



# THINK THE UNTHINKABLE

**A post Covid-19 European Library Agenda  
meeting Sustainable Development Goals and  
funded through the European Structural and  
Investment Funds (2021-2027)**

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**SHORT VERSION**



**EBLIDA**  
The European Bureau of Library,  
Information and Documentation  
Associations

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## Foreword

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The Report [\*“Think the unthinkable - A post Covid-19 European Library Agenda meeting Sustainable Development Goals and funded through the European Structural and Investment Funds \(2021-2027\)”\*](#) aggregates three reports already released by the EBLIDA European Sustainability House in the first half of 2020 and available on the EBLIDA website:

- [\*“A European library agenda for the post-Covid 19 age”\*](#);
- [\*“European Structural and Investment Funds 2021-2027: Funding opportunities for Libraries”\*](#),
- and [\*“Sustainable Development Goals and libraries. First European Report”\*](#).

The three combined reports will update the [EBLIDA Matrix](#), now available on the EBLIDA website. The reason for the “Think the unthinkable” Report is easy to understand. We are living hard times with little certitudes ahead of us – first and foremost: what will be the future of libraries after Covid-19 crisis? How will they overcome the financial storm which is now affecting all European societies, to a bigger or lesser extent? And will the Covid-19 outbreak imply further divide in library development among European states, and among regions in the same State?

It is very likely that the resilience and eventual survival of European libraries will not be left to the fittest, but to those libraries which will be able to innovate, cooperate, learn from others and open to non-library actors. This line of action can highly benefit from the progress of the Agenda 2030 in libraries in a Europe that is smarter, greener, more connected, more social and closer-to-its-citizens - the five objectives of the 2021-2027 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

If libraries expect to play a role in ESIF, in Europe, and more in general in the 2020-2030 decade, they have to focus on the social, creative, innovative, technological and participative nature of their cultural action. Libraries and sustainable development, and sustainable development in libraries funded by ESIF – this is the realistic strategy libraries could and should embrace, also in the light of the uncertain prospects dictated by post-Covid.

In an appeal launched during the Covid-19 crisis, Mr Enrico Giovannini, former Minister of Labour and now Spokesperson of the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS), has invited organisations working on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to “think the unthinkable”.

This Report gives a few examples on how the unthinkable comes true in European libraries. It is partly a list of best practices, partly an agenda for European libraries, and a practical Guide to European Structural and Investment Funds 2021-2027. It is certainly not a book of dreams.

I hope that the Report will trigger further cooperation and change in libraries. Let’s join our efforts in thinking the unthinkable.

*Ton van Vlimmeren, President EBLIDA*

## 1. A Post Covid-19 European Library Agenda

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### 1.1 A post-Covid 19 agenda

Between March and May 2020, all libraries were locked down all over Europe, in different modalities and with minimal library services. To be closed for a library is a non-identity clause. It is the paradox of this crisis. Normally during crisis the library is an information center and a safe haven for citizens. In this crisis however the library cannot act as a gathering point for sharing stories, answering questions and be a hub in the community.

In order to monitor the state of libraries during the Covid-19 crisis, EBLIDA created a “Checklist for library associations and libraries in the face of Covid-19 crisis” and initiated a survey which involved 17 European countries. The aim of the survey was not only to showcase the effort made by libraries in Europe to mitigate the harmful effects of the Covid-19 outbreak on human beings. It also pointed the way forward for libraries entering the post-Covid-19 age.

In the resulting report “A European library agenda for the post-Covid 19 age”, published in May 2020, EBLIDA identified five new normals for a European Library Agenda in the post-Covid-19 age:

1. Exponential social distancing: a well-connected two-meter library;
2. Technologies are mutating and shaping libraries in new ways;
3. Uncharted economic territory: review the library budget composition;
4. Library governance at central and local levels;
5. Do not forget the climate change opportunity and threat.

1. The new normal in library practices concerns access policies, personnel security, social distancing and sanitation of collections. Rules and regulations have been, and will be, driven by three factors: a) national health regulations; b) risk perception, which varies from one country to another; c) the size and the arrangement of library spaces. EBLIDA diffused recommendations and guidelines for handling physical material in libraries enacted in several European libraries and countries.<sup>1</sup> Library spaces and offices are being re-designed in order to reduce the risk of creating crowds. Library rooms are full of separations and well-spaced desks instead of crowded open spaces. Common areas like canteens and meeting rooms have fewer chairs and log information about the last time they were cleaned. Cleaning policies are frequently updated. Social distancing and the 2-meter society may have a strong impact on the concept of a “complete self-service” or unstaffed library and on the responsibility of a facility being used by patrons without direct human surveillance.

Since library services could not be performed onsite, home delivery services were often activated with book packages to be picked up at the door. The most common service in European libraries has been the creation of platforms ensuring centralised access to Covid-19 related health information produced by governmental authorities, health institutes and the World Health Organisation. This service has been implemented in practically all EBLIDA member countries with a view to combating fake news on Covid-19.

In other countries (especially Ireland, Finland, the Netherlands), libraries and library associations have worked together with local councils library to support education, to offer services to elderly people, including food delivery and children care. and to providing a one-stop access to information, the most common service in European libraries has been the creation of platforms ensuring centralised access

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance, <http://www.eblida.org/news/april-newsletter-special-issue3.html>; more guidelines have been published in most recent Newsletter issues.

to accurate Covid-19 related health information produced by governmental authorities, health institutes and the World Health Organisation. Practically all libraries and/or library associations created pages providing links to official public health information of relevance for libraries (e.g. lifespan of the virus on paper and plastic, quarantining books and other media). In some European libraries, activities were even further integrated into national health policies. Social media was used to offer story time (in Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Bulgaria, Switzerland). In some countries (Lithuania and, to a lesser extent, France and Portugal), libraries helped produce 3D printed face masks for healthcare workers in response to the growing demand for protective equipment. Tight integration into national health policies during the Covid-19 crisis was particularly strong in Ireland, where equipment was donated to hospitals and online lectures and interactive workshops were provided in collaboration with mental health services.

The most visible service libraries provided was the promotion of access to online resources via their websites pointing to platforms of e-books, and e-media. Statistics concerning the use of digital platforms in March-April 2020 compared to the same period in the previous year shows considerable growth in all countries, and in particular in Estonia and Ireland where access to digital resources was two, three or even ten times more intense. In general, it can be said that the use of library platform increased by figures very close to 100 percent. In Latvia and, only for periodicals, in Sweden, national libraries managed to come to an agreement with copyright agencies.

## **1.2 Lessons to be learned from the Covid 19 crisis**

If libraries are hubs for the communities they refer to, the first lesson to be learned is that this library function is easily lost if communities are not circulating. It is not easy to run, or to re-invent, a library in a generalised two-meter society where events are forbidden, 75 % of chairs are removed, services to customers have to comply with social distancing rules and library's outreach is restricted in many ways. The most frequent response during the Covid-19 crisis has been to resort to digital media to channel library information. Therefore, the second lesson to be learned is that libraries should set up contingency plans in case of disasters affecting the society and make attempts to work on a dual mode (physical and digital) to reach their communities, shifting from one channel to another when one of the two modes is unavailable or inaccessible.

There is a big caveat, however. Communities that are at the other hand of the two channels - physical vs digital – are not the same, rather the opposite. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted a new digital divide between the have and the have-nots, in terms of access to broadband, equipment, digital literacy skills, quality technical support, online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration.<sup>2</sup> Furthering technological inclusion, digital literacy, non-formal and informal learning is a big challenge for libraries which have to revise the scale, the scope, the learning objectives and the virtual dimension of their operations to make this happen. It is a fact that targeted communities are not easily interchangeable and dropping one channel would immediately result in the exclusion of a great number of library users.

Apart from considerations on the demand side (the users' perspective), there are also changes which affect library digital offer. Conjuring up contingency plans often means to draft worst scenario with large calamities of a kind that re-design societal habits and its economic asset. It is the case of a war or, as for Covid-19, of a viral disease having wide-ranging effects on human lives. But there are small-scale, sectoral disasters which can be just as calamitous for libraries.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.kb.se/samverkan-och-utveckling/nytt-fran-kb/nyheter-samverkan-och-utveckling/2020-04-08-svens-ka-dags-tid-ning-ar-till-gang-li-ga-for-alla-under-coro-nakrisen.html>

In the previous paragraph we have reported individual cases of libraries having had extraordinary increases in the offer of content provided in their digital platforms. Less transparent are the spectacular increases of accesses to Big Techs' digital platforms. Performances of information service and providers are known only when they impact on the stock exchange markets, which seem to have raised exponentially during the Covid-19 crisis.<sup>3</sup>

Now, imagine an alliance between Big Techs and content service providers (from Google to Netflix, and Amazon to Apple), which start offering aggregated cultural products – films, books, educational content, etc. – at extremely attractive prices close to zero or as freemium models with additional paid-for services. With Big Tech companies taking the lead, digital public libraries will soon be relegated in the backseat of the universal distribution of content. The second lesson to be learned from the Covid-19 crisis – resorting to digital platforms to enhance library services - has to be inflected in relation to short- and long-term visions: if in the short-term the digital channel has magnified library resilience in a calamitous time, in the long-term, it is not taken for granted that the role of public libraries will continue to perform as well as it is now.

Libraries have to take stock of the activities implemented during the Covid-19 crisis; after all, they may be useful for the next emergency. The third lesson learned is that libraries should be able to decouple connectivity and technology: it is not because they are technology-intensive that libraries are in the position of mastering the technologies they use. Libraries need to monitor the movements taking place in their functional domains and exert full control on the data produced within their space and concerning their operations. In other words, libraries need to master data produced by technologies used in their operational arena or at least, when this is not possible because of privacy laws, this data should be shared with library policy-makers as much as possible.

Scaling up library activities by expanding their scope, enhancing learning objectives by emphasising the virtual dimension, data control – all this requires money. It would be a mistake to scale down R&D investments in the future library's agendas: the challenge is to integrate traditional “core” library activities with sustainable development and investment in digital resources and high tech / AI tools. The fourth lesson learned is that, if librarians do not start taking action, administrators and politicians will play a key role in the post-Covid-19 age with their usual glossary of restructuring, core investments, financial cuts and pruning non-essential library branches.

If this comes true, the whole scaffolding built in the last decades on the concept of libraries as “third” and/or “meeting place” may get lost. And together with it, the movement towards the diverse community libraries refer to, their focus on sustainable development goals and even the acquis they have matured up during the Covid-19 crisis. A further risk is that R&D will be put in the library backseat and the gap with information service providers will widen in terms of positions and impact on the society.

A good crisis should never be wasted. There is a risk that the economic post-Covid-19 Agenda will delay or dilute the 2030 European Agenda for Sustainable Development by continuing to fund polluting and unsustainable activities (high carbon emission companies and health-damaging industries) to the

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<sup>3</sup>Widely reported in the press; see for instance: Robin Wigglesworth, How Big Tech got even bigger in the Covid-19 era, Financial Times, 1 May 2020, <https://www.ft.com/content/d2e09235-b28e-438d-9b55-0e6bab7ac8ec>; Naomi Klein, How big tech plans to profit from the pandemic, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2020/may/13/naomi-klein-how-big-tech-plans-to-profit-from-coronavirus-pandemic>, The Guardian, 13 May 2020; Netflix stock up 14% in 2020 at \$375 despite COVID-19; is it sustainable?, Forbes, 2 April 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2020/04/02/netflix-stock-up-14-in-2020-at-375-despite-covid-19-is-it-sustainable/>.

detriment of good-for-society activities addressing vulnerable people and the left-behind. A great deal of library activities used digital channels to reach targeted communities. But certainly, the most effective and impressive action has been developed towards the elderly and vulnerable on lockdown. Covid-19 support service consisting of “Community Call” delivered via phone, text, email and through platforms, the provision of face masks for healthcare workers through 3D printers, food delivery where and when necessary - these were the services which did show library empathy towards their communities and also the fifth and most important lesson to be learned from the crisis.

### **1.3 Thinking the unthinkable: recommendations for a post-Covid 19 library agenda**

During the Covid 19 crisis practically all European libraries and library associations provided health information services. A good number of them, however, departed from the narrow concept of libraries as information service supplier and developed a wide range of social activities aimed at vulnerable people. In spite of social distancing and requirements limiting people’s access to library premises, advanced and/or new direct services to users were engineered. In the aftermath of the Covid 19 pandemic, a European library agenda should progress around three main axes:

- A. A social axe, aimed to strengthen library links with the communities they refer to;
- B. A technological axe, with an enriched offer of digital services and a seamless ability to reach a broader range of users;
- C. A governance axe, with new models and more flexibility in adapting library structures to diversified sources of income.

In regard to the social axe, a European library agenda should:

- 1) To a greater or lesser extent, libraries have been integrated into national health policies during the Covid 19 crisis. Activities in the health (information) field should be preserved and reinforced in locally distributed health policies with services provided through voice (community calls and audiobooks) and making (3D printers), complementing visual-based services (consultation of websites, and visual tools).
- 2) Social distancing and re-thinking library spaces bring about new ways of re-designing people flow-in/flow-out with movements of resources, ideas, and equipment and reinforce the use of technologies in reaching library users.
- 3) During the Covid 19 crisis libraries very often offered a one-stop access to accurate Covid-19 related health information produced by governmental authorities, health institutes and the World Health Organisation. This is a further demonstration that combat to fake news should be the centre stage of library mission.
- 4) A society pivoting around social distancing may end up creating negative requirements leading to social exclusion. European libraries should embark upon a fully-fledged strategy aimed to the vulnerable, the elderly and left-behind, also delivering food where necessary, and adopt hybrid methods (physical and technological combined) to reinforce their action.

In regard to the technological axe, a European library agenda should:

- 5) Reinforce its focus on e-copies (an item deliberately removed from the EU Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market) and use data and experiences matured up during the Covid-19 crisis to design new models of e-copy distribution in libraries, taking into account the economies and policies pursued both by information service providers (free and universal access to content based on advertisement revenues) and aggregators (massive distribution of content at low subscription costs);

- 6) Reinforce digital literacy activities for targeted categories of people in close link with general policies aimed to fill the digital divide, foster digital intelligence in libraries and stimulate multiple use of technologies (for instance, 3D printers used for cultural, educational and health policies);
- 7) Be active partners in national digitalisation and artificial intelligence plans through cutting edge experiences which may scale up library practices from the analogue to the digital and from the digital to the analogue, and combining the two in order to meet library traditional objectives;
- 8) Pursue distance-learning objectives in alliance with educational establishments, stretching out as far as possible the virtual dimension, and capitalise on the library digital offer in order to become hotspots for young people.
- 9) In compliance with privacy regulations, exert control over data and metadata affecting library operations and re-use them for policy-making and decision-making processes, in particular when they concern movements of people and resources and related library outcomes;
- 10) Be active actors in the distribution cycle of the post-production events likely to be built around music, performing arts and live performance as a result of the lethal effects of the Covid-19 crisis in this domain, and therefore request ministries of culture and/or local cultural department/agencies to re-design the system of local aids, fiscal incentives, policy measures and other form of subsidies to culture in a broader holistic perspective.

In regard to the library governance axe, a European library agenda should:

- 11) Request local governments to find additional budget for library services at national and European level in order to compensate for shortcomings in library's future budgets and make the most out of the experience matured by libraries during the Covid-19 crisis;
- 12) Think of themselves as "structurally" essential to the development of a country and, in this way, manage possible financial resources generated from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) 2021-2027, in particular when dealing R&D, artificial intelligence and technological projects, as well as social missions;
- 13) Link the development of the public library to sustainable development activities at local and national level;
- 14) Encourage libraries to be champions of sustainable development policies in all their action and apply the taxonomy regulation on social development set up by the European Commission in all library operations, for instance, in library procurement policies;
- 15) Adopt flexible forms of library governance in order to manage European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) 2021-2027 in an appropriate way.

## 2. Sustainable Development Goals and European Structural and Investment Funds: which library concept?

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Libraries make available a wide offer of cultural and educational products along a continuum going from collection to connection, provide services to citizens aimed at social inclusion and make them key players in lifelong learning, citizen science, research, innovation and the promotion of an active citizenry for a democratic and sustainable society. This definition of a library is functional for SDG-oriented library projects to be funded through ESI Funds.

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development does not explicitly address culture. Nevertheless, UNESCO - the “custodian agency” for all aspects linked with culture and cultural development – has developed a conceptual framework based on four transversal thematic dimensions: *Environment & Resilience* (meeting SD Goals 2,6,9,11,12,13,14,15,16 and corresponding to the ‘Planet’ pillar of the SDGs); *Prosperity & Livelihood*, focused on sustainable economies, income and employment generated through cultural goods and services (meeting SD Goals 8,10,11 and corresponding to the ‘Prosperity’ pillar of the SDGs); *Knowledge & Skills*, empowered through education training, processes, policies and materials (addressing SD Goals 4,8,9,12,13) and *Inclusion & Participation*, concerning the abilities of people to access culture and participate in cultural life, freedom of cultural expression, access to information, and reflecting SD Goals 9,10,11,16.<sup>4</sup>

An empirical way to see how culture is instrumental in implementing SDGs is to examine Voluntary National Reports (VNRs) drafted by UN Member States in order to detect how they report about cultural activities. In Voluntary Regional Reports (VRRs) libraries are mentioned several times: Barcelona libraries have monitored the attainment of SDG 4; the Oodi central library in Helsinki is used as platform for “the development of new solutions with business potential” (SDG 8) and all Oodi 38 libraries fight to reduce inequalities as learning platforms targeted at high-risk target groups and people in need of special support (SDG 10).<sup>5</sup>

The range and variety of library initiatives present in VNRs does not do justice to the profound involvement of European libraries in ESI Funds and SD Goals. The implementation of the Agenda 2030 of sustainable development in libraries has raised enthusiasm and expectations. To give an example, more than 1,600 library events took place in France in a week of September 2019!<sup>6</sup>

Both ESIF and SDG leave room for an extended concept of library, which is functional both for embedding libraries in the 2030 Agenda and in the provision of ESI Funds and can be so defined:

*By making available a wide offer of cultural and educational products in a continuum going from collection to connection, European libraries are providing services to citizens aiming at social inclusion; they are also key players in lifelong learning, citizen science, research, innovation and the promotion of an active citizenry for a democratic and sustainable society.*

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<sup>4</sup> UNESCO. Culture 2030 Indicators, cit., pp. 26 and ss.

<sup>5</sup> Yildirim, Ege; Baltà Portolés, Jordi; Pascual, Jordi; Perrino, Massimo; Llobet, Marta; Wyber, Stephen; Phillips, Peter; Gicquel, Laurent; Martínez, Raquel; Miller, Shanon; Guerra, Claudia (2019). *Culture in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda*. Project Report. Culture2030Goal campaign, Paris.

<http://openarchive.icomos.org/2167/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://agenda2030bibfr.wixsite.com/agenda2030bib/presentation>.

### 3. Sustainable Development Goals and their implementation in European libraries

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#### 3.1 Why a Europe-oriented library approach to SDGs

In September 2015, the UN General Assembly approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 169 targets and 232 indicators - a roadmap for UN countries towards sustainable prosperity, social inclusion and equality while at the same time preserving our planet and leaving no one behind. All countries share the responsibility to contribute, within the limits of their capacity, to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development has been running since 2001. A multi-stakeholder platform, including high-level experts and policy-makers in sustainability issues across all EU countries, was set up in 2017 to support and advise the European Commission on the implementation of the SDGs at EU level.<sup>7</sup>

There are several reasons why the EU approach can be considered different from the one set up at UN level.

First of all, the goals are interpreted according to the EU context. For example, Goal 1, “No Poverty” is considered a multidimensional phenomenon. EU Programmes and projects within Goal 1 deal with absolute poverty. An even greater deal, however, focuses on relative poverty with a view to breaking the poverty chain. Goal 2: “Zero Hunger” in Europe focusses more on food waste and security than on food shortage. Unlike many disadvantaged regions of the world, which face hunger, the EU’s central nutritional challenge is obesity; therefore, the European Commission has given priority to the fight against obesity by encouraging organic farming.

Second, sustainability indicators in the European Union reflect the priority changes described in EU National Voluntary Reports. Eurostat has set up its own series of indicators. In most cases they mirror those present in the UN SDG scheme. In several cases, however, EU indicators depart from them and evaluate sub-targets which are EU country specific. For instance, the main Eurostat indicator assessing the implementation of Goal 2 is the percentage of obesity in population – an indicator which is not present among the 13 UN indicators used to measure the attainment of Goal 2 at international level.

Third, EU programmes and projects have been subjected to a re-think and are re-adapting in order to comply with UN SDGs. The European Commission has made extensive efforts to introduce elements of sustainability into EU activities integrating the SDG targets. A large amount of funding opportunities are therefore available to European stakeholders involved in the implementation of SDGs, provided that they take into account EU specific policies and the objectives set up by EU programmes.

#### 3.2 SDG-oriented library projects

European libraries, too, can apply to EU schemes in order to consolidate and boost their activities in favour of sustainable development. They have to keep in mind, however, that there is a specific European approach that differs from that of the UN in terms of SDG interpretation, assessment and funding criteria. Libraries are considered not only *lieux du livre* (book places), but *lieux du vivre* (life

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<sup>7</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/international-strategies/sustainable-development-goals/multi-stakeholder-platform-sdgs\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/international-strategies/sustainable-development-goals/multi-stakeholder-platform-sdgs_en).

places).<sup>8</sup> They can cover SD Goals in a way which is consistent with the objectives set up by a European Union which ambitions to be climate-neutral by 2050, as well as “smarter” and “closer” to its citizens. European libraries are setting up SDG projects with a view to meeting SDG objectives and enlarging their scope of action. But first, they have to get rid of four false myths surrounding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development when applied to libraries, namely the idea that SDG-oriented library projects a) do not fall within the library’s core mission, b) are of an environmental nature, c) concern mainly fiscal and legislative macro-policies and d) fit small-scale, locally based projects of demonstrative nature.

The list of SDG-oriented library projects mentioned in this report has been drafted on the basis of the responses received from EBLIDA Members to two EBLIDA Questionnaires: “Sustainable Development Goals and their Implementation in European Libraries” and “The European Structural and Investment Funds”. Examples of models / best practices in libraries are summarised in the following Table.

SDG	Goal description	Library Project / Best Practice
1	No poverty	Guidance and support to lift people out of poverty and integrate most deprived people better into society (4 cities in the Netherlands). An écrivain public regularly attends libraries to facilitates people with literacy problems in their administrative tasks, helping them fulfil their civil rights (France).
2	Zero Hunger	Agrolib project helps farmers with subsidies and incentives for agricultural development (Serbia and Romania).
3	Good Health and Well-Being	Production of 3D printed face masks during the Covid 19 crisis (Lithuania and to a lesser extent, also Portugal and France). Free book packages to babies aged six months and older (Belgium). Born to read, in collaboration with paediatric associations (Italy). Active Living Area, Citizen Science project transforming 80 ha of farmland and woods surrounding the SD University in a community driven outdoor living lab (Denmark).
4	Quality education	“Treffpunkt Deutsch” access to language training and educational resources to the immigrant community (Germany). Many more library projects in the following fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extended general support to students;</li> <li>- Young students having special needs (dyslexia, etc.),</li> <li>- Relapse into illiteracy;</li> <li>- Digital illiteracy;</li> <li>- Language courses and in particular, language courses for the host country for immigrants;</li> <li>- Extended library openings on special events;</li> <li>- Libraries as social meeting points for women at home and/or of non-national origin;</li> <li>- Vocational training;</li> <li>- Use of digital resources and databases;</li> <li>- Children reading;</li> <li>- EU information and access to EU databases;</li> <li>- Sources in open access.</li> </ul>
5	Gender Equality	Re-thinking the whole library system as an institutional engine designed to attain SDG 5 (Spain); IHLIA in the Public Library of Amsterdam, ATRIA Institute, Centrum Schwule Geschichte (Cologne) and networks of women’s library.

<sup>8</sup> Ministère de la Culture. Voyage aux pays des bibliothèques Lire aujourd’hui, lire demain Par Erik Orsenna et Noël Corbin. Février 2018, [file:///fs-srv-p100/users\\$/gvi010/Desktop/20182002%20Rapport%20Voyage%20au%20pays%20des%20biblioth%C3%A8ques.pdf](file:///fs-srv-p100/users$/gvi010/Desktop/20182002%20Rapport%20Voyage%20au%20pays%20des%20biblioth%C3%A8ques.pdf).

6	Clean Water and Sanitation	Implementation of the Green Library, green building certificate (in various countries).
7	Affordable and Clean Energy	Implementation of the Green Library through: a) reduction of energy consumption; b) efficient use of the energy supply; c) default powering off or going into standby mode; d) use of the simplest and most user-friendly solutions; and e) use of passive systems for the environment adjustment (IFLA Checklist) Air seekers project (Belgium).
8	Decent Work and Economic Growth	Link between quality education and sustainable economic growth (Spain) and children-oriented activities (Spain). “Get Your Facts Straight! Media Literacy for All”, “E-skills for E-inclusion”, Mini Technology Centre in Vratsa (Bulgaria).
9	Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	Educational projects in the regional libraries of Plovdiv, Smolyan and Stara Zagora districts (Bulgaria); 3D applications in libraries (Lithuania, France,, Portugal and other countries).
10	Reducing Inequality	BIST (Bibliotheken im Stadtteil, “Libraries in the City area”) consisting of: improvement and adaptation of the social infrastructure; b) social development of library services in disadvantaged neighbourhoods; c) Further development of library services (Germany). Ideas Box: fully-fledged mobile library in a container (Bibliothèques Sans Frontières, international). Access to computers for immigrants from Albania, Russia, Ukraine and Bulgaria (Greece).
11	Sustainable Cities and Communities	Libraries as factors of urban regeneration (Aarhus, Helsinki, Paris, and many more cities). Book heritage projects (in many European cities), in particular: “St. Cyril and Methodius” National Library of Bulgaria established as a Centre of Excellence for the Bulgarian Heritage, “Written treasures of the Lower Danube” (Bulgaria-Romania) and “Cultural and historical destinations” (Bulgaria.Turkey) Building renovation in Oranienburg and Waltershausen (Germany).
12	Responsible Consumption and Production	“The land is cleaner, we are more knowledgeable”: a 3D Printer is made available to every student in return of plastic bottles (Bulgaria); BYOD (Bring Your Own Device), a Citizen Science aimed to engage citizens in research regarding electronic waste (Denmark); “Plastic Troop Challenge”, LocHal Library (Tilburg, NL).
13	Climate Action	ISO standard 14001:2004: Environmental management systems — Requirements with guidance for use (Spain).
14	Life below water	Regional book prize for environment (France).
15	Life On Land	“Harvest your city” a local library becomes a urban garden (Germany); “Wildlife around us”, make people aware of the wildlife around them (Bulgaria).
16	Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	Public debate around environmental sustainability and democracy, and “Human Library” (Spain) ; VPRO Tegenlicht (Backlight) Meetups in libraries (Netherlands); Combat against fake news (In Europe: France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom; EBLIDA is promoting NewsGuard).
17	Partnerships for the Goals	Bibliothèques sans Frontières in 50 countries (international) ; Human Library – People on Loan (Denmark + ca 80 countries); Financial support in the following areas: Health and Science, Poverty Reduction and Social Cohesion, Universal Education, Biodiversity and Climate Change (Fondation de Luxembourg).

### 3.3 SDG-oriented library policies and indicators

Beyond SDG stories, libraries can go one step further in advocacy and explore a more advanced narrative of policies and indicators. Several model policies have been detected. In Latvia, SDGs are applied according to an “institutional” policy, where Latvian libraries are considered “organically” functional to the implementation of SDGs. In some other countries, for instance in France and Germany, the librarians’ movements towards the 2030 Agenda result from a multitude of activities, exhibitions and events linked with SDGs. In Spain, the case for the 2030 Agenda has found a systemisation in a strategic proposal jointly elaborated by CCB - the body where meaningful organisations acting as catalysts for library change are represented – axed on six SD Goals: 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reducing Inequality), 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). SDG policies can also be detected in the way the 2030 Agenda is used in various European countries, for instance if SDG-oriented library activities are funded through the European Structural and Investment Funds or other EC programmes.

A thorny issue, not easily solved, concerns indicators applied in libraries. Libraries are not economic agents and a more rounded and complete picture should measure the impact of libraries on: a) individual abilities, competencies, representations and behaviours; b) society - in terms of social inclusion, education, lifelong learning, cultural heritage, public health and reinforcement of democracy, and c) the economy, in terms of Return on Investment (RoI) and the commercial life of a city or a region. Since these measurements are difficult and costly, comparing library performance indicators with SDG indicators poses a problem of pragmatism. How determinant can libraries be in contributing to the attainment of goals? The answer may be found in the need for having more ad hoc, library-tailored targets and indicators, which may be used to evaluate SDG-oriented library projects.

## 4. What are European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) 2021-2027

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### 4.1 Seven Funds and Five Main Objectives<sup>9</sup>

To enable consistency with other EU policies, the rules on delivery and implementation of ERDF and the Cohesion Fund are governed as far as possible by the Common Provisions Regulation. ESI Funds 2021-2027 set out common provisions for seven shared management funds at the EU level:

CF:	Cohesion Fund
EMFF:	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF:	European Regional Development Fund
ESF+:	European Social Fund Plus
AMIF:	Asylum and Migration Fund
ISF:	Internal Security Fund
BMVI:	Border Management and Visa Instrument

Still to be adopted, the majority of ERDF funding (65 % to 85 %) will focus on smart growth and the green economy, but also support other activities such as connectivity, social issues and local development; the CF will continue to focus predominantly on environmental and transport infrastructure.<sup>10</sup> Being part of the EU's budget from 2021-2027, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) will be the main financial instrument to strengthen Europe's social dimension.<sup>11</sup>

Five main objectives (also designated as PO, Policy Objectives) will determine the development of ESI Funds in 2021-2027:

1. **A Smarter Europe**, through innovation, digitisation, economic transformation and support to small and medium-sized businesses (PO 1);
2. **A Greener, carbon free Europe**, implementing the Paris Agreement and investing in energy transition, renewables and the fight against climate change (PO 2);
3. **A more Connected Europe**, with strategic transport and digital networks (PO 3);
4. **A more Social Europe**, delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights and supporting quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare (PO 4);
5. **A Europe closer to citizens**, by supporting locally-led development strategies and sustainable urban development across the EU (PO 5).

### 4.2 How to use ESIF 2021-2027 to implement Sustainable Development Goals in library projects

Evidence for this Chapter has been found in two fundamental pieces of EU legislation. The first is the "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund", which has been submitted to the European Parliament and expects to be approved in an EP Plenary session before adoption. The proposal concerns the next multi-annual financial ERDF framework for the period 2021-2027 and provides for a date of application

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<sup>9</sup> What follows summarizes the content of the document: European Commission. Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund Strasbourg, 29.5.2018 COM(2018) 372 final 2018/0197(COD), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52018PC0375&from=EN>

<sup>10</sup> Agnieszka Widuto. European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund 2021-2027. Briefing EU Legislation in Progress 2021-2027, PE 625.141 Members' Research Service PE 625.141 – January 2020, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/625141/EPRS\\_BRI\(2018\)625141\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/625141/EPRS_BRI(2018)625141_EN.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=62&langId=en>

as of 1 January 2021.<sup>12</sup> The second is the “Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)”, a fund whose aim is essentially job improvement in Europe.<sup>13</sup> Among the seven funds, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund (CF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) are those where libraries can find the most attractive funding opportunities.

ESIF managing authorities, which are different in every Member State,<sup>14</sup> are now making fundamental choices concerning the directions to be given to the policy objectives and the future allocation of funds. In order to ensure consistent monitoring of progress towards performance, the regulation also maintains a common set of output and results indicators.

In the following pages, seven tables corresponding to the specific ESI Funds 2021-2027 objectives and sub-objectives are combined with library projects for which information has been included in the answers to the “Survey on Sustainable Development Goals and their implementation in European libraries” - a Questionnaire sent to EBLIDA Members last March. For each ESIF objective, Column 1 designates the ERDF or ESF+ specific objective. Column 2 and 3 set, respectively, the related outputs and results indicated by ESIF official documents. It can be easily inferred that European Commission criteria for evaluation are quite general and do not get into the detail of the programmes. It is up to Member States to set additional criteria for evaluation.

Finally, Column 4 lists examples of library projects set up to pursue ESIF objectives or to attain specific Sustainable Development Goals. ESIF-funded and SDG-oriented library projects are therefore matched with specific ESIF 2021-2027 objectives and sub-objectives. *What is shown in the table is therefore a simulation*: under which presumed ESIF specific objective could SDG-oriented library projects have been funded, if they were to be presented within the ESIF 2021-2027 framework?

For each specific objective, one or more relevant EC programmes have also been indicated. This indication may provide for additional sources of funding opportunities or can be used as reference purpose for ESIF implementers.

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<sup>12</sup> Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund, Strasbourg, 29.5.2018, COM(2018) 372 final 2018/0197(COD) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52018PC0372&from=EN>.

<sup>13</sup> Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) Brussels, 30.5.2018 COM(2018) 382 final 2018/0206 (COD), <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2018/EN/COM-2018-382-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>

<sup>14</sup> The list, country after country, and region after region is available at the following link, [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/atlas/managing-authorities/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/managing-authorities/).

### 4.3 ESIF Objective 1 - ERDF: A smarter Europe from a library perspective

The specific objective (ii) Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies and governments, can be of interest to libraries in so far as it supports the development of digital products, services and applications in public institutions. Column 4 lists library projects which have shaped the implementation of the Agenda 2030 in several countries, as reported in the answers to the “Sustainable Development Goals and libraries: First European Report”, which are incoming at the EBLIDA Secretariat.

Horizon Europe and COSME are two of the EC programmes that should be taken into account for ESIF Objective 1. Horizon Europe identifies, among other things, key areas for research and innovation. COSME is the EU programme for Competitiveness of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises.

**ESIF Objective 1: Synoptic Table ERDF-SDG**

Specific Objective	Outputs	Results	SDG	Library projects
(i) Enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies	CCO 01 - Enterprises supported to innovate CCO 02 - Researchers working in supported research facilities	CCR 01 – (SMEs introducing product, process, marketing or organisational innovation CCR 02 - Additional users of new digital products, services and applications developed by enterprises and public institutions	<b>8</b> <b>9</b>	
(ii) Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies and governments	CCO 03 - Enterprises and public institutions supported to develop digital products, services and applications		<b>10</b> <b>4</b> <b>16</b>	National Library established as a technological Centre of Excellence (Bulgaria) Digital literacy (Spain and many other countries) Fight to fake news (France, Germany, Italy)
(iii) Enhancing growth and competitiveness of SMEs	CCO 04 - SMEs supported to create jobs and growth	CCR 03 - Jobs created in SMEs supported	<b>8</b> <b>10</b>	
(iv) Developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship	CCO 05 - SMEs investing in skills development	CCR 04 - SMEs staff benefiting from training for skills development	<b>9</b>	Digital Skills for SME (Bulgaria)

#### 4.4 ESIF Objective 2 - ERDF: A greener, low-carbon Europe

ESIF Objective 2 largely covers the environmental pillar of the European Union 2030 Agenda.

For reference purposes, the EC programme LIFE is dedicated to the environment and climate action.

**ESIF Objective 2: Synoptic Table ERDF-SDG**

Specific objective	Outputs	Results	SDG	Library projects
(i) Promoting energy efficiency measures	CCO 06 – Investments in measures to improve energy efficiency	CCR 05 – Beneficiaries with improved energy classification	<b>6</b>	Green libraries (France, Germany, Netherlands, etc)
			<b>7</b>	Citizen Science projects
(ii) Promoting renewable energy	CCO 07 - Additional renewable energy production capacity	CCR 06 – Volume of additional renewable energy produced	<b>7</b>	
(iii) Developing smart energy systems, grids and storage at local level	CCO 08 - Digital management systems developed for smart grids	CCR 07 - Additional users connected to smart grids	<b>7</b>	
(iv) Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience	CCO 09 - New or upgraded disaster monitoring, warning and response systems	CCR 08 - Additional population benefiting from protection measures against floods, forest fires, and other climate related natural disasters	<b>13</b> <b>14</b> <b>15</b>	
(v) Promoting sustainable water management	CCO 10 - New or upgraded capacity for waste water treatment	CCR 09 - Additional population connected to at least secondary waste water treatment	<b>6</b>	
(vi) Promoting the transition to a circular economy	CCO 11 – New or upgraded capacity for waste recycling	CCR 10 - Additional waste recycled	<b>12</b>	Library projects concerning circular economy (Bulgaria)
(vii) Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution	CCO 12 - Surface area of green infrastructure in urban areas	CCR 11 - Population benefiting from measures for air quality	<b>11</b> <b>14</b> <b>15</b>	Air seekers (Belgium) Restructuring Libraries and Libraries and urban gardens (Germany)

#### 4.5 ESIF Objective 3 - ERDF: A more connected Europe

ESIF Objective 3 mainly deals with mobility and enhanced and high-speed transporting systems. Therefore, it is of little relevance for library projects. Nevertheless, the enhancement of digital connectivity - Specific Objective (i) - cannot be realized without what IFLA defines as “meaningful” access to the Internet in its four facets: physical internet connectivity, skills, social and cultural context, and laws.

**ESIF Objective 3: Synoptic Table ERDF-SDG**

<b>Specific objective</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>SDG</b>	<b>Library projects</b>
(i) Enhancing digital connectivity	CCO 13 - Additional households and enterprises with coverage by very high capacity broadband networks	CCR 12 - Additional households and enterprises with broadband subscriptions to a very high capacity networks	<b>9</b>	Digital literacy (Spain and many other countries)
(ii) Developing a sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent, secure and intermodal TEN-T	CCO 14 – Road TEN-T: New and upgraded roads	CCR 13 - Time savings due to improved road infrastructure	<b>9</b> <b>11</b>	
(iii) Developing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility	CCO 15 – Rail TEN-T: New and upgraded railways	CCR 14 - Annual number of passengers served by improved rail transport	<b>11</b>	
(iv) Promoting sustainable multimodal urban mobility	CCO 16 - Extension and modernisation of tram and metro lines	CCR 15 - Annual users served by new and modernised tram and metro lines	<b>11</b>	

#### 4.6 ESIF Objective 4 - ERDF and ESF+: A more social Europe

The European Social Pillar of Social Rights is structured in three chapters - equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion - and twenty principles - going from education, training and life-long learning and gender equality to equal opportunities and access to essential services.<sup>15</sup> The European Social Pillar of Social Rights largely overlaps with the Social and Economic Pillars of the Agenda 2030. The reference EC programme for social rights is Erasmus +.

**ESIF Objective 4: Synoptic Table ERDF-SDG**

Specific objective	Outputs	Results	SDG	Library projects
(i) Enhancing the effectiveness of labour markets and access to quality employment through developing social innovation and infrastructure	CCO 17 - Annual unemployed persons served by enhanced facilities for employment services	CCR 16 - Job seekers using annually enhanced facilities for employment services	<b>1</b>  <b>10</b>	BIST ( Bibliotheken im Stadtteil) I and II (Germany) Ecrivain public in French public libraries
(ii) Improving access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing infrastructure	CCO 18 - New or upgraded capacity for childcare and education infrastructure	CCR 17 - Annual users served by new or upgraded childcare and education infrastructure	<b>4</b>  <b>5</b>	Many education, training and lifelong learning projects all over Europe (also to be matched with Erasmus+) Digital literacy (Spain) Gender Equality (Spain)
(iii) Increasing the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities, migrants and disadvantaged groups, through integrated measures including housing and social services;	CCO 19 - Additional capacity of reception infrastructures created or upgraded	CCR 18 - Annual users served by new and improved reception and housing facilities	<b>1</b>  <b>5</b>	BIST ( Bibliotheken im Stadtteil) I and II (Germany) FEAD projects (Netherlands) Ecrivain public (France) Treffpunkt Deutsch (Germany)
(iv) Ensuring equal access to health care through developing infrastructure, including primary care	CCO 20 - New or upgraded capacity for health care infrastructure	CCR 19 - Population with access to improved health care services	<b>3</b>	3D printers supplying masks (Lithuania) Book start (Belgium, Netherlands) Born to Read (Italy)

<sup>15</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en)

The ESF is Europe’s main instrument for supporting jobs, helping people get better jobs and ensuring fairer job opportunities for all EU citizens.<sup>16</sup> Specific objectives (i) to (iv) concern access to employment, labour market, education, training and lifelong learning.<sup>17</sup>

**ESIF Objective 4: Synoptic Table ESF+-SDG (i-iv)**

	<b>Specific objective</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>SDG</b>	<b>Library projects</b>
(i)	improving access to employment of all jobseekers, in particular youth and long term unemployed, and of inactive people, promoting self-employment and the social economy;	* Personal data (Art 4(1) Regulation (EU) 2016/679) * * special category of data (Art 9 Regulation(EU) 2016/679).  (1a) Common output indicators for participants	(3) The common immediate result indicators for participants are: – participants engaged in job searching upon leaving*, – participants in education or training upon leaving*, – participants gaining a qualification upon leaving*, – participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving*.	<b>1</b> <b>8</b> <b>10</b>	Digital literacy (Spain and other countries) FEAD projects (Netherlands)
(ii)	modernising labour market institutions and services to assess and anticipate skills needs and ensure timely and tailor-made assistance and support to labour market matching, transitions and mobility;	– unemployed, including long-term unemployed*, – long-term unemployed*, – inactive*, – employed, including self-employed*, – below 30 years of age *, – above 54 years of age*, – with lower secondary education or less (ISCED 0-2)*, – with upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4)*, – with tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)*.			
(iii)	promoting equal access to and completion of, quality and inclusive education and training, in particular for disadvantaged groups, from early childhood education and care through general and vocational education and training, and to tertiary level, as well as adult education and learning, including facilitating learning mobility for all;	(1b) Other common output indicators: – participants with disabilities**, – third country nationals*, – participants with a foreign background*, – minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)**, – homeless or affected by housing exclusion*,	(4) Common longer-term result indicators for participants: – participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving*, – participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving*.	<b>4</b> <b>8</b>	Many education, training and lifelong learning projects all over Europe (also to be matched with Erasmus+) Digital Skills for SME (Bulgaria)
(iv)	promoting lifelong learning, notably flexible upskilling and reskilling opportunities for all taking into account digital skills, better anticipating change and new skills requirements based on labour market needs, facilitating career transitions and promoting professional mobility;	(2) Common output indicators for entities are: – number of supported public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level, – number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, social enterprises).			

<sup>16</sup> Article 4 of the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) Brussels, 30.5.2018 COM(2018) 382 final 2018/0206 (COD), <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2018/EN/COM-2018-382-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>

<sup>17</sup> Annexes to the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9573-2018-ADD-2/en/pdf>.

Specific objective (v) to (xi) concern social inclusion and integration as well as equal access to services.

**ESIF Objective 4: Synoptic Table ESF+-SDG (v-xi)**

	<b>Specific objective</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>SDG</b>	<b>Library projects</b>
(v)	fostering active inclusion with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability;	* Personal data (Art 4(1) Regulation (EU) 2016/679) ** special category of data (Art 9 Regulation(EU) 2016/679).  (1a) Common output indicators for participants – unemployed, including long-term unemployed*, – long-term unemployed*, – inactive*, – employed, including self-employed*, – below 30 years of age *, – above 54 years of age*, – with lower secondary education or less (ISCED 0-2)*, – with upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4)*, – with tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)*. (1b) Other common output indicators: – participants with disabilities**, – third country nationals*, – participants with a foreign background*, – minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)**, – homeless or affected by housing exclusion*, (2) Common output indicators for entities are: – number of supported public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level, – number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, social enterprises).	(3) The common immediate result indicators for participants are: – participants engaged in job searching upon leaving*, – participants in education or training upon leaving*, – participants gaining a qualification upon leaving*, – participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving*.  (4) Common longer-term result indicators for participants: – participants in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving*, – participants with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving*.	<b>1</b> <b>5</b> <b>8</b> <b>10</b>	Gender Equality (Spain) Ecrivain public in French public libraries FEAD projects (Netherlands)
(vi)	promoting socio-economic integration of third country nationals and of marginalised communities such as the Roma;			<b>1</b> <b>5</b> <b>10</b>	Media Literacy for All and E-skills for E-inclusion (Bulgaria) Digital literacy (Spain)
(vii)	enhancing the equal and timely access to quality, sustainable and affordable services; modernising social protection systems, including promoting access to social protection; improving accessibility, effectiveness and resilience of healthcare systems and long-term care services;			<b>1</b> <b>3</b> <b>8</b>	Book start (Belgium, Netherlands)
(viii)	promoting social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, including the most deprived and children;			<b>1</b> <b>8</b> <b>10</b>	FEAD projects (Netherlands) Ecrivain public (France)
(ix)	promoting equal access to and completion of, quality and inclusive education and training, in particular for disadvantaged groups, from early childhood education and care through general and vocational education and training, and to tertiary level, as well as adult education and learning, including facilitating learning mobility for all;			<b>4</b> <b>10</b>	Many education, training and lifelong learning projects all over Europe (also to be matched with Erasmus+)
(x)	promoting social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, including the most deprived and children;			<b>1</b>	Ecrivain public
(xi)	addressing material deprivation through food and/or basic material assistance to the most deprived.				

#### 4.7 ESIF Objective 5 - ERDF: a Europe closer to citizens

There are two specific objectives linked with the implementation of ESIF Objective 5: the first is related to urban development and the second to rural and coastal areas in their integrated social, economic and environmental aspects. Only one indicator, however, is applied: the population covered by strategies for integrated urban development.

**ESIF Objective 5: Synoptic Table ERDF-SDG**

<b>Specific objective</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>SDG</b>	<b>Library projects</b>
(i) Fostering the integrated social, economic and environmental development, cultural heritage and security in urban areas	CCO 21 - Population covered by strategies for integrated urban development		<b>2</b> <b>11</b> <b>14</b>  <b>15</b>  <b>16</b>	Agrolib – Ja (Republic of Serbia); Biblionet (Romania) Cultural heritage library projects in many countries (Bulgaria-Romania, Bulgaria-Turkey, States bordering the Adriatic Sea) Library campaigns promoting biodiversity on land and water Libraries promoting democratic participation

## 5. The role of EBLIDA in the European 2030 Agenda and in ESI Funds applied to library projects

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Since 2019, EBLIDA, the European Bureau of Library, Documentation and Information Associations, has integrated all Strands of its Strategic Plan into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in European libraries. EBLIDA tasks are the following:

- to increase awareness about the European way to Sustainable Development,
- to support European libraries in the attainment of UN SDGs,
- to compare SDG-oriented library indicators and EU sustainability indicators and, finally,
- to help libraries utilise and align their objectives with EU programmes designed to implement SDGs in Europe.

There are three areas in which EBLIDA can support libraries in a useful way: a) Advocacy; b) Studies and Research, and c) Consultancy and Training.

*Advocacy.* Advocacy for libraries does not only consist of being present in European institutions making the case of the importance of libraries to society. Lobbying is an important aspect of advocacy but Europe is much larger than the institutions confined into the small perimeter of the Brussels region. Advocacy has to be carried out at three levels: European, national and local.

In 2019, advocacy at European level was carried out in collaboration with PL 2030. PL 2030 has initiated a dense work of advocacy, in particular with the European Parliament. Generation Code, organised by PL2030, is an interactive exhibition showcasing the top innovative digital exhibits from public libraries across the EU. A good number of MEPs visit the exhibition and have an in-depth understanding of what libraries do and how future technologies are interacting with libraries in Europe.<sup>18</sup> EBLIDA stimulates the involvement of its Members during the exhibition who have the opportunity of advocating for libraries with MEPs.

Even more productive may be advocacy for Sustainable Development Goals at horizontal level, in collaboration with library associations and EBLIDA Members. Advocacy from below consists of empowering library administrators or administrators whose competence extends to libraries with knowledge regarding SDG policies at European level and related indicators. It also consists of spreading an administrative culture of sustainability in relation to national and local policies. Advocacy from below is just as essential as lobbying at European level.

*Studies and Research.* The EBLIDA SDG European House<sup>19</sup> opened in October 2019 with a view to delivering services to the EBLIDA communities through tools, studies and researches and training activities. The EBLIDA House is supported by the EBLIDA ELSA Group (European Libraries and Sustainability Assessment), whose aim is to establish proper methodologies for the assessment of library performance in the social and economic field, and advocate for libraries at European level by measuring the impact of libraries on the society as a whole.

- a. So far, the most important output of the SDG European House is the EBLIDA Matrix, a comprehensive toolkit which describes, goal after goal and programme after programme:
  - a) EU programmes pursuing Sustainable Development Goals which are relevant for libraries;
  - b) EUROSTAT indicators, and related trends, for each of the Goals;
  - c) on-going library policies in Europe contributing to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals;

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<sup>18</sup> <https://publiclibraries2030.eu/projects/generation-code/>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.eblida.org/activities/the-eblida-sdg-european-house.html>

d) library indicators (under construction).

EBLIDA Matrix works for the library sector, but can also be successfully transferred to other cultural institutions, like museums and archives. It can be used in three possible ways:

- a) As a compass: to frame national and / or regional library policies into the broader framework of sustainable policies described in European programmes and policies, including ESIF. Libraries can align their policies to those developed by other actors also implementing SDG policies. Partnerships with prominent EU actors help libraries to get out of their isolation; through EU databases they can find local partners and work effectively for the communities they refer to.
- b) As a calculator: to evaluate to what extent library performances align with sustainability indicators in place for each SDG. The impact of library SDG-oriented projects is different depending on whether they consist of one-off events or are long-term policies linked to local communities. Their evaluation through Eurostat sustainable indicators or ad hoc indicators provides for objective terms of assessment and sets SDG activities in libraries into the right socio-economic context.
- c) As a banner: to raise the library's profile and show how an individual library or a library system can contribute to saving the planet and make people happier. When libraries cooperate with external partners, they achieve full integration into qualified and often advanced networks. Section 1 of the EBLIDA Matrix lists relevant EU programmes for which libraries may find appropriate partnerships for sustainable targets. Therefore, the EBLIDA Matrix is also a list of funding opportunities for libraries.

*Consultancy and Training.* Based on the documentation and studies developed by EBLIDA, training and consultancy activities are being organised in 2020. The first is the joint LIBER-EBLIDA webinar on Citizen Science.

ESI Funds allow for "hard" investment in the library field; so far, libraries have used them in a moderate way. The EBLIDA Secretariat wishes to work in collaboration with its Members on the implementation of SDG projects in libraries and related funding. Tailored consultancy will be offered to EBLIDA Members on the use of ESI Funds in European libraries. Consultancy work will consist of making the best use of the EBLIDA Matrix and in providing suggestions and solutions for possible projects and strategies within ESI Funds.