



SEEDING - Grant agreement no. VS/2019/0073.  
This project has received financial support from  
the European Union.



# SEEDING

Social Economy Enterprises addressing Digitalisation,  
Industrial relations and the European Pillar of Social Rights



**CASE  
STUDY  
FRANCE**

**Groupe Up**



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COCETA

**FISE**



GRUPPO  
COOPERATIVO  
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Associazione  
nazionale  
cooperative  
di produzione  
lavoro e servizi  
**PRODUZIONE  
& SERVIZI**



Zdrúženje  
SOCIALNA EKONOMIJA  
SLOVENIJE

**SYNDICAT  
EUROPÉEN  
TRADE UNION**





NAME OF THE PRACTICE	GROUPE UP (DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF COMPANY ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES PARTICULARLY IN FRANCE)
Responsible actor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>management (with the involvement of trade unions/workers)</li> </ul>
Type of practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>collective agreement</li> <li>business plan</li> <li>company internal regulation</li> </ul>
Challenges addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>other (please specify): digital competency and social dialogue also addressing economic, social and environmental challenges through digital transformations (see 'Description' section below)</li> </ul>
Employment impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>skills and training (Practice A)</li> <li>work organisation and work-life balance (Practices B and C)</li> <li>other (please specify): "democratising work culture" (Practice B)</li> </ul>
Geographical coverage	<p>The Up Group is a cooperative group, present on four continents, operating in 19 (through partners, almost in 30) countries, and employing around 3,750 people with varied background and skills. It has five programmes in the governance, economic, social, societal and environmental field (CSR strategic programmes). In this case study, the focus is on practices implemented within or by the parent company in France which has cooperative status.</p>

<b>Sectoral coverage</b>	<p>N - Administrative and support service activities</p> <p>The Up Group (the cooperative model was established in 1964) strongly focuses on solving social problems by its voucher and payment system in various fields, mainly education, culture, food, housing and health.</p> <p>The Up Group is a unionised workplace in France.</p>
<b>Company coverage</b>	<p>The Up Group “develops payment systems and management solutions that improve the vitality of businesses and territories, as well as the purchasing power and the livelihood of employees and citizens, while offering freedom of choice and use”.</p> <p>The Up Group is a cooperative and participative company, with its head office is in Gennevilliers, France.</p> <p>The cooperative holds an ordinary general assembly once a year plus extra ordinary events if necessary.</p> <p>The Up parent company is a 100% worker-owned company (SCOP). All cooperators have to serve a one-year probationary period before becoming members.</p> <p>The cooperative’s board of directors has 16 members elected by the employee-members. In addition, three members are not employees of the company but representatives of trade unions. Three members with an advisory roles represent the company's social and economic committee. The term of office is four years. Half of the board members are women.</p> <p>There is also an executive committee, which includes the president and CEO, functional directors and area managing directors. It deals with all matters relating to the implementation of the group's strategic plan and the management of the group and its subsidiaries, in line with the decisions of the board of directors. The committee meets about once a month.</p> <p>The group also owns several affiliated companies.</p> <p>In France there are branches (units) at the national level. The deal with two services: classic social vouchers and - the mostly digitalised – other type of vouchers (paper vouchers still exist).</p> <p>The company’s core values are commitment, solidarity, fairness, innovation and entrepreneurship.</p>
<b>Occupational coverage</b>	In France, the Up Group has 1,350 employees, both white collar and blue collar (in the production centre).
<b>Workforce addressed</b>	All staff and occupations have been affected by changes, but the (emphasis were on managerial staff, especially in case of Practice A and C).
<b>ACTORS INVOLVED IN THE ACTION</b>	
<b>Company management</b>	No

<b>Worker members of the cooperative at large</b>	Yes
<b>Works councils</b>	Yes
<b>Trade unions</b>	Yes
<b>Employers' organisations</b>	No
<b>NGO</b>	No
<b>Public authority</b>	Yes
DESCRIPTION	
<b>Rationale for the adoption of the practice</b>	<p>Although the company is dedicated to digital and cultural transformation, it has no single and formal digital transformation plan or strategy. Nevertheless three practices can be identified that are meant to grasp the opportunities of the digital transformation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personalised digital training course (2018) to improve employees' digital skills ("Practice A")</li> <li>• Strengthening social dialogue (2018) / collective agreements, initiated by the management since promoting social dialogue is part of the company's strategic plan ("Practice B")</li> <li>• Integrated Digital Office programme to deliver a better service to users ("Practice C")</li> </ul> <p>The company has also created digital platforms and value-added services for its target groups.</p>
<b>Process of the adoption of the practice</b>	<p>The main steps of adopting the various practices are:</p> <p><b>Practice A (training):</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Setting up a company digitalisation policy</li> <li>2. Setting up an action plan</li> <li>3. Training</li> </ol> <p><b>Practice B (collective agreements):</b></p> <p>Promoting social dialogue is part of the group's strategic plan and has taken concrete form in 2019 in 12 new collective agreements negotiated and agreed by the company's social partners.</p> <p><b>Practice C (digital office):</b></p> <p>Three subsidiaries (in the Czech Republic and two others, before COVID-19, at least) are involved in this programme:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Setting up a local steering committee</li> <li>2. Setting up a coordination committee</li> <li>3. Global reporting to group steering committee</li> </ol>

<b>Description of the practice</b>	<p><b>Practice A (training):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the training prioritises management topics</li> <li>• launch of a multi-year training programme for the cooperative's new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system</li> <li>• employee participation in pilot training programmes in the digital (r)evolution pathway</li> <li>• creation and dissemination of the Transformons ('We transform') newsletter</li> <li>• adjustment of objectives in the cooperative's employee annual reviews.</li> <li>• redesigning managerial training</li> </ul> <p><b>Practice B (collective agreements):</b></p> <p>The 16-member board of directors was last elected in 2019. Three elected members are external directors representing the trade union confederations CFDT, CGT and FO, which contributed to the creation of the cooperative in 1964.</p> <p>The 11 agreements negotiated in France and 5 in other group countries of operation have promoted social progress in various areas such as training, remuneration, working hours, health and safety, fostering diversity, professional equality and staff representation.</p> <p><b>Practice C (Integrated Digital Office)</b></p> <p>This practice was set up as a pilot programme in France, Slovakia and the Czech Republic in 2018. The practice has developed a single portal which offers a web and mobile interface for all its customers, companies, affiliates and beneficiaries. The second phase is to offer innovative services that meet the needs of its audiences (marketing tools for affiliates, additional services for customers and additional services for users. Employee-members also benefit from it since it has made cooperation with other countries easier and smoother.</p>
<b>Dismissed alternatives</b>	None.
<b>ASSESSMENT</b>	
<b>IMPACT OF THE PRACTICE ON:</b>	
<b>Job stability and secure employment</b>	Workers benefit from the stability and security of employee status.
<b>Skills needs and training</b>	<p>Practice A (training)</p> <p>In 2019, 69.39% of the group's employee-members had access to training.</p>
<b>Working conditions</b>	The company aims to maintain a work-life balance and provide good working conditions. For example in 2018, during the company's 'Quality of Life at Work Week' and in partnership with the (French) National Agency for the Improvement of Working Conditions (Anact), a discussion arena was organised on the topic of 'Impacts of business transformation on the quality of life of employees and dialogue in companies'.
<b>Company performance</b>	Using digital tools and practices has allowed the company to grow and to reach more users.

<b>Overall strengths and weaknesses</b>	The participative approach increases operational performance.
<b>Overall opportunities and threats</b>	The COVID-19 outbreak has boosted the opportunities to digitalise more of the company and its services.
<b>Potential for social partners and collective bargaining to upscale/transfer the practice</b>	The European Works Council at UP Group can spread the practices to other countries and ensure a high level of transparency.
<b>Potential for public authorities to support upscaling/ transferring the practice</b>	The Up Group is a good example how to use digitalisation to increase social inclusion. The practices mentioned do not have potential for public authorities, but the services provided by the Up Group do.
<b>List of annexes, sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Report 2018</li> <li>• “Extra-Financial Performance Declaration” 2019 <a href="https://up.metrio.net/indicators/presentation">https://up.metrio.net/indicators/presentation</a></li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Interview with a representative of the company</li> </ul>
<b>Company website</b>	<a href="https://up.coop/">https://up.coop/</a>

The case study was prepared by: **Diesis Network (Belgium).**