

## CALL FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS

### *Expected effects of the National Strategy for the Prevention and Fight against Poverty's social rights-related measures : a literature review*

#### *Issues and themes*

*05 October 2020*

This call for research projects comprises a single stage of **selection among the detailed proposals of the research teams.**

#### **KEY DATE :**

Closing date for submission of full proposals :  
**November 09, 2020 at 2 p.m. (Paris time)**

## I. BACKGROUND

The National Strategy for the Prevention and Fight against Poverty was presented on September 13, 2018 by the French President Emmanuel Macron. Developed after a phase of consultation with the concerned stakeholders and after an online consultation, it is made up of a large number of measures based on two distinct axes: preventing reproduction of poverty through acting for children and providing support for employment.

Agnès Buzyn, then Minister of Solidarity and Health, entrusted France Stratégie with the ex-post evaluation of the National Strategy for the Prevention and Fight against Poverty. France Stratégie set up an Evaluation Committee in September 2019. Chaired by Louis Schweitzer, this committee is composed of three presidents of associations (ATD-Quart-Monde, Secours catholique-Caritas France, Uniopss), four qualified personalities and six researchers. It draws on eight public administrations and organizations (Dares, Depp, Drees, Insee, Cgdd, Cnaf, Pôle emploi, INED).

In addition, the Committee has undertaken two participatory approaches: it consults on the one hand the college of people in poverty or in a precarious situation (formerly the 8th college, which became the 5th college in 2020) within the “Conseil national des politiques de lutte contre la pauvreté et l’exclusion sociale (CNLE)” and on the other hand a panel of thirty citizens representative of the French population. These two bodies are called upon to contribute to the evaluation, from the development of the evaluation approach to the interpretation of its results.

France Stratégie is in charge of the secretariat of this committee and, together with the chairman, is responsible for its management.

The Evaluation Committee's [progress report](#) published in March 2020 sets out the main thrusts of the evaluation process, the methods under consideration and the timetable for the work to be carried out.

The committee decided that the evaluation would have a dual strategic and analytical dimension and that it would be carried out at two levels:

- Monitoring the implementation of the Strategy's measures and evaluating their effects. The committee identified thirty-five measures, which it classified into five public policies areas : early childhood and education - health - support, training and employment - housing and social rights. The implementation of the measures will be monitored and their effects assessed using indicators selected regarding their expected outcomes.. A scientific literature review will shed light, for each of the major themes, on the theoretical link between the measures and the objective pursued on the one hand, and between the first result and the final result that can be expected on the other hand.
- Evaluating the national strategy as a whole with respect to the major objectives targeted by the Strategy, and integrating within the scope of the Strategy other policies that may have an effect on poverty. The Strategy's broad objectives selected by the committee are: to prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty, to enable people to move out of poverty, and to leave no one in deep poverty. The Strategy could evolve as part of the policy response plan to the coronavirus crisis: some measures could be expanded, others postponed, others added.

The committee decided to favor a multidisciplinary approach, with qualitative and quantitative methods, and field feedback from the target audience (in particular by soliciting the CNLE 5th college), associations fighting against poverty and actors in charge of the Strategy's

implementation. Randomized controlled trials may be conducted. The committee also plans to draw on French and international scientific literature:

- to shed light, for each of the major themes of the strategy, on the theoretical link between the measures and the objective sought on the one hand, and between the first result and the final result that can be expected on the other hand ;
- to illustrate the expected effects of policies which effects cannot be validated in the short term.

The Committee programs the evaluation work, relies on work already carried out by the administrations, and, for measures for which a scientific evaluation committee is or will be set up, on the conclusions of these evaluations.

It is within this framework that various calls for research projects have been decided.

**The committee wishes to deepen the knowledge on the link between access to rights (general theme), access to benefits, support, support for parenthood, fight against over-indebtedness (sub-themes) and poverty. This is the purpose of this call for projects.**

## II. ISSUES AND RESEARCH AREAS

### 1. Issues

The Evaluation Committee has identified seven concrete measures related to social rights in the Strategy. As work on the "Revenu Universel d'Activité" – RUA (universal activity income) has been suspended and the revaluation of the Activity Bonus is the subject of another call for projects, it wishes to limit this call for projects to the five other measures of this theme:

- "Modernize the delivery of social benefits by promoting the exchange of information between actors, making the procedures automatic and promoting payment "au juste droit", and generalize datamining for the identification of potential beneficiaries."
- "Reinforce access to social rights and services (generalization of unconditional social services, experimentation of "zero non-use territories", digital safe)."
- "Renewed social work throughout the territory: training of social workers and development of referral agents."
- "Renovate the policy to support for parenthood and create 300 new social centers in priority territories."
- "Prevent and fight against overindebtedness: deployment of 400 "Points conseil budget" (Budget Advice Points) throughout the country and introduction of a cap on bank fees."

The measures' outlines and their major objectives are set out in fact sheets annexed to the committee's March 2020 progress note ([available online](#)).

To assess their effects on poverty, the Evaluation Committee raises the following questions:

- What effects can be expected from the Strategy's social rights-related measures ?

- What are the lessons learned from existing evaluations on schemes that are close to the Strategy's measures with regard to their effects on poverty ?

**The Evaluation Committee issues a call for research projects to determine the expected effects of the Strategy's social rights related- measures on poverty.**

## **2. Areas of research**

**The main objective of this call for research projects is to support the Committee in its evaluation of the social rights-related measures of the National Strategy for the Prevention and Fight against Poverty.**

The research work will comprise three parts, with :

1. *A review of the French and international scientific literature on the links between access to rights and poverty and on the expected effects on poverty of the social rights-related measures of the strategy*

The purpose of this literature review will be to shed light on the logic underlying the Strategy's social rights-related measures, based on the elements available in the French and international scientific literature.

This work will first require an inventory of the research findings on the links between access to rights and poverty, and on the main factors by which access to rights influences poverty.

It will then present in more detail the lessons learned from the literature on the themes covered by the social rights-related measures of the Strategy: access to benefits, support, support for parenthood, and fight against overindebtedness.

Annex 13 of the Evaluation Committee's March 2020 Progress Note ([available online](#)) illustrates this work with an example on the Strategy's Early Childhood and Education theme .

2. *A causal chain to illustrate the expected effects of the Strategy's social rights-related measures on poverty*

The purpose of this part will be to represent with a simple model the theoretical steps that lead measures to the achievement of their main objective and the expected effects according to the literature.

The research team will focus on the themes covered by the Strategy's social rights-related measures - access to benefits, support, support for parenthood, fight against overindebtedness and any other themes it will have identified in the previous part. For each group of measures relating to the same theme, a causal chain will be drawn.

The causal chain will present the theoretical steps that lead measures to the achievement of the broad objective(s) they target. The scientific literature review (part 1) will enable to link the

implementation of a measure to the expected gain at time t and to its expected consequences in the medium and long term.

The chain of causality will thus be built in several steps:

- 1) First define what are the targeted objective(s) of a group of measures ;
- 2) Draw a theoretical path between the measures and the targeted objective(s) ;
- 3) Identify what effects are observable for the group of measures ;
- 4) Search for evidence (scientific literature) on the link between these effects and poverty reduction (causality).

With respect to this causal chain, the research team will identify the evaluation questions to be answered by the Evaluation Committee. In the light of the elements resulting from the scientific literature review, the evaluation conditions, the type of indicators that can be selected (quantitative or qualitative), the methods likely to be used to capture the specific effects of the measures, as well as the nature of the data to be collected, etc. will then be specified.

Annex 12 of the Evaluation Committee's March 2020 Progress Note [available online](#) illustrates this work with an example on the Strategy's Early Childhood and Education theme.

### *3. Synthesis of scientific assessments on programs close to those of the Strategy*

The purpose of this part will be to prepare a summary presenting scientific evaluations carried out in France or internationally on programs similar to those of the Strategy in order to enlighten the committee on the expected long-term effects of these programs in France. The document will at least specify the programs evaluated, the target audiences, the research questions, the result indicators (quantitative or qualitative) and the results of these evaluations.

## **III. CONDITIONS FOR CARRYING OUT RESEARCH PROJECTS**

### **1. Methodology**

The research work should at least cover the field of economics, sociology and scientific impact assessments. The team will detail its approach to respond to each of the three axes of the call for projects.

### **2. Composition of the teams**

The selection committee will pay particular attention to the quality of the team formed to carry out the research project. Collaborations between academic research structures are possible. The teamwork methods as well as the commitments, responsibilities and investments of each individual must be clearly explained in the research projects submitted. International experience or association of foreign team(s) will be an advantage.

### **3. Schedule and budget**

The total duration of the project, which will start from the date of signature of the research agreement between France Stratégie and the representative acting in the name and on behalf of the research team (the laboratory or unit) initiating the project, may not exceed **three months**.

Project leaders must ensure that they present a schedule compatible with the maximum three-month period mentioned above and provide for the submission to France Stratégie of a plan and a first version of the scientific literature review, the causal chain and the synthesis within one and a half months after notification, in order to limit the risks of exceeding this period and possibly refocus the work.

Delivery of the literature review, chain of causality and synthesis will be made no later than three months after notification.

The budget for the research project will be detailed.

#### **4. Selection mode**

This call for projects comprises a single step which consists in selecting the projects to be funded among the detailed proposals of the research teams.