



Brussels, November 2018

SCOPING NOTE

Social Infrastructure Investment in Europe

I. Steering Board for Social Infrastructure Investment

The Steering Board for Social Infrastructure Investment brings together the main representatives of the social services, health, education, social and affordable housing and ageing sectors at European level. Together, we represent thousands of organisations providing services which enable millions of people in Europe to access their human and social rights, to live healthier, to be empowered and to live in dignity, as well as the largest European network of organisations of and for older persons (AGE) .

Many of these services require investment to help deliver more and better services across the continent. The following scoping note further defines the social infrastructure investment needs, how this can be done and highlights the type of projects which can and should be invested in.

II. Investing in Innovative Social Infrastructure

The Steering Board understands Social Infrastructure to primarily mean assets in health, social care and support, education and life-long learning, affordable housing & the Social Economy.

There is huge scope for investment in social infrastructure projects in Europe, including:

- The creation, transformation, renovation, retrofitting or refurbishment of buildings
- Energy efficiency measures of buildings
- Digitalisation,
- Accessibility
- Facilitation of community based services

This “Hard Social Infrastructure” is at the core of any EU investment initiative seeking to increase access to finance in the social sectors. The significant majority of these “Hard Social Infrastructure” projects are small to medium size, which would often require amounts between €1 million and €15 million, with low interest rates and a longer loan duration; than other infrastructure projects. A public guarantee can help to create such conditions for public and private investors.

There is also scope for investment in “Soft Social Infrastructure”. This investment market is less well developed, and will need a shift in approach and framework from investment funds. “Soft social

infrastructure” may include elements such as staff training projects, research, prevention, and the testing of innovative ideas for improved service provision.

III. Trends in Social Infrastructure

Although there are sector-specific differences between the health, social, education and housing sectors, all are experiencing common trends towards more inclusive, person-centred, community-based forms of service provision.

This is encapsulated within the European Pillar of Social Rights, which is about delivering new and more effective rights for citizens, built upon 20 key principles. The following principles require investment into Social Infrastructure to be achievable:

- Principle 1. Education, training and life-long learning, which highlights the need for “quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning”
- Principle 9. Work-life balance, which highlights the importance of “access to care services”.
- Principle 11. Childcare and support to children, focusing on the importance of “early childhood education and good quality care”; as well as the right to “specific measures to enhance equal opportunities for children from disadvantaged backgrounds”
- Principle 16. Healthcare, which brings attention to the necessity of “affordable, preventive and curative health care of good quality”.
- Principle 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities; which raises attention on the need for “services that enable them to participate in the labour market and in society” and a “work environment adapted to their needs”.
- Principle 18. Long-term care; highlighting the need for “affordable long-term care services of good quality, in particular home-care and community-based services”
- Principle 19. Housing and assistance for the homeless, which brings to light the need for “social housing or housing assistance of good quality” and adequate shelter and services for the homeless “to promote their social inclusion”

These principles not only highlight the need for investment into social infrastructure, they also bring to light a specific focus on the trends and investment needs in these sectors; with a strong focus on quality throughout the Pillar. Principle 17 on the inclusion of persons with disabilities is a good example of this as it focuses on services which enable people to get a job and live in the community; therefore -de facto- arguing that services which do not allow for these aspects are not the right way forward in social service provision for persons with disabilities. Similar trends can be established for health (16), education (1), long-term care (18) and housing and assistance for the homeless (19).

In short, the Steering Board argues that any (European) investment instrument for social infrastructure should use the European Pillar of Social Rights as a guiding compass for any investment to be made.

More practical efforts should be made to develop Investment guidelines and indicators for Innovative Social Infrastructure; which ensures that a fine balance is found between encouraging investment into projects which help services best respond to the individual needs of their beneficiaries/users whilst also not discouraging investors away from investment into projects which could still be improved yet would already improve the quality of life of the service users. .

Other European initiatives can also help to guide the types of projects which should be invested in; such as the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social

Services, the European Responsible Housing initiative¹ -launched in 2014- that developed a Responsible Housing CSR Code of Conduct, the recommendations of the Action Plan of the Housing Partnership under EU Urban Agenda² and the different International Conventions: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as WHO declarations, such as, the Astana declaration on primary health care and Tallinn on inclusive Health Systems.

IV. Project Typology

The Health, Social Care & Support, Education and Housing sectors are very broad and heterogenous in the services they cover and provide. It would not be feasible nor practical to comprehensively map the investment needs of these sectors within this scoping note; and thus provide a precise project typology within these fields.

The following section will nonetheless attempt to illustrate the types of projects across Europe which exist and would benefit from a programme supporting investment into innovative social infrastructure.

A. Social Care and Support:

- Housing First projects:
 - Housing First is an innovative model to address homelessness, which is increasingly established as a best practice. It involves providing rapid access to permanent housing, accompanied with support, as the main response to homelessness. Currently, the main response to homelessness in Europe is temporary accommodation³. There is an urgent need for investment to support the shift towards Housing First. Examples of project proposals include:
 - Project in Sweden requiring €7.34 million investment to help reduce homelessness in Stockholm by creating a “social real estate company to provide affordable rental apartments” which would also allow for increased and flexible individual support for residents.
 - Project in France (Lyon). The Metropole of Lyon requires an investment of approximately €35 million per year to implement Housing First in its territory over 5 years. This encompasses several investment strands: acquisition & transformation of private rental stock for social purposes (20 to 25 million); alternative & shared forms of housing (1 million); temporary and infill housing (2 million) ; Community Land Trusts (5 million).
 - Projects in Czech Republic. In a context where structural funds have been programmed for the implementation of HF, there is demand for complementary finance for construction & renovation of housing; and for bridging loans to enable actors on the ground to access structural funds.
- Supported Living project
 - Project requiring €9 million to build/buy 40 accessible studio flats for persons with intellectual disabilities across Flanders. Accompanied with support services, this would enable 40 or more persons with disabilities to live independently and in the community.

¹ <http://www.responsiblehousing.eu/en/>

² <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/housing/actions>

³ See Housing First Guide Europe, available at: <http://housingfirsteurope.eu/guide/>

- Energy Efficiency project
 - Project requiring €3 million investment to make energy-efficiency adaptations to social service providers infrastructure.
- Administrative facilities to coordinate homecare services
 - Project requiring €1.8 million to build an administrative headquarters to help manage, coordinate and organise the relevant home care and support services across the region; thus supporting the shift away from institutional care settings.
- Community-based Services Infrastructure
 - A project in Spain requiring €15 million to help build rural Community-based services infrastructure; primarily one stop shop support structures (integrated services) & development of an IT management platform, connecting the regional government structure of social services with the municipal one stop shop centres.

B. Health

- Integrated primary care facilities
 - The new facilities will help to change the health system dynamics to increase cost-effectiveness, reduce fragmentation, and bring care closer to communities. Projects which integrate soft and hard infrastructure to include health promotion services should be prioritised
 - Building new primary care centres, similar to those built as part of the Primary Care Centres in Ireland.
- Quality outdoor green environments and community-driven spaces
 - Projects to build or renovate outdoor residential areas and public parks to better accommodate and promote active travel (defined as walking or biking to and from work, school, shops/ services, leisure activities, or to public transport) as well as space for community activities and health promotion (eg. urban gardens ; walking tours/corridors ; outdoor activities).
- Healthy Living project (soft infrastructure)
 - An example of a health promotion project is Living Healthy operated by the Croatian Public Health Institute in partnership with 21 county institutes of public health, NGOs, schools and several sectoral ministries. The project targets public awareness about risk factors for non-communicable diseases such as obesity and sedentary lifestyles. Among the cross-sectoral project activities are supplying schools with physical education equipment; improving the visibility of walking routes and supporting the work of volunteers at national parks. The project cost EUR 3,970,366.

C. Education

- Lifelong Learning Community Centers
 - Projects across Europe to build Lifelong Learning Community Centers with Multidisciplinary teams – combining services for an integrated approach and one-stop-shop solution to child development and family support in deprived and marginalised areas. Eg. In Latvia, Danmark and Dublin.

D. Affordable & Social Housing

- Independent living
 - HELM HOUSING ASSOCIATION in Belfast, Northern-Ireland created a comfortable living environment for those living with Dementia, by developing a world-class facility which meets the needs of those with dementia and their loved ones, and creating Belfast’s first dementia friendly community.
 - Curo housing association in the UK carries out the Wellbeing House project which provides affordable housing for adults who can’t immediately return home or who would otherwise be in hospital bed. The project includes Care and Support package tailored to each person, in addition to telecare.

- Urban development and urban regeneration
 - Venning ECO-Life project carried out by Goedkope Woning in Kortrijk, Belgium transformed the most disadvantaged district into the most sustainable one in the city, not just by focusing on energy performance, ecology and CO2 neutrality but also on turning Venning into a pleasant place to live, stripping it of its social stigma.

- Integration of refugees
 - The Staudenhof-Project by Propotsdam created 30 accommodation for refugees in Potsdam and focused on their integration into the society. Beyond building homes, tools used included open work meetings for all interested organisations, day of open doors for tenants, a two-month long city festival in the residential area, community gardening in front of the house.

- Energy efficiency and improving living conditions
 - Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme to tackle energy poverty in Ireland, a 21 million € project to fund energy efficiency improvements in the homes of the elderly and vulnerable, making the homes more comfortable, healthier and more cost effective to run.

