

Thematic Evaluation of OP II

Monitoring Committee

31 October 2014



Introduction

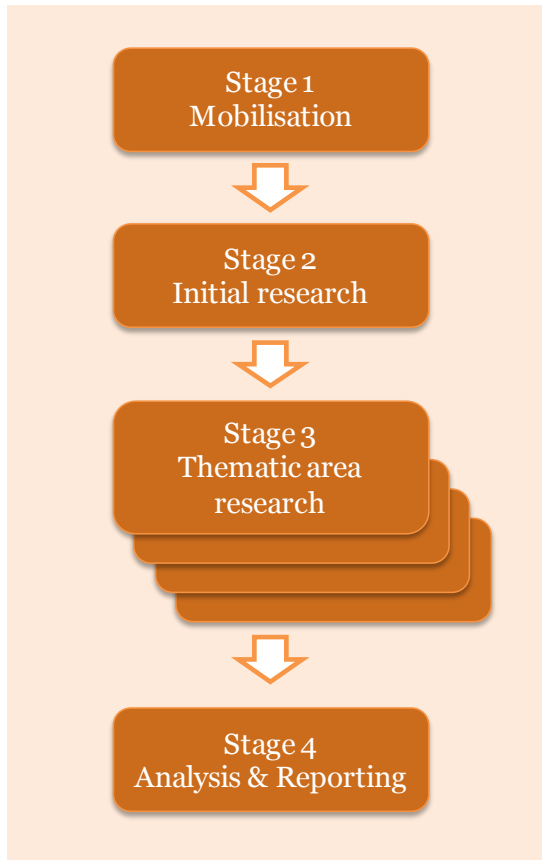
Objective:

- To communicate the analysis and conclusions emanating from the research carried out and reflected in the evaluation report covering the period up to December 2012

This presentation covers:

- The scope of the evaluation and the methodology used
- Key findings and recommendations in relation to *education and lifelong learning*
- Key findings and recommendations in relation to *enhancement of employability and adaptability of the workforce*
- Key findings and recommendations in relation to *horizontal priorities and ESF principles*

Methodology



✓ Stage 2: documentation review and key stakeholder focus group meetings

Stage 3:

- ✓ Assessment of each thematic area at project level
- ✓ Interviews with intermediary body
- ✓ Review of project documentation
- ✓ Interviews with project leaders
- ✓ Project case studies (ESF3.64, ESF3.60, ESF1.25)
- ✓ Survey with employers

Stage 4:

- ✓ Working paper on the next programming period 2014-2020
- ✓ Focus group meetings with policy makers and other stakeholders
- ✓ Consolidation of assessment on thematic areas and preparation of evaluation report

Education and Life Long Learning

Key findings - education and lifelong learning

- **Increase in participation rate and creation of flexible paths** – 10 projects were assessed - overall, projects were successful in this regard, especially those related to training, online e-learning and scholarship programmes. However, there were 4 projects which were not completed by the end of 2012. (Project assessed include: ESF 1.19, 1.22, 1.23, 1.24, 1.25, 1.34, 1.40, 1.125, 1.130, and 2.139)
- **Skills Mismatches** – out of the 3 projects set out to address skills mismatches, 2 rendered positive results. In the third project there was low take up due to participants finding it difficult to commit to the course. In fact, a number of the participants started but did not complete the training. A re-run of course was rolled out to mitigate this. (Project assessed include: ESF 1.23, 1.34 and 2.72)
- **Capacity Building Measures** – 3 projects were assessed – 2 projects were in their procurement stage. 1 project had a positive uptake where it provided support to teachers and administrators with the necessary training to deliver an e-learning programme. (Project assessed include: ESF 1.36, 1.131 and 1.123)
- **Increase in participation rate in lifelong education, lifelong learning and/or capacity building within the public administration** – 2 projects were assessed. Whereas 1 project was completed and achieved its target, the other project was still on-going. (Project assessed include: 4.98 and 4.100)

Conclusion

- When considering the programmes contribution towards education and life-long learning, although overall a positive contribution had already been achieved by the end of 2012, further progress is required towards:
 - increasing participants gaining a further or higher education and training qualification, particularly in S&T or ICT;
 - increasing student participation rate in general field of study (non S&T or ICT) at further or higher education level;
- Therefore, emphasis on this area should be made in the projects which are still ongoing or approved, as well as, in the next programming period in order to incentivise students to take up further or higher education, particularly in the S&T and ICT field of study.

Recommendations – Potential actions not addressed by the current programme

ESF Objectives for 2007-2013	Gap identified in the 2007-2013 programming period	Recommendations
<p>To increase student participation rates in general fields of study (non S&T or ICT) at a further or higher level of education</p> <p>To increase student participation rates in science, technology and ICT at a further or higher level of education</p>	<p>Increase in student participation rates in general fields of study at a further or higher level of education – number of persons participating (484 achieved; 600 target) / % of participants gaining qualification (61% achieved; 75% target). Increase in student participation rates in S&T and ICT at a further or higher level of education – number of persons participating (achieved 2,324 achieved; 3,000 target)/ % of participants gaining qualification (47% achieved; target 75%). Number of S&T or ICT actions / studies/campaigns/research activities carried out (5 achieved; 10 target)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key target area should be the increase of participation in science and technology subjects, including reforms to the way the subjects are taught and approached. OP should also address the gender gap in science and technology for e.g. through career guidance to females • Scholarship programmes should be tied to incentives for the participants to return to work in Malta • The tracking of employment movements of scholarship participants and the boosting of apprenticeships are also to be encouraged • Modernisation of the education system to offer industry relevant courses

Recommendations – Potential actions not addressed by the current programme

ESF Objectives for 2007-2013	Gap identified in the 2007-2013 programming period	Recommendations
To increase the number of adults (25-64 years) participation in lifelong learning	Target in relation to increase in the number of adults (25-64 years) participation in lifelong learning: 7% achieved; 8% target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater focus on work placements and internships • Quality lifelong learning with accreditation / certificate • Initiatives supporting re-skilling across and within sectors • Improve capacity to forecast skills needs - Projects were not based on a study which identifies industries for which there are gaps with regards to required skills. • Further career guidance initiatives • Information campaigns to encourage people to take up vocational training opportunities and lifelong learning.
Reducing early school-leaving rate	Target in relation to early school leavers: 22.6% achieved; 22% target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whereas the current program has focused mostly on higher education and lifelong learning, in the next programming period there should be a greater focus on actions directed at primary and compulsory education

Enhancement of Employability and Adaptability of the Workforce

Key findings – enhancement of employability and adaptability of the work force

- **Employability of disadvantaged persons**– 10 projects were assessed - overall, projects were successful in this regard. However, there were 2 projects which were not completed by the end of 2012 (Project assessed include: ESF 3.47, 3.48, 3.52, 3.60, 3.61, 3.62, 3.66, 3.59, 3.102, 3.64)
- **Initiatives for workforce to remain employable and for unemployed to become employed**–of the 7 projects assessed, 4 of the projects proved to be successful as they met their objectives and their targets. The 3 projects that failed to meet their targets were due to the fact that 1 was still in its procurement stage, and the other 2 had less uptake than expected (Project assessed include: 2.11, 2.12, 2.4, 1.19, 1.29, 2.72, 4.100)
- **Investment in Human Resources within the Private Sector** – 2 projects were assessed in this regard, being the aid schemes relating to employment aid and training aid, which both exceeded their targets in terms of participants and in meeting their objectives. ESF 3.64 - Employment Aid Programme; ESF 2.65 -Training Aid Framework (TAF)

Key Findings – Training Aid Framework - Survey

PwC carried out a survey with the employers whose employees benefited from the Training Aid Framework:

- The survey was submitted to 427 participants who had received reimbursement at the time of the survey. Responses were received from 172 participants from a number of different industries (40% response rate).
- Very favourable results with 61% of beneficiaries stating that the project increased the productivity and competitiveness of their business.
- When asked to choose what the Company's objective for training employees was, *Increase in knowledge of employees* and *increase in general and technical competencies of employees* were by far the most chosen responses. Furthermore, all objectives scored over 4/5 except for increase in flexibility of employees which scored 3.8/5.

Key Findings – Training Aid Framework - Survey

- The innovation area which was scored as most relevant in which action was taken and / or in which the business is expected to intervene through the activities funded by the scheme was *new methods of management* with an average score of 3.33/5 followed by *new product/services features* and *new processes for quality control* which achieved scores of 3.12 and 3.02 respectively.
- Additionally, 67% of participants responded that the training has been passed on to other employees within the organisation.
- Overall, TAF had a very positive effect on enabling enterprises to become more productive and competitive through the development of skills, qualifications and knowledge.

Conclusion

- The programme had an overall positive impact and a number of objectives were fully met by end 2012, including those relating to:
 - Increasing participation in lifelong learning;
 - Supporting the adaptability of undertakings through skills improvements
 - Vulnerable persons trained / supported and remaining in training / employment 6 months after receiving assistance
- Further progress is required in relation to
 - Increasing female participation
 - Persons trained through capacity building courses in relation to the integration, retention and progression of disadvantaged groups in the labour market

Recommendations – Potential actions not addressed by the current programme

ESF Objectives of the 2007-2013 programming period	Gap identified in the 2007-2013 programming period	Recommendations
<p>To contribute towards the integration, retention and progression of disadvantaged groups in the labour market, whilst addressing labour market distortions</p>	<p>Number of people from disadvantaged groups trained through capacity building courses (364 achieved; 600 target)</p> <p>Number of civil society projects in relation to the integration, retention and progression of disadvantaged groups in the labour market (3 achieved, 50 target)</p> <p>A lack of awareness and support with regards to employment of disadvantaged groups within the companies employing such persons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives for employers to take on disadvantaged persons as interns /apprentices to mitigate existing problem in finding employers who are willing to provide these placements. • Youths not a homogenous group and therefore projects targeted towards specific youth groups should be undertaken. • Providing the necessary help with first time job applications and personal career advisors. • Mentoring programmes for youths to assist them to start their jobs on the right foot. • Improved links between universities and business by supporting post graduate studies.

Recommendations – Potential actions not addressed by the current programme

ESF Objectives 2007-2013 prog. period	Gap identified in the 2007-2013 programming period	Recommendations
To increase female participation rate	<p>Number of actions supporting a lifecycle approach to work (3 achieved; 10 target)</p> <p>Number of women trained / supported (925 achieved; 2,000 target)</p> <p>Number of families benefiting from childcare (0 achieved; 1,600 target)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater focus on female employment is needed in next programming period, particularly through the targeting of specific groups within the ‘female’ group: single mothers, older workers, domestic violence victims, young teenage mothers • Funding studies to explore benefits versus minimum wage – ‘making work pay’. • Active labour market strategies are often targeted at unemployed persons - More focus is required to target inactive women. • Interventions should focus more on the 40+ age group as the problem is more pronounced in this cohort. • Efforts to maintain 25-40 improvements and implementing actions from studies carried out. Projects should aim to support the family not specifically females. • Projects supporting also the family such as through the setting up of Family Resource Centres and also Interventions supporting childcare .

Recommendations– Potential actions not addressed by the current programme

ESF Objectives of the 2007-2013 programming period	Gap identified in the 2007-2013 programming period	Recommendations
<p>To strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector</p>	<p>Training was generally considered to be too generic and in many cases did not directly target the individual’s training needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More focus on specific training on improving technical skills such as financial management and HR management.

Horizontal priorities and ESF Principles



Horizontal Priorities - *environmental sustainability and equal opportunities*

- In their funding application, beneficiaries were required to describe their proposed contribution towards horizontal priorities and report on the implementation of these activities
- Few initiatives which stood out in that they were more effective than what is generally expected in this area and what is legally required

Key Findings – Horizontal Priorities

Project	Environmental Sustainability
ESF 1.25: Strategic Educational Pathways Scholarships' (STEPS)	✓ Scheme to grant post-graduate students bursaries to undertake masters and doctorate level courses in areas of national priority. One area relates to studies that focus on strategic environmental issues at national level. Also provided support to students wanting to pursue higher education in environmental related studies and research. This project went beyond the minimum requirements of enhancing the skills of our labour force but also funded courses related to environmental sustainability.
ESF 3.52 -Care Creates Change in People's Lives and the Environment	✓ This project provided employment opportunities in the area of the creation of products from waste. It therefore contributed towards environmental protection, through the adoption of the zero waste concept and also encouraged employment in the resource (waste) management sector. During training , trainees created useful and saleable products using recyclable materials.

Key Findings – Horizontal Priorities

Project	Environmental Sustainability
ESF3.66 – Ic-Cavetta - Maltese literacy toolkit for employment and education inclusion	✓ Aimed to develop a teaching tool kit to improve Maltese literacy skills and computer orientation skills. Most exercises were performed electronically contributing to a reduction in printed material usage and where printing was necessary, recycled paper was used. Project actions also made use of flash cards to include words and pictures related to environmental protection, promotional material related to education on environmental protection, such as waste separation were distributed to the educators to use during workshops. Results showed that such efforts increased Environmental Consciousness among participants.
ESF 1.22 - Research Analysis and Training for Enhancing the University Library	✓ Aimed to transform the University of Malta’s library facilities from one based on printed material to a digitized online system. Project directed its efforts towards enhancing environmental sustainability, since the transition from a paper-based to a digitized system resulted into a fall in paper usage. Moreover, the accessibility of the service from one’s home will also contribute to a reduction in transportation emissions as well as a fall carbon footprint of the library.

Key Findings – Horizontal Priorities

Project	Equal Opportunities
ESF 3.48 - Lifelong Learning for Enhance Employability for Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Aimed to develop opportunities especially for mothers that were currently inactive in the labour market to participate in the community and view themselves as lifelong learner to increase the potential employability. This project managed to attract its targeted number of participants (605 participants) and gave rise to improvements in the female participation rate in the labour market. Equal opportunities with respect to gender, where also promoted by this project as all activities were open to both genders . Equal opportunities in terms of location was also promoted as venues selected for undertaking activities were in different areas of Malta making it accessible for all.
ESF 3.59 -Nista: The Benefits of Sharing Life’s Responsibilities Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Campaign that included a 13 week TV series promoting financial independence for woman whilst also encouraging greater involvement of men in non-remunerated family work. As part of this project’s contribution to achieving equal opportunities, the NCPE was consulted during the research phase. This project has assisted in reducing female discrimination through the promotion of achieving work life balance with particular attention to males. The project reached its objective as it stimulated a public discussion about striking the work-life balance including issues such as child care services after school.

Horizontal Priorities - *environmental sustainability and equal opportunities*

In order to ensure that the coverage of horizontal priorities that resulted in the 2007-2013 programming period is improved for the next programming period, the following ideas for consideration were put forward:

- Greater emphasis (for e.g. consultations with applicants) to be placed on the horizontal priorities, with more interventions aimed towards concretely addressing these priorities
- Introducing requirement to provide evidence of consultation with horizontal priorities' area experts in application form, on same lines required in relation to State Aid Monitoring Board
- Publication of guidelines and ideas of how the horizontal priorities could be addressed e.g. how can a project be more environmentally friendly? Which disadvantaged groups need to be considered in addressing equal opportunities?
- Organising annual workshops with project leaders in order for them to share best practice examples
- The development of best practice case studies which could serve as a starting point for new projects to be implemented in the next programming period

Key Findings – ESF Principles - Innovation

Project	Innovative Activities
ESF 1.123 - Training support for the e-learning Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Involved the provision of training to teachers and administrators to use interactive whiteboards and e-learning platforms for educational purposes. Hence, this project encouraged greater innovation in the education sector, making it more appealing to students whilst also identifying different ways of engaging them and enhancing their knowledge.
ESF 1.125 - Creating a Knowledge Transfer Framework and Technology Entrepreneurship Training Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Aimed to develop an intellectual property and transfer framework and intensive training programme in science technology entrepreneurship at the University of Malta. This project directly contributes to innovation, as its objective is to improve collaboration between University and enterprises in terms of research and innovation and knowledge transfer. Innovation was encouraged as project promoted the identification of different knowledge transfer methods and in turn increased the resource base of university students and graduates.

Key Findings – ESF Principles - Innovation

Project	Innovative Activities
ESF 1.40 - Science Popularisation Campaign	✓ Initiatives to enhance public interest in science and technology. At the time, science and technology graduates were 25% of the EU average. Moreover, according to the NSRI 2007-2010, only 7 out of 31 PhD graduates were in engineering, science, medicine and agriculture. Hence, this initiative was essential to stimulating attention to science, which would ultimately translate into greater interest from students and give rise to greater innovation and research activities, through their acquired skills.
ESF 3.52 - Care Creates Change in People’s Lives and the Environment	✓ Aimed to create employment opportunities in the area of product creation from waste materials. Hence, this project introduced an element of innovation in the terms of the variety of saleable and usable products generated from waste and its appeal to creativity and thought.

Key Findings – ESF Principles - Innovation

Project	Innovative Activities
ESF 4.97 - Employee Support Programme for Public Employees	✓ Aimed to create a workplace-focused programme designed to identify and respond to the needs of employees experiencing personal, emotional and/or behavioural problems that interfere with their work-life balance, so as to enable them to be healthier, and more productive. The objective of this project was innovative in its own right as training and support were provided to public employees in all scales, who faced psycho-social/disability difficulties. Moreover, this project was innovative in its collaboration with various social partners namely Richmond Foundation, Cana Movement, National Commission for Persons with disability, OASI Foundation, Foundation for Social Welfare Services and Malta Hospice Movement. These institutions also provided their support to public employees affected by colleagues facing psycho-social/disability difficulties, thus making this project innovative also in this respect.

Recommendations – ESF Principles – Innovative Activities

- For the 2014-2020 programming period, following the publication of a Commission note, a definition of social innovation was provided as follows:
 - *“the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations” – (Guide to Social innovation, February 2013)*
- Some examples of innovative practices that could be introduced in the next period include:
 - Projects which focus on developing person/employer approaches
 - Projects which use ICTs to enhance/replicate other delivery mechanisms
 - Projects which develop social enterprises – both as a mechanism for generating new employment opportunities and as a focus for leadership development services
 - Projects which consider new delivery mechanisms – including integrated, multi-partner and ICT-based approaches, i.e. innovation in the processes undertaken in projects
 - Projects which encourage new partnerships
 - Projects which encourage working with new target groups
 - Projects which aim to develop new qualifications and training outcomes

Key Findings – ESF Principles – Transnational Activities

Project	Transnational Activities
ESF 3.62: ME2- Integration of Persons with a Disability in the Labour Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Aimed to Support disabled persons to enter the labour market and coach them towards successful job retention. Promoted transnational activities through collaboration with its transnational partner, Brandon Trust – Bristol, whereby 47 persons benefitted from the Bristol Visits, 27 of whom were project workers and administration and 20 were ME2 project beneficiaries.
ESF 3.66 - Ic-Cavetta- Maltese literacy toolkit for employment and education inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Aimed to develop a Maltese literacy tool kit to improve Maltese literacy skills and computer orientation skill amongst disadvantaged persons. Contributed towards enhancing transnational activities through the exchange of information with Estonia, where similar work was carried out.
ESF 3.71 - Impact Assessment on Mental Health Development for Employment Policy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Involved performing a study to identify the main obstacles faced by persons with mental health difficulties in accessing retaining or maintaining employment and how greater integration of these persons can be achieved into the labour market. This project encouraged transnational activities with Compagnie de Sporen in Belgium .

Recommendations – ESF Principles – Transnational Activities

- A large number of projects, especially those related to training and development, involved collaboration with foreign universities and the collaboration with consultants from foreign universities (Example: MCAST projects)
- More focus needs to be placed on promoting the advantages of trans nationality. For example:
 - Benefits of learning from the experiences of others across a range of areas
 - Observing similar approaches
 - Showing what could be achieved and providing lessons for delivery, e.g. through sharing of project experiences
 - Gaining confidence that ones innovative approaches could work (accounting for political, structural and cultural differences)
 - The benefits brought about from the sharing of experiences amongst the project team which results in learning from more advanced transnational partners

General Recommendations

General recommendations to improve the result of OPPI in meeting its pre specified indicators include:

- More integration between different projects
- More information on how specific projects contribute towards the achievements of the impact indicators

Recommendations aimed at building capacity and enhancing the programme implementation process:

- To consider central Government support and training to project leaders, project managers and administrators in setting their objectives and targets, project implementation, procurement, project management, monitoring the results of their projects, and project administration
- To consider published timetable of calls for different priority axis whilst at the same time balancing out the administrative capacity requirements this would entail
- To consider whether proposed projects should also include post-delivery interventions to assess the realization of the intended project outcomes
- To encourage pilot projects to test a concept before going for a large projects
- To consider harvesting the knowledge of project leaders by creating avenues for knowledge sharing

Way Forward

Phase 1:

- Final approval of draft thematic evaluation report

Phase 2:

- Phase 2 will consist of the second pass evaluation leading to the submission of Deliverable 2 - Updated Thematic Evaluation Report
- Kick off meeting held on 7 August 2014, and following the approval of the inception report, this phase will commence
- Phase 2 milestones:
 - Delivery of draft updated thematic evaluation report to MA – April 2015
 - Delivery of final thematic evaluation report to MA – September 2015
 - Project Closure – October 2015

Thank-you



Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2007-2013
Empowering People for more Jobs and a Better Quality of Life
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European Social Fund (ESF)
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