

OUTPUT FACT SHEET

Strategies and action plans

Version 2

Project index number and acronym	CE 1345 SIV
Output number and title	O.T1.1. Voucher Strategy
Responsible partner (PP name and number)	WU (Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien)
Project website	https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/SIV-.html
Delivery date	12.2019

Summary description of the strategy/action plan (developed and/or implemented), explaining its main objectives and transnational added value

The voucher strategy was one of the outputs developed within the framework of WP T1 and focuses on facilitating the smooth implementation of the voucher programs in the 8 partner countries in a structured and coordinated way. This provides guidance to the partners concerning the implementation process and enables them to overcome differences in their respective national contexts. Such differences concern for instance the addressed target groups and their demands, the already available portfolio of active and passive public labor market instruments or the expertise and previous experience of the implementing partners.

In the course of the first months of the project, the partners identified various target groups based on research of the labour market situation in their respective countries as well as on the accessibility through the organizational activities of the partners. These target groups include disabled people (Croatia, Hungary), graduates of vocational schools, single parents or parents on/after maternity leave and 50+ year old unemployed (Slovakia), immobile job seekers with good qualifications (especially single parents) (Poland), disadvantaged job seekers selected for a training in coding (Austria), aspiring entrepreneurs (Czech Republic) and various disadvantaged groups not serviced by the social system (Germany). This is in line with the SIV specific objective according to which partners will jointly plan and promote the integration of disadvantaged people into the labour market. The current strategy allows us to integrate different approaches for achieving this objective.

The selection of the target groups is also in line with the horizontal principle of creating equal opportunities and non-discrimination, as through the SIV project job seekers gain access to the labour market independent of any target group-specific disadvantages (e.g. ethnic, societal, physical or intellectual disadvantages).

The strategy further comprises five different voucher models, developed by the partners. The models vary in terms of recipients of the vouchers (e.g. employers, employees, job agencies), content of the support (labour costs/training/matching) and salary refunds/success fees.

The involvement of all partners also increases the transnational value of the strategy, since it incorporates approaches tailored for each national context and at the same time, it coordinates these in a manner that ensures their compatibility.

The voucher strategy is currently being implemented in the 8 partner countries. However, since the strategy development the partners acknowledged the need for its regular revision in order to fit the changing needs (e.g. as influenced by the covid19 pandemic). This revision process is ongoing.

NUTS region(s) concerned by the strategy/action plan (relevant NUTS level)

The developed voucher strategy covers the 8 partner countries represented in the SIV partnership. Concretely it is being implemented in the following regions:

- Austria: Vienna
- Croatia: Zagreb, other regions
- Czech Republic: Ostrava, other regions
- Germany: Baden-Württemberg
- Hungary: several rural areas
- Poland: Warsaw and Rzeszow
- Slovakia: Bratislava, other regions
- Slovenia: Ljubljana, other regions

Expected impact and benefits of the strategy/action plan for the concerned territories and target groups

The voucher strategy has enabled the project partners to tailor voucher models suitable for their respective national contexts as well as for the needs of the target groups that they wish to pursue. This allows for more targeted approaches that enhance the impact of the target groups. At the same time, the strategy also ensures that the partners are following a common goal and enables a coordinated effort. The employers and job seekers are the primary beneficiaries of the program, which has a positive social and economic impact on them. The employers benefit from acquiring a better understanding for the needs of the target groups as well as from added financial security in employing them. Furthermore, the program also triggers impact on an individual level for job seekers from all mentioned disadvantaged target groups, as through regular employment and participation in social activities, they gain a new purpose, profit from an improved daily structure as well as from improved psychological well-being, as preliminary results of our analyses show.

Sustainability of the developed and/or implemented strategy/action plan and its transferability to other territories and stakeholders

The sustainability of the voucher program was a goal that we pursued from the start, when developing the voucher strategy. By developing several voucher model that are flexible and can fit to different frameworks, we make sure that these are easily transferrable to other territories and thus allow for scaling the current project. Also, we decided to establish a European Cooperative Society (SCE) as a sustainable structure to be used beyond the scope and runtime of the SIV project for implementing vouchers in different countries. We also involved external partners in this process, which benefit from knowledge transfer. Other stakeholders that potentially benefit from the strategy are organizations and institutions interested in adopting innovative strategies for labor market integration. One important learning was that strategies need to constantly be revised and adapted to the newest needs, as the labor market is highly susceptible to exogenous influence and thus constantly changing.

References to relevant deliverables and web-links If applicable, pictures or images to be provided as annex

The current output is based on the preparatory activities conducted by all partners within the framework of a collaborative process in the first phase of the SIV project. Specifically, the output builds upon the five different voucher models developed within the deliverable "Draft Voucher Strategy" (<https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/SIV/D.T1.2.3.-Draft-Vouche-Strategy.pdf>) as well as on eight approaches for the planned implementation of the voucher systems that are described in the same document.