

SOCIAL IMPACT VOUCHER (SIV) PROJECT

Social Impact Vouchers as a Tool
for Social Innovation on the Labour
Market

Policy and Practice Conference
&
Closing Conference

Date: Tuesday, 22nd February 2022, 10:00 - 17:00

Location: online (via zoom)

✓ **Registration:** <https://short.wu.ac.at/interreg-siv-conference-22feb22>

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Thematic Focus of the Conference

Employment and the labour market are currently facing major challenges in Europe, due to digitalization, demographic changes, and not least due to the Covid-19 pandemic. On one hand, a shortage of skilled workers threatens several fields of activity such as the care and IT sectors; on the other hand, (long-term) unemployment persists among disadvantaged social groups. Moreover, new groups of unemployed persons like entrepreneurs emerge as a result of the pandemic disproportionately affecting different economic sectors.

What are possible approaches to tackle these issues? What other challenges can we expect in the future and how can we deal with them?

Experiences from our ongoing Interreg Central Europe project "[Social Impact Vouchers](#)" (SIV) show that privately financed labour market instruments - in addition to public ones - can be part of the solution. Within the framework of this project, partner organizations from eight countries have developed voucher models that bring together job seekers and prospective employers in different ways, depending on the target groups and their specific needs, and pilot them in their respective areas of activity. A distinguishing feature that the voucher models have in common is their aim to activate private stakeholders such as companies or impact investors and to involve them in implementing the programmes. Besides innovation in terms of engaging alternative financial mechanisms for funding measures for labour market integration, social innovation with regards to developing and piloting new approaches for labour market instruments has too been a pivotal focus of our project.

With the policy and practice conference, we intend to share the experiences and learnings that we made within the framework of the SIV project to further pave the way for fostering social innovation in the field of labour market integration. Also, we wish to reflect on them with experts in the fields of labour market integration, social impact investing, policy-making and research. We will start with a look at the bigger picture of employment in the European context and explore to what extent social impact investors consider labour market issues as part of their responsibility. This sets the groundwork to help shape the development of future strategies and solution approaches for alleviating unemployment in Europe. Next, we will present our pilots and ideas for scaling them up and for setting up a sustainable follow-up phase for our project. Finally, we will focus on our policy recommendations meant to address the shortcomings and obstacles that we encountered while implementing the pilots.



Agenda

09:30 - 10:00 Online access & get-together

10:00 - 10:15 Opening of the conference

10:15 - 10:40 *Keynote speech:*

Current developments and future trends on the European labour markets

- ▶ Future challenges on European labour market with focus on societal and structural transformations, general regional needs as well as specific needs of disadvantages groups. Changes within European labour markets due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - ▶ Reactions of European Union institutions on new challenges on the labour market. Possible contribution of social innovations to labour market integration.
 - ▶ Outlook of European labour markets. Strategies and possible approaches for dealing with future challenges.
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10:40 - 11:05 *Keynote speech:*

The role of private investors in supporting labour market integration

- ▶ Importance of measures promoting labour market integration for foundations. Good practices, future ideas and possible approaches based on own strategies and actions.
 - ▶ Current gaps and needs and the role of social innovations in the context of designing and implementing labour market instruments. Possible contribution of other private investors to labour market integration.
 - ▶ Outlook of the (future) potential of privately funded measures promoting labour market integration.
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11:05 - 11:15 *Screen & coffee break*

11:15 - 12:30 *Panel discussion:*

The possible contribution of social innovations in the field of labour market integration

- ▶ Potential for improving outcomes of labour market integration by applying innovative instruments. Possible thematic focus and addressed target groups.
- ▶ Potential for diversifying instruments for labour market integration through financial innovation. Requirements, opportunities and limitations.
- ▶ Expected reach and impact of innovative approaches.

12:30 - 13:30 *Screen & lunch break*

13:30 - 14:50 *Breakout sessions*

Session 1: Social impact vouchers (SIVs) for promoting labour market integration

- Good practices from the Interreg SIV project: Voucher models and pilots
- Lessons learned

Session 2: Social Impact Funds (SIFs) as alternative financing mechanisms for labour market interventions

- The Interreg SIV approach: National and transnational funds
- Lessons learned

Session 3: Assessing the social and economic impact of labour market interventions

- Methods and tool for analysing impact
- Key findings from the Interreg SIV evaluation

14:50 - 15:00 *Screen & coffee break*



15:00 - 16:00

Closing session:

Legacy of the Interreg SIV project for the further pursuit of social innovation in the field of labour market integration

- ▶ Summary of the key results of the breakout sessions. Good practices and lessons learned within the framework of the Interreg SIV project
- ▶ Formulation of policy recommendations based on results of the Interreg SIV project

Starting with
16:00

Conclusion of the conference

Get-together and networking