
Title of the project:	SWINS – Sustainable Wellbeing through Investment in Social Services
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Area:	Social services, care & wellbeing, social investment, policy assessment

What?

SWINS will develop and test a policy-oriented toolbox for the ex-ante assessment of the economic and social returns of investments in social services over the life course. Focusing on the complementarity of services aimed at developing human capabilities throughout the lifespan, it will explore the impacts of alternative social policy scenarios entailing different social services configurations (from maternal care and ECEC, to education and ALMP, up to long-term care).

SWINS will conceptualize returns investments in social services in terms of income, employment, and growth. It will also attempt to bridge knowledge gaps about how these investments influence macroeconomic stability and foster the EU sustainability transition performances. By implementing a right-based social investment approach, SWINS aims to support the rethinking of social services as drivers of the EU's shift towards sustainable wellbeing, going beyond their role as mere safeguards against the side effects of economic and ecological transitions.

Leveraging the expertise of a multi-disciplinary (law, economics, sociology, political science) consortium, SWINS will explicitly pursue impact by proposing concrete strategies to integrate research findings and tools into the institutional, legal and policy frameworks.

Who?

SWINS is a project coordinated by the UAB (PI Margarita León Borja). It brings together researchers from eight international academic institutions, one European policy research think-tank and the major network of European Social NGOs, Social Platform. In particular, these are the members of the consortium: National University of Ireland Maynooth, Oslomet, Social Platform, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, University of Belgrade, Tarki Institute, Fondazione Pin, University of Antwerp, Institute for Future Fit Economies.

On behalf the Universitat Autònoma of Barcelona, IGOP's team is formed by:

PI: Margarita León is Full professor of Political Science at the Universitat Autònoma Barcelona (UAB). Between 2010 and 2015 she was a 'Ramón y Cajal' Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Government and Public Policies of the same university. From 2003 until 2010 she was lecturer in European social policy, University of Kent. She has been Marie Curie postdoctoral research at the European University Institute in Florence (2001-03) and a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at University of Berkeley, California (2018). Her main areas of research are comparative social policy and welfare state reform. She has published in numerous international peer-reviewed scientific journals; co-edited with A. Guillén *The Spanish Welfare State in European Context* (2011, Ashgate) and edited *The Transformation of Care in European Societies* (2014, Palgrave). In 2018 she was awarded ICREA ACADEMIA for excellence in research. She is co-chair of the Spanish Network of Social Policy -REPS, Espanet-Spain and Academic Director of Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo-Barcelona (UIMPB).

Zyab Ibáñez is a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Government and Public Policies (IGOP) of the Universitat Autònoma Barcelona. He holds a PhD in Political and Social Sciences from the European University Institute, Florence 2007, and an MSc in Environmental Assessment from the London School of Economics. His research combines cross-national institutional analyses and organizational case-studies to explore how different institutional regimes shape the design and implementation of public policies in the areas of employment, working-time and migration. As a researcher, he has been involved in several EU and National funded projects, such as RECOWE, Mobile Identities, PROMISE and EUROSHIP.

Why?

SWINS's agenda is rooted in the conviction that the current era, where the succession of consecutive, interlinked and multidimensional shocks (from the 2008 recession and 2010 European debt crisis to the Covid19 pandemic and the current wars in Ukraine and Gaza, passing through the 2015 refugee crisis) and structural challenges (demographic trends, labour market transformations, digitalization and climate change), marked the onset of a transformative phase for European societies. Transformative resilience necessary to 'bounce forward' towards a sustainable wellbeing economy requires the full and effective mobilization of available resources. In this respect, the strengthening and optimization of social services emerge as a strategic tool to foster wellbeing while keeping within planetary boundaries.

A key aspect of this challenge lies in developing tools capable of providing a solid measurement of both outcomes and processes for planning, monitoring, and public debate transparency.

How?

SWINS overall objective is to produce a new comparative, gender sensitive and integrated framework for the measurement of the returns of investments in social services. By reconnecting micro and macro dynamics, SWINS will develop and test a policy-oriented toolbox for the ex-ante assessment of the economic and social returns

of investments in social services aimed at rethinking social services as a driver of the EU transition towards a sustainable wellbeing economy.

SWINS methodology will be based on three main steps: 1) the identification of macro-regularities, that is the relation between investment in social services and aggregate socioeconomic performances, 2) analysis of the micro-foundations, that is the analysis of the micro-level mechanisms that explains the macro-regularities, 3) macro and long-term projection of the results. SWINS will rely on a variety of methodologies, i.e. microsimulation analysis using the EUROMOD platform and its expansions, synthetic panels, causal analysis of comparative microdata, machine learning techniques and macroeconomic agent-based models.

When?

February 2025 – January 2028

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