESF+ website](#)



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