



## LIST OF CONTENTS

2. European Action programmes 2014-2020 per sector .....	2
2.4 Social affairs, employment and justice .....	2
2.4.3 Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI") .....	2
4. Open calls 2014 on European Action programmes .....	9
<b>1.3 EaSI</b> .....	9
<i>PROGRESS Axis</i> .....	9
<i>Social policy innovations supporting reforms in social services</i> .....	9
 <i>PROGRESS Axis</i> .....	15
<i>Social policy innovations supporting social protection, social inclusion and the     reduction and prevention of poverty.</i> .....	15

## 2. European Action programmes 2014-2020 per sector

### 2.4 Social affairs, employment and justice

#### 2.4.3 Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI")

PROGRAMME/CALL	European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI")
Programme	<p>EaSI+ is the new European Programme for Employment and Social Policy.</p> <p>The Programme brings together under a single financing framework and replaces three instruments that have been operating in the period 2007-2013, i.e. the PROGRESS programme, EURES and the Progress Microfinance Facility Instrument. Differently to the previous Progress Programme, the Axis 'Progress' of EaSi do not cover the components "Gender equality" and "Diversity and fight against anti-discrimination", which on the contrary are included in the new programme "Rights, equality and citizenship".</p>
General objectives	<p>The Programme aims to contribute to the implementation of Europe 2020, including its headline targets, Integrated Guidelines and flagship initiatives, by providing financial support for the Union's objectives in terms of promoting a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions.</p> <p>EaSI Programme shall seek to achieve the following general objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strengthen ownership among policy-makers at all levels, and produce concrete, coordinated and innovative actions at both Union and Member State level, in respect of the Union objectives in these fields, in close collaboration with the social partners, as well as civil society organisations and public and private bodies;</li> <li>• support the development of adequate, accessible and efficient social protection systems and labour markets and facilitate policy reform, in these fields, notably by promoting decent work and working conditions, a prevention culture for health and safety at work, a healthier balance between professional and private life and good governance for social objectives, including convergence, as well as mutual learning and social innovation;</li> <li>• ensure that Union law on matters relating to these fields is effectively applied, and, where necessary, contribute to modernising Union law, in line with decent work principles and taking into account the Smart Regulation principles;</li> <li>• promote workers' voluntary geographical mobility on a fair basis and boost employment opportunities by developing high-quality and inclusive Union labour markets that are open and</li> </ul>

	<p>accessible to all, while respecting workers' rights throughout the Union, including freedom of movement;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote employment and social inclusion by increasing the availability and accessibility of microfinance for vulnerable people who wish to start up a micro-enterprise as well as for existing micro-enterprises, and by increasing access to finance for social enterprises.</li> </ul>
Programme structure	<p>The Programme shall be made up of the following three complementarity axes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>The Progress axis</u>, which shall support the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Union instruments, policies and relevant Union law referred to sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions. It shall promote evidence-based policy-making, social innovation and social progress, in partnership with the social partners, civil society organisations and public and private bodies;</li> <li>2. <u>The EURES axis</u>, which shall support activities carried out by EURES with social partners, other employment service providers and other interested parties, to develop information exchanges and dissemination and other forms of cooperation, such as cross-border partnerships, to promote voluntary geographical mobility for workers on a fair basis and to contribute to a high level of quality and sustainable employment;</li> <li>3. <u>The Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis</u>, which shall increase the access to, and the availability of, financing for legal and physical persons, pursuant its specific objective.</li> </ol>
Eligible activities	<p>EaSI Programme shall support different kind of actions in base of each axis, in particular:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>The Progress axis</u> is focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- employment, in particular to fight youth unemployment;</li> <li>- social protection, social inclusion and the reduction and prevention of poverty;</li> <li>- working conditions.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Under this action, <u>specific objectives</u> will be carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- develop and disseminate high-quality comparative analytical knowledge, in order to ensure that Union policies in these fields are based on sound evidence and are relevant to needs, challenges and conditions in the individual Member States and other countries participating in the Programme;</li> <li>- facilitate effective and inclusive information-sharing, mutual learning and dialogue on Union policies in these fields, at Union, national and international level in order to assist the Member States and other countries participating in the Programme in developing their policies and the Member States in implementing Union law;</li> </ul>

- provide financial support to test social and labour market policy innovations, and, where necessary, to build up the main actors' capacity to design and implement social policy experimentation, and to make the relevant knowledge and expertise accessible;
- provide Union and national organisations with financial support to increase their capacity to develop, promote and support the implementation of Union instruments, policies and relevant Union law in the matter.

Eligible activities:

A. Analytical activities:

- gathering of data and statistics, taking account of both qualitative and quantitative criteria, and developing common methodologies, classifications, micro-simulations, indicators and benchmarks, where appropriate broken down by sex and age-group;
- surveys, studies, analyses and reports, including through the funding of networks of experts and development of expertise in thematic sections;
- qualitative and quantitative evaluations and impact assessments carried out by both public and private bodies;
- monitoring and assessment of the transposition and application of Union law;
- preparation and implementation of social policy experimentation as a method for testing and evaluating innovative solutions with a view to up-scaling them;
- dissemination of the results of those analytical activities.

B. Mutual-learning, awareness and dissemination activities:

- exchanges and dissemination of good practice, innovative approaches and experience, peer reviews, benchmarking and mutual learning at European level;
- Council Presidency events, conferences and seminars;
- training of legal and policy practitioners;
- drafting and publication of guides, reports and educational material and measures relating to information, communication and media coverage of initiatives supported by the Programme;
- information and communication activities;
- development and maintenance of information systems in order to exchange and disseminate information on Union policy and legislation and on the labour market.

C. Support with regard to:

- the operating costs of key Union-level networks the activities of which relate to and contribute to the objectives of the Progress axis;
- capacity-building of national administrations and specialist services responsible for promoting geographical mobility designated by the Member States and microcredit providers;
- organisation of working groups of national officials to

	<p>monitor the implementation of Union law;</p> <p>2. <u>EURES axis</u> will support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- transparency of job vacancies, applications and any related information for applicants and employers;</li><li>- development of services for the recruitment and placing of workers in employment through the clearance of job vacancies and applications at Union level, in particular targeted mobility schemes;</li><li>- cross-border partnerships.</li></ul> <p>The <u>specific objectives</u> developed will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- ensure that job vacancies and applications and corresponding information and advice, as well as any related information such as that concerning living and working conditions, are made transparent for the potential applicants and the employers, respectively. This shall be achieved through exchange and dissemination at transnational, interregional and cross-border level, through the use of standard interoperability forms for job vacancies and applications and through other suitable means, such as individual counselling and mentoring, especially for the low skilled;</li><li>- support the provision of EURES services for the recruitment and placing of workers in quality and sustainable employment through the clearance of job vacancies and applications; support for EURES services shall extend to various phases of placement, ranging from pre-recruitment preparation to post-placement assistance with a view to the applicant's successful integration into the labour market; such support services may include targeted mobility schemes to fill job vacancies in a certain sector, occupation, country or a group of countries or for particular groups of workers, such as young people, with a propensity to be mobile, where a clear economic need has been identified.</li></ul> <p><u>Eligible activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the development and the activities of EURES cross-border partnerships where requested by services territorially responsible for border regions;</li><li>- the provision of information, counselling, placement and recruitment services for cross-border workers;</li><li>- the development of the multilingual digital platform for the clearance of job vacancies and applications;</li><li>- the development of targeted mobility schemes, (e.g. continuation of Your First EURES job) following calls for proposals, to fill job vacancies where labour market shortcomings have been identified, and/or to help workers with a propensity to be mobile, where a clear economic need has been identified;</li><li>- mutual learning among EURES actors and training of EURES advisors, including EURES cross-border partnership advisors;</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- information and communication activities to raise awareness of the benefits of geographical and occupational mobility in general and of the activities and services provided by EURES.</li> </ul> <p>3. <u>The Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis</u>: will follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- microfinance for vulnerable groups and micro-enterprises;</li> <li>- social entrepreneurship.</li> </ul> <p>The <u>specific objectives</u> pursued by the axis are referred to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increase access to, and the availability of, microfinance for:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vulnerable persons who have lost or are at risk of losing their job, or have difficulty in entering or re-entering the labour market, or are at risk of social exclusion, or are socially excluded, and are in a disadvantaged position with regard to access to the conventional credit market and who wish to start up or develop their own micro- enterprises;</li> <li>• micro-enterprises in both start-up and development phase, especially micro-enterprises which employ persons as referred to in point;</li> </ul> </li> <li>- build up the institutional capacity of microcredit providers;</li> <li>- support the development of the social investment market and facilitate access to finance for social enterprises by making equity, quasi-equity, loan instruments and grants of up to EUR 500 000 available to social enterprises with either an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 30 million, or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 30 million which are not themselves a collective investment undertaking. In order to ensure complementarity, the Commission and the Member States shall, in their respective areas of competence, closely coordinate these actions with those undertaken in the framework of cohesion policy and national policies.</li> </ul> <p><u>Eligible activities</u> in this field will foster support to microfinance and social enterprises, including for institutional capacity building, in particular through the financial instruments.</p>
Eligible organizations	<p>Depending on the different axis, the Programme is open to:</p> <p>1. <u>Progress axis</u>: all public and/or private bodies, actors and institutions, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- national, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>- employment services;</li> <li>- specialist bodies provided for under Union law;</li> <li>- the social partners;</li> <li>- non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>- higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>- experts in evaluation and in impact assessment;</li> <li>- national statistical offices;</li> <li>- the media.</li> </ul>

	<p>2. <u>EURES axis</u>: all bodies, actors and institutions designated by a Member State or by the Commission which fulfil the conditions for participating in EURES, as set out in Decision 2012/733/EU. Such bodies, actors and institutions shall include in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- national, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>- employment services;</li> <li>- social partner organisations and other interested parties.</li> </ul> <p>3. <u>The Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis</u>: public and private bodies established at national, regional or local level in the eligible countries and providing in those countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- microfinance for persons and micro-enterprises;</li> <li>- financing for social enterprises.</li> </ul>
Eligible countries	<p>Participation in the EaSI Programme shall be open to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 28 EU Member States;</li> <li>• EEA countries, in accordance with the EEA Agreement, and EFTA member states (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein; except Swiss Confederation that has not signed the EU agreement);</li> <li>• the candidate countries and potential candidates, in accordance with the general principles and the general terms and conditions laid down in the framework agreements concluded with them on their participation in Union programmes (Albania, Bosnia-Erzegovina, Kosovo, Iceland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey).**</li> </ul> <p>**Except for EURES axis where the candidate countries and potential candidates are not eligible.</p>
Duration	<p>The Programme shall run from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.</p> <p>Information regarding the duration of the projects are not yet available since the first calls have not yet been published.</p>
Amount of contribution	<p>The EaSI budget for the 2014/2020 programming period shall account approximately for 919 million EUR, allocated as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 61 % to the Progress axis (of which 15-20% will be reserved for social experimentation projects);</li> <li>2) 18 % to the EURES axis;</li> <li>3) 21 % to the Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis.</li> </ol> <p>The financial contributions are diversified according to the three different axes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Progress axis</u>: the Union co-financing shall not exceed, as a general rule, 80 % of the total eligible expenditure.</li> <li>2. <u>EURES axis</u>: the Union co-financing shall not exceed, as a general rule, 95 % of the total eligible expenditure.</li> <li>3. <u>"Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship" axis</u>: except in the</li> </ol>



	case of joint actions, the financial appropriations allocated to this axis shall cover the full cost of the actions implemented through financial instruments, including payment obligations towards financial intermediaries, such as losses from guarantees, management fees for the entities managing the Union's contribution and any other eligible costs.
How to apply	The application rules will be announced once the first call will be published.
Deadline	At the moment the deadline for submitting proposals is not available since the first call have not been published yet.
Evaluation criteria	The evaluation criteria will be announced with the publication of the first call for proposals.
Link	European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI") <a href="#">Regulation No 1296/2013</a> Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI") <a href="#">Official website</a> DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion – European Commission <a href="#">website</a>



## 4. Open calls 2014 on European Action programmes

### 1.3 EaSI

#### PROGRESS Axis

*Social policy innovations supporting reforms in social services*

PROGRAMME/CALL	European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" 2014-2020 CALLS FOR PROPOSALS FOR SOCIAL POLICY INNOVATIONS SUPPORTING REFORMS IN SOCIAL SERVICES
Call	CALL FOR PROPOSALS VP/2014/008
Programme	EaSI is a European-level financing instrument managed directly by the European Commission to support Union's objectives in terms of promoting a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions and contribute to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy. The PROGRESS AXIS(Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity) has a specific budget for social innovation and social policy experimentation.
Main objectives	<p>The overall purpose of this call for proposals is to foster innovation and reforms in the social services to tackle sector main challenges as identified in the call and to develop innovative responses corresponding to national, regional and local realities and in line with the social investment approach.</p> <p>This call foreseen under EaSI Progress axis promotes the social policy experimentation as a method for testing and evaluating innovative solutions with a view to up-scaling them.</p> <p>The call has two objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Using social policy innovations for undertaking structural reforms in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy</u>, in particular the Country Specific Recommendations received by the Member States as part of the European Semester, dealing with the need to better integrate and innovate social services to deliver improved childcare, long-term care, employment services, training and life-long learning, healthcare, housing and services which help confront poverty and social exclusion;</li> <li>○ <u>Strengthening partnerships between public, private and civil society sector to involve in awareness raising activities about the use and benefits of social policy innovation.</u></li> </ul>
Types of projects funded	The Social Investment Package (SIP) published in February 2013, emphasises that social services play a pivotal role to ensure

effective and efficient social protection.

The SIP stresses in particular the critical role of high quality, integrated and personalised services in developing people's skills and capabilities, in improving their opportunities and in helping them make the most of their potential throughout the life course. To do so, social services should be delivered focusing on the individual's situation and in line with the general quality principles presented in the "Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services".

The Commission Communication "Implementing the Community Lisbon programme: Social services of general interest in the European Union" identified two main categories of services. Besides statutory and complementary social security schemes, the concept includes services provided directly to the person such as social assistance services, employment and training services, housing support and social housing, childcare, long-term care services and healthcare.

The focus areas of innovation in this call are:

- **one-stop-shop approach** (integration of social services through setting up 'one-stop-shops')

One-stop-shops are an advanced form of integration which comprises multi-service delivery in a single location. This form of integration can include a stronger coordination between services but it can also lead to the creation of a single body with a more or less autonomous decision making authority which implies more deep structural changes.

The integration of social services through setting up 'one-stop-shops' has potential for cost efficiency, the effectiveness of the delivery and the capacity to tackle complex and multiple problems while also ensuring take-up and coverage.

This approach requires an approach in steps taking into consideration the following:

- Integration of information systems to reduce duplication, provide basis for a holistic, personalised approach to services delivery and help fight fraud.
- Integration of employment services with social assistance services and enabling services.
- Reducing the complexity of accessing services by inter alia simplifying eligibility requirements.
- Improving coordination among different levels of government (central, regional or local) to improve overall service delivery.
- Coordinating tax and benefits systems and looking at the impact of various programmes at the level of the individual.

- **personalised approaches** (integrated service at the level of the individual e.g. through high quality case handlers)

A case handler is a form of integrated service at the level of the individual. Different types of approaches could be taken according to the role given to the case handler. For instance, in a multidisciplinary team, one team member could act as the case manager and ensure the coordination between the team members and the user. More integrated approaches rely on an intensive case

	<p>management where the case manager coordinates the services for the user, especially for users facing complex and long-term needs. The SIP points out that the social services should be comprehensive and personalised, conceived and delivered focusing on the user. Indeed, individual situations require specific social services to prevent or support. A personalised approach to social services would include working to identify the responses and their relevance to the person's situation, to develop user's capacity to receive them and to forge links with relevant services.</p> <p>The outreach, and the thus the coverage, of social services could be increased through the use and training of high quality case handlers, able to assess and provide individualised guidance to people's needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b><u>innovative partnerships</u></b> (cross-sector collaborations and strategic partnerships).</li> </ul> <p>Building-up innovative partnerships is a key element in the SIP approach and is particularly relevant in the area of the provision of social services. These partnerships could include relevant private and public entities, as well as civil society organisations. Social policy innovations in social services can take place in public, private and civil society sectors, but also at the intersection of them. Innovative partnerships can include an increased share of information (through integrated databases) as a first step, but could also result in agreements on shared approaches or, in a more advanced form, agreement on setting up a formal governing body. Fostering such partnerships promotes complementarities and synergies between actors, encourages further social innovations within a context of limited resources and rising costs, and creates the premises for sustainable cooperation beyond the particular intervention. Often the most fruitful sources of new idea, funding and approaches to create social value are cross-sector collaborations and strategic partnerships for the delivery of social services in innovative ways.</p> <p>Innovation in social services means new practices, policies or processes to meet known and newly emerging challenges. This may involve improving the delivery, availability, coverage, accessibility, quality, affordability, effectiveness and efficiency of an existing service or creating a new service which better meets citizens' needs.</p>
Eligible activities	<p>The call funds the design and implementation of social policy experiments. In particular, it supports innovative reforms of service delivery with evidence of improved outcomes, achieved through strengthened partnerships between public, private and civil society stakeholders, including social entrepreneurs and social NGOs. The proposals should present long term perspectives on how successful innovations and reforms will be designed, tested and implemented.</p> <p>Projects should foresee the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b><u>Policy relevance and needs assessment</u></b></li> </ul> <p>Applicants should describe what they propose to do, including rationale for the work, hypothesis used in deciding to undertake the</p>

	<p>project and the baseline data at the start of the intervention, what the expected outcomes will be and who will benefit from the work. The proposed approach should be in line with major EU sector legislation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Activities and expected outcomes</u> The project should identify and describe the different incentives, opportunities or constraints with which the targeted population will be confronted. The project should explain why these activities might help address the social need that was identified and to ensure that the targeted population will indeed be willing and able to participate.</li> <li>- <u>Impact/outcomes evaluation method</u> The applicants have to identify the impact/outcomes evaluation method they will apply to provide evidence and to determine the expected outcomes of the proposed intervention.</li> <li>- <u>Project sustainability</u> The proposal should include a short-term and long-term strategy beyond the grant period.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to that, in designing, implementing and reporting on the activity, beneficiaries/contractors must address the following issues: social exclusion, discrimination, gender equality, attention to vulnerable groups.</p>
<p>Eligible organizations</p>	<p>The social policy experimentation project has to be submitted and driven by a consortium of stakeholders involved in the process of social policy innovation. <u>The proposal should include at least one co-applicant.</u> The lead applicant and co-applicants must be properly constituted and registered legal persons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>The lead applicant</u> must be a public authority or a public body at national, regional or local level having a role to play in policy setting or delivering social services.</li> <li>- <u>Co-applicants</u> must be public authorities at central, regional or local level, or bodies governed by public law, and/or civil society organisations, and/or private sector organisations. Including academic structures, research organisations or international organisations is strongly encouraged.</li> </ul>
<p>Eligible countries</p>	<p><u>Participating countries:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU Member States.</li> <li>- EFTA/EEA countries, in accordance with the EEA Agreement.</li> <li>- Candidate and potential candidate countries, in accordance with the general principles and the general terms and conditions laid down in the framework agreements concluded with them on their participation in Union programmes.</li> </ul> <p>Concerning EFTA/EEA countries, candidate and potential candidate countries, only Iceland is supposed to have finalized the agreement before the deadline for the submission of the proposals. Therefore applicants and co-applicants from EFTA/EEA countries, candidate and potential candidate countries should check with the secretariat of the call (empl-VP-2014-008@ec.europa.eu) their eligibility for the 2014 call for proposals.</p>

Duration	The duration of the project must be between 24 months and 36 months.
Budget	The overall indicative amount made available for this call is 9 200 000 €. The grant requested must be 750 000 € minimum and 2 000 000 € maximum. The European Union financial aid granted will not exceed 80% of the total eligible costs of the action. The consortium members must guarantee the co-financing in cash of the remaining 20%. Contributions in kind are not accepted as co-financing.
Deadlines	The proposals must be submitted electronically online and sent by post or by personal delivery in one original to the European Commission, <b>by 28 August 2014</b> at the latest. The projects should start after signature of grant agreements, expected within six months of the date of submission.
How to apply	Applicants are invited to fill in the application form online, on the SWIM secure website.. Annexes, which are compulsory, must also be filled in and uploaded online. After filling in the form, applicants must submit it both electronically and in hard copy with required annexes. to the addresses below by the deadline (their submission date will be taken as the date of dispatch, as evidenced by the postmark or the express courier receipt date). Please care for specific layout and binding requirements as stated in the call.
Evaluation criteria	The maximum total points that a proposal may obtain is 100. Proposals that do not receive 70 points will not be considered for funding. <u>Policy criteria (70 points)</u> 1 - Policy relevance of the proposal (20 points) 2 – Clarity of activities and expected outcomes (20 points) 3 - Appropriateness of the impact/outcomes evaluation method (20 points) 4 - Sustainability of the project (10 points) <u>Organisational criteria (15 points)</u> 1 - Relevance of the consortium proposed for the achievement of the expected results (5 points). 2 - Quality of the evaluation plan of the project (5 points). 3 - Quality of the communication and dissemination plan (5 points). <u>Financial criteria (15 points)</u> 1 - Adequacy of the human and financial resources to the planned activities (cost-effectiveness) (10 points). 2 - Overall quality, clarity and completeness of the budget (5 points).
Reference documents	EaSI <a href="#">Programme</a> Call <a href="#">website</a> Call for <a href="#">proposals</a> <a href="#">Financial</a> guidelines <a href="#">SWIM</a> Guide



	<p><a href="#">Methodological</a> reference document SWIM <a href="#">online</a> system</p>
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**PROGRESS Axis**

*Social policy innovations supporting social protection, social inclusion and the reduction and prevention of poverty.*

<b>PROGRAMME/CALL</b>	<b>European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" 2014-2020 / Support for social protection reforms</b>
Call	Call for proposals VP/2014/006 – Support for social protection reforms
Programme	<p>EaSI is a European-level financing instrument managed directly by the European Commission to support Union's objectives in terms of promoting a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions.</p> <p>The PROGRESS AXIS (Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity) has a specific budget for social protection, social inclusion and the reduction and prevention of poverty.</p>
Priorities	<p>The EaSI Programme shall, in all its axes and actions, aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people;</li> <li>- promote equality between women and men,</li> <li>- combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;</li> <li>- promote a high-level of quality and sustainable employment, guarantee adequate and decent social protection, combat long-term unemployment and fight against poverty and social exclusion.</li> </ul>
Specific objectives	<p>The purpose of this call for proposals is:</p> <p>(a) to help Member States review specific aspects of their social protection systems to identify potentials for improved cost-effectiveness, including by strengthening the systems' social investment orientation. The grants should contribute to reforms aimed at the delivery of adequate and universal social protection at the lowest possible budgetary cost and with the greatest possible positive impact on employment and growth, thereby making the schemes more sustainable under adverse budgetary and demographic conditions.</p> <p>(b) Overall, projects are expected to generate knowledge and evidence that help steer national reforms, either</p> <p>(i) by facilitating the access to expertise from other Member States and/or international organisations,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p>(ii) by obtaining empirical evidence needed for international comparisons and mutual learning.</p> <p>The focus should be in particular on major challenges that have been, or might become, the subject of country-specific</p>

	<p>recommendations, as well as reforms that could strengthen the social investment dimension of social protection schemes.</p>
Type of projects funded	<p>Project formats with different time horizons and resource requirements can be funded, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- country reviews by international organisations;</li> <li>- secondments of policy advisers from another country;</li> <li>- study visits from and to countries with relevant experience,</li> <li>- provision of empirical evidence needed for international comparisons and mutual learning.</li> </ul> <p>Only one application relating to a major social protection challenge and one relating to the need for empirical evidence shall be considered per country.</p>
Eligible activities	<p>Grants awarded under this call will allow Member States to (i) access experience and expertise from other countries and international organisations, or (ii) obtain empirical evidence needed for international comparisons and mutual learning. The grants could be used in particular for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the assessment of the general architecture of social policy, including the allocation of resources and resulting trade-offs between social policy areas. Such a "check-up" should take interdependencies within the country's tax-benefit system as well as wider socioeconomic impacts (on employment, competitiveness, incentives to save and to take entrepreneurial risks) into account;</li> <li>- the assessment of alternative strategies to reform social protection spending or financing arrangements, with a focus on the reforms' impacts on coverage, adequacy, public spending, distributive effects, and behavioural incentives;</li> <li>- the exchange of good practices and lessons learnt from past reform experiences;</li> <li>- the collection and analysis of data that can be used for international comparisons needed for mutual learning and evidence-based policy making.</li> </ul> <p>In any case, the projects should build on, and contribute to, the expertise and capacity available in the beneficiary country.</p>
Eligible organisations	<p>Sole applicants or, in the case of a consortium, lead applicants in charge of coordinating the action, must be the competent national public authority or a public agency expressly appointed in writing by the competent national authority to assume responsibility for the implementation of the action.</p> <p>In the case of a consortium, co-applicants can be any type of non-profit organisation and international organisations. International organisations whose registered office is outside the abovementioned East participating countries are also eligible.</p> <p>Affiliated entities are not eligible under the present call for proposals.</p>
Eligible countries	<p>The lead applicant and co-applicants must, at the time of the submission of</p>



	<p>applications under this call, be properly constituted and registered legal persons established in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU Member States;</li> <li>- EFTA/EEA countries, in accordance with the EEA Agreement (Iceland);</li> <li>- Candidate and potential candidate countries, in accordance with the general principles and the general terms and conditions laid down in the framework agreements concluded with them on their participation in Union programmes from 2015.</li> </ul>
Duration	The initial duration of the projects should not exceed <b>24 months</b> .
Budget	The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects is estimated at EUR 2 500 000. EU financial aid granted will not exceed 80% of the total eligible costs of the action. The Commission expects to fund around 10 proposals.
Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>31 October 2014, 12:00 (noon) Central European Time</b></li> </ul>
How to apply	<p>Applications must be accompanied by the required annexes and must be submitted:</p> <p>1) in <u>electronic format</u> via the SWIM online application</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>2) in <u>hard copy</u> (in one original) to the following addresses:</p> <p>a) by registered mail or express courier service (the submission date will be taken as the date of dispatch, as evidenced by the postmark or the express courier receipt date):</p> <p style="text-align: center;">European Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Unit D3 (J-27 01/242): Call for proposals VP/2014/006 B-1049 Brussels, Belgium</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>b) by hand delivery against a signed receipt from the Commission's central mail service (this hand delivery can be direct or through any authorised representative of the applicant, including private messenger service etc.) by 16.00 h, <b>30/09/2014</b>:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">European Commission Unit D3 - Call for proposals VP/2014/006 Central courier service Avenue du Bourget, 1 B-1140 Evere, Belgium</p> <p>When sending the hard copy, applicants are requested to number the accompanying documents to be submitted with the application. Documents</p>

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	<p>will be printed double-sided, if possible. Only two-hole folders will be used. The dossier should not be bound or glued. The reference of the call for proposals must be indicated on the envelope. Please make sure that the full set of the application form and all accompanying documents are sent by post by the deadline.</p>
Evaluation criteria	<p>Grant applicants must meet the following <b>selection criteria</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The applicant (i.e. lead applicant and any co-applicants) must have access to solid and adequate funding to maintain its activities for the period of the action and to help finance it as necessary.</li><li>- The applicant (lead and any co-applicants) must have the operational resources (technical, management) and the professional skills and qualifications needed to successfully implement the project.</li></ul> <p>The grants will be awarded following an assessment of the proposals on the basis of the following criteria. Only proposals in excess of 70 points and at least 50% of the maximum number of points for each criterion can be selected for funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Relevance to the general objectives of the call for proposals (15 points)</li><li>- Potential impact on policies in the applicant country (15 points)</li><li>- Overall quality of the proposal (30 points)</li><li>- Relevance of the proposal for the EU policy debate (15 points)</li><li>- Sound cost-efficiency ratio and financial quality of the proposal (25 points)</li></ul>
Link	<p>EaSI <a href="#">Programme</a> Call <a href="#">website</a> <a href="#">SWIM Guide</a> SWIM <a href="#">online</a> system</p>