



Ireland's European Structural and Investment Funds Programmes 2014-2020

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## European Social Fund (ESF) Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020

### ESF ANTI-FRAUD STRATEGY

Article 72 (h) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (CPR) requires Member States to prevent, detect, correct irregularities including fraud, and the recovery of amounts unduly paid together with any interest on late payments.

Article 122 CPR is the legal basis for reporting irregularities and suspected fraud.

Article 125 (4) (C) CPR states in relation to the financial management and control of the operational programme, the MA shall:

*“put in place effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures taking into account the risk identified”*

The European Commission's Joint Anti-Fraud Strategy 2015-2020 has intensified the anti-fraud effort through a series of new initiatives, one being the introduction of a specific regulatory anti-fraud requirement for 2014-2020 in the CPR (Article 125 (4)) which requires Managing Authorities (MAs) to put in place effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures taking into account the risks identified. The Commission has also provided related guidance to MAs, including a fraud risk assessment tool.

The ESF MA's anti-fraud strategy has utilised the Commission's guidance, fraud risk assessment tool and templates and involves the following initiatives:

- Fraud Risk Self-Assessment
- Anti-Fraud Measures
- Action Plan

#### **Fraud Risk Self-Assessment**

The Fraud Risk Self-Assessment tool is used to assess the impact and likelihood of common fraud risk occurring. The operational objective for the ESF MA is to deliver fraud responses which are proportionate to the risks and tailored to the specific situations related to the ESF fund.

#### **Anti-Fraud Measures**

Related mitigating controls have been put in place to address specific situations which may arise at the level of selection of projects, implementation of programmes and verification of activities, certification and payments and direct procurement by the MA. The Anti-Fraud measures include the following:

- An Anti-Fraud and Conflict of Interest Policy
- Prevention/detection measures such as robust controls, the planned use of the ARACHNE tool, on-going risk assessment, training and raising awareness of fraud
- The promotion of clear reporting mechanisms for both suspicions of fraud and control weaknesses
- The promotion of investigation, correction and prosecution procedures.

### **Action Plan**

The action plan details the actions required to ensure effective and appropriate anti-fraud measures are in place. The actions include the following:

- Circulation of standardised checklists to be used by the MA and the IBs/Beneficiaries and the provision of guidance on how the verification checks are to be carried out.
- Reviewing and clarifying existing controls
- Training and raising awareness

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