

# Operational Programme II

## Cohesion Policy 2007-2013

*Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life*

Annual Implementation Report

2013



Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2007-2013

European Social Fund (ESF)

*Investing in your future*



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|--|-----------|
| <b>List of Tables .....</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>List of Acronyms .....</b>  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>1 – Introduction .....</b>  | <b>10</b> |
| <b>2 – Overview of the implementation.....</b>   | <b>11</b> |
| 2.1 Achievement and analysis of the progress.....  | 11        |
| 2.1.1 Information on the physical progress of the Operational Programme.....   | 11        |
| 2.1.2 Financial information.....   | 20        |
| 2.1.3 Information about the breakdown of use of the funds .....  | 23        |
| 2.1.4 Assistance by target groups .....  | 29        |
| 2.1.5 Assistance repaid or re-used .....   | 30        |
| 2.1.6 Qualitative Analysis .....   | 30        |
| 2.2 Information about compliance with Community Law .....  | 43        |
| 2.3 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them .....   | 43        |
| 2.3.1 Significant problems encountered in implementing the actions and activities of Article 10 EC<br>Reg. 1081/2006 ..... | 44        |
| 2.4 Changes in the context of the operational programme implementation.....  | 44        |
| 2.5 Substantial modification pursuant to Article 57 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.....                                   | 44        |
| 2.6 Complementarity with other instruments .....   | 45        |
| 2.7 Monitoring and evaluation .....  | 47        |
| 2.7.1 Monitoring and reporting by the MA and IB .....  | 47        |
| 2.7.2 Monitoring Committee.....  | 48        |
| 2.7.3 Annual Review Meeting .....  | 49        |
| 2.7.4 Evaluation .....   | 49        |
| <b>3 – Implementation by Priority.....</b>   | <b>57</b> |
| 3.1 Priority Axis 1 – Improving Education and Skills .....   | 57        |
| 3.1.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress.....   | 57        |
| 3.1.2 Information on the physical and financial progress .....   | 59        |
| 3.1.3 Qualitative analysis .....   | 63        |
| 3.1.4 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them .....   | 67        |
| 3.2 Priority Axis 2 – Investing in Employability and Adaptability of the Workforce.....                                    | 68        |

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| 3.2.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress .....                        | 68         |
| 3.2.2 Qualitative analysis .....   | 73         |
| 3.2.3 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them .....       | 76         |
| 3.3 Priority Axis 3 – Promoting an Equal and Inclusive Labour Market .....             | 78         |
| 3.3.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress .....                        | 78         |
| 3.3.2 Information on the physical and financial progress .....                         | 81         |
| 3.3.3 Qualitative Analysis .....   | 83         |
| 3.3.4 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them .....       | 89         |
| 3.4 Priority Axis 4 – Strengthening of institutional and administrative capacity ..... | 90         |
| 3.4.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress .....                        | 90         |
| 3.4.2 Information on the physical and financial progress .....                         | 92         |
| 3.4.3 Qualitative Analysis .....   | 94         |
| 3.4.4 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them .....       | 97         |
| 3.5 Priority Axis 5 – Technical Assistance .....                                       | 99         |
| 3.5.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress .....                        | 99         |
| 3.5.2 Information on the physical and financial progress .....                         | 100        |
| 3.5.3 Qualitative Analysis .....   | 102        |
| 3.5.4 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them .....       | 102        |
| <b>4 – ESF programmes: Coherence and Concentration .....</b>                           | <b>104</b> |
| 4.1 Links with the NRP .....   | 104        |
| 4.2 Links with the CSGs and IEGs .....   | 109        |
| 4.3 Links with the European Employment Strategy .....                                  | 111        |
| <b>5 – Technical Assistance .....</b>  | <b>115</b> |
| 5.1 Furniture and Equipment .....  | 115        |
| 5.2 Implementation of Cohesion Policy .....  | 116        |
| 5.3 Information and Publicity .....  | 116        |
| 5.4 Evaluation .....   | 117        |
| 5.5 Capacity Building .....  | 118        |
| Conclusion .....   | 118        |
| <b>6 – Information and Publicity .....</b>   | <b>120</b> |

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| 6.1 Measures taken to provide information and publicity on the Operational Programmes..... | 120        |
| 6.1.1 Analysis of Activities carried out in 2012 .....                                     | 120        |
| 6.2 Other Publicity Measures Undertaken in 2013.....                                       | 124        |
| 6.2.1 Updates to the Investing in Your Future Website and Promotion .....                  | 124        |
| 6.2.2 Calls for Projects and Information Sessions for Project Promoters.....               | 126        |
| 6.2.3 Information and Publicity Networks .....   | 127        |
| 6.2.4 Website and Social Network Page .....  | 128        |
| 6.2.5 Other Initiatives .....  | 129        |
| 6.3 Expenditure during 2013 .....  | 130        |
| 6.4 Expenditure to Date .....  | 132        |
| 6.5 Information and Publicity by Intermediate Bodies in 2013 .....                         | 133        |
| 6.6 Information and Publicity by Beneficiaries in 2013.....                                | 135        |
| 6.7 Communication Plan Indicators .....  | 138        |
| 6.8 Conclusion .....   | 146        |
| <b>7 – Concluding Remarks .....</b>  | <b>147</b> |
| <b>Annex 1 – Cumulative Expenditure Table .....</b>  | <b>148</b> |
| <b>Annex 2 – List of Projects &amp; Aid Schemes as at end December 2013 .....</b>          | <b>149</b> |

## List of Tables

---

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Table 1 – Indicators - Priority Axis 1: Improving Education and Skills.....                                       | 15 |
| Table 2 – Indicators - Priority Axis 2: Investing in employability and adaptability of the workforce.....         | 16 |
| Table 3 – Indicators – Priority Axis 3: Promoting an equal and inclusive labour market.....                       | 17 |
| Table 4 – Indicators – Priority Axis 4: Strengthening of institutional and administrative capacity.....           | 18 |
| Table 5 – Indicators – Priority Axis 5: Technical Assistance .....  | 19 |
| Table 6 - Summary of Verified, Certified and Received Amounts .....   | 20 |
| Table 7 - Priority Axes by source of funding (€).....   | 21 |
| Table 8 - Cumulative breakdown of allocations of the Community contribution by category (Part C of Annex II)..... | 23 |
| Table 9 - Training Aid Framework.....   | 26 |
| Table 10 - Employment Aid Programme.....  | 28 |
| Table 11 - Annex XXIII Data on Participants .....   | 29 |
| Table 12 - Population by Gender .....   | 50 |
| Table 13 - Population by Age Group.....   | 50 |
| Table 14 - Population by Region.....  | 51 |
| Table 15 - Population by Gender .....   | 51 |
| Table 16 - Population by Age Group.....   | 52 |
| Table 17 - Population by Region.....  | 52 |
| Table 18 - Priority Axis 1 Indicators (Output and Result Indicators) .....  | 59 |
| Table 19 - Data on Participants Priority Axis 1 .....   | 61 |
| Table 20 - Financial Progress Priority Axis 1 .....   | 62 |
| Table 21 - Priority Axis 2 Indicators (Output and Result Indicators) .....  | 69 |
| Table 22 - Data on Participants Priority Axis 2 .....   | 71 |
| Table 23 - Financial Progress Priority Axis 2.....  | 72 |
| Table 24 - Priority Axis 3 Indicators (Output and Result Indicators) .....  | 81 |
| Table 25 - Data on Participants Priority Axis 3 .....   | 82 |
| Table 26 - Financial Progress Priority Axis 3.....  | 83 |
| Table 27 - Priority Axis 4 Indicators (Output and Result Indicators).....   | 92 |
| Table 28 - Data on Participants Priority Axis 4 .....   | 93 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Table 29 - Financial Progress Priority Axis 4 .....  | 94  |
| Table 30 - Priority Axis 5 Indicators (Output and Result Indicators) .....                   | 100 |
| Table 31 - Data on Participants Priority Axis 5 .....  | 101 |
| Table 32 - Financial Progress Priority Axis 5 .....  | 102 |
| Table 33 - Cross Referencing of OPII - Priority Axes and CSGs.....                           | 110 |
| Table 34 - Calls for Project Proposals Information Sessions.....                             | 126 |
| Table 35 - Total expenditure (%) on information and publicity measures (OPII) for 2013 ..... | 131 |
| Table 36 - Expenditure to date on information and publicity measures (OPII) .....            | 132 |
| Table 37 - Communication Plan Indicator .....  | 139 |

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## List of Acronyms

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|       |  |
|-------|--|
| ACR   | Annual Control Report                            |
| AIR   | Annual Implementation Report                     |
| BIC   | Business Incubation                              |
| CA    | Certifying Authority                             |
| CAF   | Common Assessment Framework                      |
| CDP   | Continuing Development Coordinators              |
| CF    | Cohesion Fund                                    |
| CION  | European Commission                              |
| COCOF | Coordination Committee of the Funds              |
| CPD   | Continuing Professional Development              |
| CSGs  | Community Strategic Guidelines                   |
| CSR   | Country Specific Recommendations                 |
| DG    | Director General                                 |
| DLL   | Directorate for Lifelong Learning                |
| EAFRD | European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development |
| EAP   | Employment Aid Programme                         |
| EC    | European Commission                              |
| EFF   | European Fisheries Fund                          |
| EMFF  | European Maritime and Fisheries Fund             |
| ERDF  | European Regional Development Fund               |
| ESF   | European Social Fund                             |
| ESG   | Evaluation Steering Group                        |
| ESIF  | European Structural and Investment Funds         |
| ETC   | Employment and Training Corporation              |
| EU    | European Union                                   |
| EU    | European Union Programmes Agency                 |
| GBER  | General Block Exemption Regulation               |

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| GIS   | Geographic Information System                      |
| IAID  | Internal Audit Investigation Department            |
| IB    | Intermediate Body                                  |
| IBSC  | Intermediate Body Steering Committee               |
| ICT   | Information Communication Technology               |
| IEG   | Integrated Employment Guideline                    |
| ILO   | International Labour Organisation                  |
| IMCC  | Inter-Ministerial Co-ordination Committee          |
| INIO  | Informal Network of Information Officers           |
| IP    | Intellectual Property                              |
| IPRO  | Intellectual Property Rights Office                |
| ISCED | International Standard Classification of Education |
| IT    | Information Technology                             |
| ITS   | Institute of Tourism Studies                       |
| IWB   | Interactive White Boards                           |
| JER   | Joint Employment Report                            |
| KMS   | Kunsill Malti Għall-iSport                         |
| KNPD  | Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b' Dizabilità       |
| KT    | Knowledge Transfer                                 |
| KTO   | Knowledge Transfer Office                          |
| LIIP  | Local Informal Information and Publicity           |
| LM    | Line Ministry                                      |
| LOF   | Learning Outcomes Framework                        |
| MA    | Managing Authority                                 |
| MC    | Monitoring Committee                               |
| MCA   | Malta Communications Authority                     |
| MAST  | Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology     |
| MCCAA | Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority   |
| MCESD | Malta Council for Economic and Social Development  |



|        |   |
|--------|---|
| MCST   | Malta Council for Science and Technology                                    |
| MEAIM  | Ministry for European Affairs and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto |
| MEDE   | Ministry of Education and Employment  |
| MEUSAC | Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee                                      |
| MFC    | Malta Film Commission   |
| MITA   | Malta Information Technology Agency   |
| MPSC   | Ministerial Project Steering Committee                                      |
| MQF    | Malta Qualifications Framework  |
| MS     | Member State  |
| MT     | Malta   |
| MTA    | Malta Tourism Authority   |
| NCF    | National Curriculum Framework   |
| NCFHE  | National Commission for Further and Higher Education                        |
| NCPE   | National Commission for the Promotion of Equality                           |
| NGO    | Non-Governmental Organisation   |
| NHSCT  | Northern Health and Social Care Trust                                       |
| NQF    | National Qualifications Framework   |
| NRP    | National Reform Programme   |
| NSO    | National Statistics Office  |
| OP     | Operational Programme   |
| OPI    | Operational Programme I   |
| OPII   | Operational Programme II  |
| OTS    | On The Spot   |
| PA     | Priority Axis   |
| PAHRO  | Public Administration Human Resources Office                                |
| PPCD   | Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Department                            |
| PSC    | Project Selection Committee   |
| S&T    | Science and Technology  |
| SFD    | Structural Funds Database   |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| SOE   | Statement of Expenditure                        |
| STEPS | Strategic Educational Pathway Scholarships      |
| TA    | Technical Assistance                            |
| TAF   | Training Aid Framework                          |
| TFEU  | Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union |
| TM    | Transport Malta                                 |
| UK    | United Kingdom                                  |
| UOM   | University of Malta                             |
| VAT   | Value Added Tax                                 |
| VET   | Vocational Education and Training               |
| VLA   | Virtual Learning Environment                    |

# 1 – Introduction

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OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

Objective Concerned: Convergence

Eligible area covered: Malta

Programming period: 2007 - 2013

Programme Number (CCI No): 2007/MT051PO001

*Programme Title:* Operational Programme II – Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life (Cohesion Policy 2007-2013)

ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION  
REPORT

Reporting year: 2013

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Date of approval of the annual report by the Monitoring Committee  
16<sup>th</sup> May 2014

## 2 – Overview of the implementation

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### 2.1 Achievement and analysis of the progress

2013 marks the seventh year of the implementation of Operational Programme II (OPII) and was characterised with progress in the implementation of approved projects, with some initiatives either completing the activities foreseen under the project or close to completion whilst at the same time new projects were being approved in an effort to fully commit the allocation under the Operational Programme. This section examines the progress made during the year under review in implementing the ESF Operational Programme. The financial tables and description further on provide details on the expenditure paid out by the project beneficiaries and included in payment claims processed through the SFD. The remainder of this section highlights the physical implementation of the Operational Programme.

#### *2.1.1 Information on the physical progress of the Operational Programme*

As at the end of the reporting year, there were eighty-three (83) approved operations<sup>1</sup> out of which thirty-three (33) were at closure stage with the rest at different stages of implementation.

In 2013 achievement was registered both in terms of progress from a budgetary point of view and in terms of results achieved on the ground. By December 2013, 99.5% of the OP's allocation was committed (€131,133,092) and 71% of the amounts committed were contracted. In order to achieve this success, in 2013 the MA issued two calls for proposals, which together with calls that were under evaluation from calls launched in 2012, resulted in the approval of fourteen (14) new projects in 2013, amounting to €17,699,018, four (4) under PA 1<sup>2</sup>, one (1) under PA 2<sup>3</sup>, four (4) under PA 3<sup>4</sup> and five (5) under PA 4<sup>5</sup>.

During the year under review, the Programme registered considerable progress in disbursement, with €22,768,247 paid in 2013, representing an increase of €2,796,940 (14%) over the payments done in 2012, bringing the total cumulative payments as at the end of the year to €69,564,988 (public eligible), representing 53% of the committed amount and 75% of the contracted amounts<sup>6</sup>.

Pursuant to an increased expenditure, the MA sought to focus significantly on verification of expenditure paid exercises. This brought the certified total public eligible amount to €61,942,286<sup>7</sup> representing 46% of the total OP allocation. This activity in terms of verification and certification of expenditure meant that

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<sup>1</sup> Eighty-one (81) mainstream projects; 2 (two) Aid Schemes and (1) Technical Assistance.

<sup>2</sup> ESF1.225, ESF1.227, ESF1.228, ESF1.229 approved under Call 11 (launched in 2012).

<sup>3</sup> ESF2.204, approved under Call 10 (launched and evaluated in 2012).

<sup>4</sup> ESF3.193 and ESF3.196 approved under Call 9, which was launched and evaluated in the last quarter of 2012. ESF3.231 and ESF3.234 approved under Call 12.

<sup>5</sup> ESF4.216, ESF4.218, ESF4.220, ESF4.221 approved under Call 11 and ESF4.236 was approved under Call 13.

<sup>6</sup> The total contracted cumulative as at end 2013 amounts to €92,579,651.

<sup>7</sup> The total certified up to end 2012 amounted to €31,781,820.

Malta achieved its financial targets (of the so-called 'n+3/2' target) in real terms, as was the case in previous years.

The programme implementation, which addresses the European Employment Strategy, continued to put in place measures which aimed at improving education and skills (40% of payments - PA 1); employability and adaptability in the labour market (22% of payments - PA 2); social inclusion (26% of payments - PA 3); and lifelong learning to strengthen the institutional and administrative capacity (8% of payments - PA 4), registering considerable results on the ground with a number of individuals that experienced the benefits of the ESF investments both in Malta and Gozo. In this regard, by the end of year under review achievements were registered in the majority of output and result indicators<sup>8</sup>.

- **Aid Schemes implemented under Article 107 of the Treaty**

With the exception of Quarter 4 for the EAP, in 2013 activity under the two (2) schemes implemented under Article 107 of the Treaty was mostly concentrated on the processing of reimbursement claims and management verifications. This was a challenging year for the IB, as it underwent a restructuring process within its implementation and control units to simplify and facilitate the payment processing.

As reported in the AIR 2012, both Schemes – the Training Aid Framework (TAF) and the Employment Aid Programme (EAP) – had achieved full commitment of the total public eligible amount allocated to it by the end of 2012, resulting in €21.1m<sup>9</sup> committed to operations by more than four thousand private enterprises. At the time there was also an over-commitment of €5.1m across both schemes. Notwithstanding, a number of decommitments were registered during 2013, as Beneficiaries either claimed less amounts than committed, or the eligible amounts were reduced by the IB following its management verifications.

On the other hand, in September 2013, the IB proposed an extension to the EAP scheme to address the particular needs of Gozitan employers and residents. This was welcomed by the MA, which allocated an additional €1.96m to top up the €12.2m already budgeted under the scheme, bringing the total allocation under the EAP Aid Scheme up to €14.16m. The new Gozo scheme was launched on 28th October 2013 and was an immediate success as 428 applications were received. 354 grants amounting to over €2m started in January 2014 and will run for twelve months, addressing seven target groups of disadvantaged individuals, as guided by Article 1 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 800/2008 (General Block Exemption Regulation).

The two Aid schemes contributed significantly to OPII financial targets for 2013, with a total of €8.64m (public share) certified to the Commission under both Schemes<sup>10</sup>, representing 29% of the amounts

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<sup>8</sup> With the exception of output indicator 'Number of families benefiting from childcare' under PA 3, as this indicator is not being targeted by any of the approved operations.

<sup>9</sup> TAF €8,851,620 and EAP €12,200,000, excluding the over-commitments.

<sup>10</sup> TAF - €2.86m and EAP - €5.79m

certified under the entire Programme during the year under review. €2m (public eligible) were paid under the TAF during 2013, almost equivalent to the total amounts paid up to December 2012 together (€2.2m). €4.6m remain to be disbursed, possibly by the end of 2014. Even better results were achieved under the EAP, where €5.5m were paid in 2013, as opposed to the €3.44m disbursed up to December 2012.

All this was the result of a concerted effort by all stakeholders, as the strengthened and restructured administrative capacity at ETC was complemented by the continuous support from the MA, the Ministry of Education and Employment (MEDE), the Treasury and the CA. This efficiency in payment processing and certification was commendable also in the light of the fact that, through their management verifications, the MA and the CA still obtained the necessary levels of assurance to certify payments, thus preserving the reliability of the management and control systems in place.

- **Territorial Earmarking: Progress on Implementation of the 10% Commitment for Gozo**

As reported in preceding years, Government has a territorial commitment to spend 10% of the Funds on projects that contribute directly to Gozo's socio-economic development. The calls for project proposals issued in 2013 targeted both Malta and Gozo. As at end 2013, there were six (6) Gozo-based projects<sup>11</sup>, contributing to a direct investment of €990,739 in public eligible costs. In addition, as at end 2013, there were a further sixty-one (61) projects which had a component targeting Gozo, with an overall investment of €10,742,045<sup>12</sup> (public eligible). Out of this amount, €316,662 were committed under the TAF scheme, aiding 308 Gozo-based enterprises, and €4,120,500 were committed under EAP, assisting 558 persons so far.<sup>13</sup>

It is important to note that, by mid-2013, significant progress was made towards the 10% commitment, with the new projects selected under Calls 12 and 13, raising the commitment to €12.5m. However, major reductions were registered towards the end of the year, primarily under project ESF1.130, where €1.08m were deducted due to a revision in project activities. Further reductions were also registered under ESF1.23 (€91,555, savings) and ESF2.4 (€266,850, lower participation by Gozitans), and the withdrawn projects (footnote 12).

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<sup>11</sup> ESF1.23, ESF1.209, ESF2.7, ESF2.141, ESF3.108 and ESF4.189

<sup>12</sup> When compared to AIR 2012, the number of projects contributing to the Gozo commitment increased by twelve (12) (ESF1.211, ESF1.225, ESF1.227, ESF1.228, ESF2.204, ESF2.85, ESF3.193, ESF3.196, ESF3.232, ESF4.216, ESF4.220 and ESF4.221) and the total amount of eligible costs increased by €1.3m. This is the net result following the deduction of the Gozo commitment after the withdrawal of five (5) projects (ESF2.138, ESF3.107, ESF3.112, ESF4.167 and ESF4.182).

<sup>13</sup> Participants under the new EAP for Gozo are not reported here. These will be reported in the next AIR, following commitments made between the IB and the Beneficiaries in January 2014.

By way of summary, as at end of the year, the total commitment for Gozo (including Aid Schemes) was €11,732,784, equivalent to 9% of the total OP allocation<sup>14</sup>. The MA will strive to achieve the 10% target in 2014, also through the approval of projects under Call 14 which may contribute to the Gozo dimension.

- **Indicators**

During the year under review the physical progress continued to be registered under all Priority Axis with an aim to reach the set targets. The tables below provide an overview of the achievements registered as at end 2013. It should be noted that some indicators from previous years have been slightly revised following official justified notifications from Beneficiaries, to revise the achievement reported in previous years<sup>15</sup>. The MA continues to monitor the mechanism put in place by the Beneficiaries to collate data on indicators to ensure the correctness of data provided. A detailed analysis of the achievements registered under output and result indicators will be provided in Chapter 3 of this report.

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<sup>14</sup> €131,764,705

<sup>15</sup> Justifications for revised indicators are included under the respective Priority Axis in Chapter 3.

**Table 1 – Indicators - Priority Axis 1: Improving Education and Skills**

| Priority Axis 1 – Improving education and skills  |   |   |             | 2007 | 2008 | 2009  | 2010  | 2011  | 2012  | 2013   | Total |
|---|---|---|-------------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| Output  | A | Indicator 1: Number of persons participating in further or higher education & training programmes               | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 140   | 155   | 147   | 45    | 158    | 645   |
|   |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 600   |
|   |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
|   | B | Indicator 2: Number of persons participating in S&T or ICT in further or higher education & training programmes | Achievement | 0    | 15   | 583   | 605   | 745   | 397   | 167    | 2,512 |
|   |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 3000  |
|   |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
|   |   | Indicator 3: Number of persons participating in S&T or ICT capacity building education & training               | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 1     | 27    | 52    | 2     | 0      | 82    |
|   |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 250   |
|   |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
|   |   | Indicator 4: Number of S&T or ICT actions/studies/campaigns/research activities carried out                     | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 0     | 5     | 0     | 0     | 1      | 6     |
|   |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 10    |
|   |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
|   | C | Indicator 5: Number of persons trained through capacity building courses  | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 96    | 545   | 49    | 150   | 314    | 1,154 |
|   |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 750   |
|   |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
| Indicator 6: Number of persons trained through supplementary courses, modules or credits for better skills matches    |   | Achievement   | 0           | 213  | 211  | 1,503 | 3,871 | 4,374 | 3,731 | 13,903 |       |
|   |   | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | 3,000  |       |
|   |   | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    |       |
| Indicator 7: Number of actions supporting educational quality, relevance, structures, systems, campaigns and research |   | Achievement   | 0           | 0    | 1    | 4     | 6     | 1     | 1     | 13     |       |
|   |   | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | 20     |       |
|   |   | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    |       |
| Results   | A | Indicator 1: % of participants gaining a further or higher education & training qualification                   | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 0%    | 28%   | 38%   | 59%   | 63%    | 63%   |
|   |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 75%   |
|   |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
|   | B | Indicator 2: % of participants gaining a further or higher education & training qualification in S&T or ICT     | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 0%    | 18%   | 27%   | 47%   | 65%    | 65%   |
|   |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 75%   |
|   |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
|   |   | Indicator 3: % of participants gaining a qualification/certification in capacity building education/training    | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 0%    | 29%   | 90%   | 96%   | 96%    | 96%   |
|   |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 80%   |
|   |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
|   | C | Indicator 4: % of participants gaining a qualification/certification  | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 3%    | 53%   | 63%   | 88%   | 87%    | 87%   |
|   |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 80%   |
|   |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |



Table 2 – Indicators - Priority Axis 2: Investing in employability and adaptability of the workforce

| Priority Axis 2 – Investing in employability and adaptability of the workforce |   |   |             | 2007 | 2008 | 2009  | 2010   | 2011   | 2012  | 2013  | Total  |
|--|---|---|-------------|------|------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|--------|
| Output   | A | Indicator 1: Number of persons trained/supported  | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 4,773 | 14,025 | 15,311 | 6,773 | 3,784 | 44,666 |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | 45000  |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    |
|  |   | Indicator 2: Number of actions supporting educational structures, systems, campaigns and research | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 0     | 0      | 1      | 1     | 3     | 5      |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | 5      |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    |
|  | B | Indicator 3: Number of undertakings supported   | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 148   | 916    | 1,001  | 991   | 12    | 3,068  |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | 700    |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    |
| Results  | A | Indicator 1: % of participants in employment or further study 6 month after receiving assistance  | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 37%   | 51%    | 73%    | 77%   | 71%   | 71%    |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | 20%    |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    |
|  |   | Indicator 2: % of participants gaining qualification/certification                                | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 77%   | 83%    | 87%    | 89%   | 86%   | 86%    |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | 60%    |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    |
|  | B | Indicator 3: % of participants gaining qualification/certification                                | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 93%   | 95%    | 99%    | 99%   | 99%   | 99%    |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | 60%    |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    |

**Table 3 – Indicators – Priority Axis 3: Promoting an equal and inclusive labour market**

| Priority Axis 3 – Promoting an equal and inclusive labour market |  |   |   | 2007        | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | Total    |     |
|--|--|---|---|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|----------|-----|
| Output   | A  | Indicator 1: Number of actions supporting a lifecycle approach to work                                  | Achievement   | 0           | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 2    | 0    | 3        |     |
|  |  |   | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | 10       |     |
|  |  |   | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a      |     |
|  |  | Indicator 2: Number of women trained/supported  | Achievement   | 0           | 0    | 23   | 275  | 374  | 253  | 67   | 992      |     |
|  |  |   | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | 2.000[1] |     |
|  |  |   | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a      |     |
|  |  | Indicator 3: Number of families benefiting from childcare   | Achievement   | 0           | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0        |     |
|  |  |   | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | 1,600    |     |
|  |  |   | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a      |     |
|  | B  | Indicator 4: Number of vulnerable persons trained/supported   | Achievement   | 0           | 0    | 504  | 3498 | 4311 | 1651 | 86   | 10050    |     |
|  |  |   | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | 6,500    |     |
|  |  |   | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a      |     |
|  |  | Indicator 5: Number of persons trained in capacity building courses                                     | Achievement   | 0           | 0    | 22   | 258  | 30   | 61   | 346  | 717      |     |
|  |  |   | Target  | n/a         | 0    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | 600      |     |
|  |  |   | Baseline  | n/a         | 0    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a      |     |
|  |  | Indicator 6: Number of studies, actions, campaigns, research activities carried out                     | Achievement   | 0           | 0    | 0    | 4    | 9    | 1    | 3    | 17       |     |
|  |  |   | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | 10       |     |
|  |  |   | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a      |     |
| Indicator 7: Number of civil society projects                    |  | Achievement   | 0   | 0           | 2    | 0    | 1    | 1    | 0    | 4    |          |     |
|  |  | Target  | n/a   | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | 50   |          |     |
|  |  | Baseline  | n/a   | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  |          |     |
| Results  |  | A   | Indicator 1: % of participants in employment or further study 6 months after receiving assistance | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 0%   | 0%   | 15%  | 40%  | 37%      | 37% |
|  |  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a      | 20% |
|  |  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | na   | n/a  | n/a      | n/a |
|  | Indicator 2: % of participants gaining a qualification/certification |   | Achievement   | 0%          | 0%   | 0%   | 75%  | 61%  | 50%  | 47%  | 45%      |     |
|  |  |   | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | 50%      |     |
|  |  |   | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a      |     |
|  | B  | Indicator 3: % of vulnerable persons in employment or further study 6 months after receiving assistance | Achievement   | 0%          | 0%   | 0%   | 13%  | 41%  | 70%  | 76%  | 76%      |     |
|  |  |   | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | 20%      |     |
|  |  |   | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a      |     |
|  |  | Indicator 4: % of participants in capacity building gaining a qualification/certification               | Achievement   | 0%          | 0%   | 0%   | 81%  | 83%  | 69%  | 36%  | 37%      |     |
|  |  |   | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | 80%      |     |
|  |  |   | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a      |     |

**Table 4 – Indicators – Priority Axis 4: Strengthening of institutional and administrative capacity**

| Priority Axis 4 – Strengthening of institutional and administrative capacity |   |  |             |      |      |      |      |       |       |       |        |     |
|--|---|--|-------------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-----|
|  |   |  |             | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011  | 2012  | 2013  | Total  |     |
| Output   | A | Number of persons participating in training  | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 3    | 226  | 2,286 | 8,436 | 7,094 | 18,045 |     |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | 9,000  |     |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    |     |
|  |   | Number studies/actions/campaigns/research activities carried out   | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 1     | 4     | 2     | 8      |     |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 30  |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a |
|  | B | Number of projects supporting partnership  | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 2    | 0    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 2      |     |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 7   |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a |
| Results  | A | % of participants gaining a qualification/certification  | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 0%   | 22%  | 61%   | 86%   | 90%   | 90%    |     |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 80% |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a |
|  | B | % increase in the technical capacity (secretariat) at MCESD to support Council (and sub-committees) in reaching informed opinions in policy issues | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 0%   | 57%  | 0%    | 0%    | 0%    | 57%    |     |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 50% |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a |

**Table 5 – Indicators – Priority Axis 5: Technical Assistance**

| Priority Axis 5 - Technical Assistance |   |   |             | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013            | Total              |                   |     |
|--|---|---|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----|
| Output                                 | A | Indicator 1:<br>Number of Persons Trained                         | Achievement | 0    | 86   | 57   | 71   | 31   | 44   | 48              | 337 <sup>16</sup>  |                   |     |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a             | n/a                | 350 <sup>17</sup> |     |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a             | n/a                | n/a               |     |
|  |   | Indicator 2:<br>Number of evaluations carried out                 | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0               | 0                  | 1                 |     |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a             | n/a                | n/a               | 4   |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a             | n/a                | n/a               | n/a |
|  |   | Indicator 3:<br>Number of Publicity measures undertaken           | Achievement | 3    | 5    | 4    | 5    | 5    | 3    | 4 <sup>18</sup> | 4 <sup>18</sup>    | 29 <sup>19</sup>  |     |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a             | n/a                | n/a               | 15  |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a             | n/a                | n/a               | n/a |
|  |   | Indicator 4:<br>Number of studies/research activities carried out | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0               | 0                  | 1                 | 2   |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a             | n/a                | n/a               | 5   |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a             | n/a                | n/a               | n/a |
| Result                                 | A | Indicator 1:<br>Reaching N+3/N+2 targets                          | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 0%   | 0%   | 100% | 100% | 100%            | 100% <sup>20</sup> |                   |     |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a             | n/a                | 80%               |     |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a             | n/a                | n/a               |     |

16 This figure does not include repeat participants. Achievements registered in previous years included repeat participants and as at end 2011 amounted to a total of 468. This figure has now been revised to eliminate any repeat participants in accordance with the TA's OP target. Furthermore, the figure quoted in 2007 erroneously reported 3 participants which has now been corrected.

17 Does not include repeat trainees.

18 This figures includes: 1 (Annual Event); 1 (Local network meeting), 1 (call for proposals) and 1 (promotional items and information tools, including adverts.

19 Achievement between 2007 and 2010 was reported as per Communication Plan, but reported as micro-publicity actions and as at end 2011 amounted to 34. These have now been revised to include macro- publicity actions in order to be in line with the TA OP target.

20 Under this indicator the total achievements are not being calculated cumulatively but are reflecting the final reporting year.

## 2.1.2 Financial information

### Advance Payments

No further advance payments were due to Malta in 2013. The total amount of advance payments received under ESF remained €10,080,000 as per Article 82 of EC No. Reg 1083/2006.

### Interim Payments

Interim payments received in 2013 amounted to €27,155,612, accounting for 52% of all interim payments received under the Programme by the end of the year (€51,728,590). The MA launched the Statement of Expenditure (SoE) process on seven separate occasions in 2013: February, April, June, September, October, November, and December. Table 2 below indicates the total public share (EU + MT) that was verified by the MA, the amounts certified by the CA (public share) and the funds received from the EC during 2013.

Table 6 - Summary of Verified, Certified and Received Amounts

| Summary - Verified, Certified and Received | Verified by MA in 2013    | Certified by CA in 2013   | Received from EC in 2013  |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
|  | (public share, €)         | (public share, €)         | (EU share, €)             |
| October (2012)                             | € 576,160 <sup>21</sup>   | € 575,201 <sup>22</sup>   | € 488,921 <sup>23</sup>   |
| November (2012)                            | € 4,243,334 <sup>24</sup> | € 4,242,422 <sup>25</sup> | € 3,606,059 <sup>26</sup> |
| December (2012)                            | € 866,365                 | € 866,365                 | € 736,410 <sup>27</sup>   |
| February                                   | € 2,391,973               | € 2,391,973               | € 2,033,177 <sup>28</sup> |
| April                                      | € 4,109,839               | € 4,107,502               | € 3,491,377 <sup>29</sup> |
| June                                       | € 3,988,214               | € 3,961,362               | € 3,367,158 <sup>30</sup> |
| September                                  | € 5,763,972               | € 5,763,972               | € ,899,376 <sup>31</sup>  |
| October                                    | € 8,705,074               | € 8,650,079               | € 7,352,567 <sup>32</sup> |
| November                                   | € 1,394,607               | € 1,388,902               | € 1,180,567 <sup>33</sup> |
| December                                   | € 1,085,121               | € 1,085,121               | € - <sup>34</sup>         |
| <b>Total (2013 only)</b>                   | <b>€ 28,305,165</b>       | <b>€ 30,160,466</b>       | <b>€ 27,155,612</b>       |

<sup>21</sup> Amount refers to 2012 data and is being included for reference purposes only

<sup>22</sup> ibid

<sup>23</sup> Amount was received from the EC on 26th February

<sup>24</sup> Amount refers to 2012 data and is being included for reference purposes only

<sup>25</sup> Of which €2,297,233 were certified by the CA in 2012. The remaining balance of €1,945,189 was certified in 2013.

<sup>26</sup> Amount refers to the thirteenth application for payment and was received from the EC as follows: €1,952,648 was received on 26th February while €1,653,411 was received on 2nd April

<sup>27</sup> Amount refers to the fourteenth application for payment and was received from the EC on 23rd May

<sup>28</sup> Amount refers to the fifteenth application for payment and was received from the EC on 23rd May

<sup>29</sup> Amount refers to the sixteenth application for payment and was received from the EC on 11th July

<sup>30</sup> Amount refers to the seventeenth and eighteenth application for payment and was received from the EC as follows: €2,416,492 was received on 16th October while €950,666 was received on 18th November

<sup>31</sup> Amount refers to the nineteenth and twentieth application for payment and was received from the EC as follows: €3,373,134 was received on 20th November while €1,526,241 was received on 3rd December

<sup>32</sup> Amount refers to the twenty-first application for payment and was received from the EC on 23rd December

<sup>33</sup> ibid

<sup>34</sup> Amount refers to twenty-second application for payment and was still due from the EC as at end of year. The amount was received from the EC on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

Table 7 - Priority Axes by source of funding (€)

|  | Total funding of operational programme (Union and national) | Basis for calculating Union contribution (Public or Total cost) | Total amount of certified eligible expenditure paid by Beneficiaries <sup>35</sup> | Corresponding public contribution <sup>36</sup> (Certified Only) | Implementation rate in %        |
|--|---|---|--|--|---------------------------------|
|  | a   | b   | c  | d  | e = c/a if T or<br>e = d/a if P |
| Priority axis 1 - Improving education and skills                                   | € 41,400,000  | P   | € 24,481,986   | € 24,481,986   | 59%                             |
| Priority axis 2 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of the workforce | € 30,995,000  | P   | € 14,000,547   | € 14,000,547   | 45%                             |
| Priority axis 3 - Promoting an equal and inclusive labour market                   | € 36,900,000  | P   | € 16,204,269   | € 16,204,269   | 44%                             |
| Priority axis 4 - Strengthening of institutional & administrative capacity         | € 17,199,118  | P   | € 4,797,175  | € 4,797,175  | 28%                             |
| Priority axis 5 - Technical Assistance   | € 5,270,589   | P   | € 2,458,310  | € 2,458,310  | 47%                             |
| <b>Grand total</b>   | <b>€ 131,764,707</b>  | <b>P</b>  | <b>€ 61,942,286</b>  | <b>€ 61,942,286</b>  | <b>47%</b>                      |

<sup>35</sup> Includes public only, certified by CA, article 53(1), EC1083/2006

<sup>36</sup> Cumulative certified public

### **Conclusions of the outcome of the 2012 Audit**

In 2013, there was the conclusion of the 2012 Commission Systems Audit. When the European Commission audited ESF 1.36, the Commission did not agree with the exclusion clause as adopted by the Maltese Authorities for the award of a training contract whose objective was to develop the necessary training materials and to provide vocational top-up degrees and Masters Courses to students and MCAST staff respectively. The Commission services concluded that although there was adequate publicity, the obligations under the Directive to publish on the O.J. was not adhered to and hence a 25% financial correction on the value of the contract was imposed. The financial correction was settled in 2013.

### **European Court of Auditors Mission**

In December 2012 and February 2013, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) carried out an audit mission which objective was to obtain reasonable assurance that the work carried out by the Maltese Audit Authority was compliant with the requirements of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006. The results of the audit mission are included in the ECA Annual Report concerning the financial year 2012 on the Implementation of the EU Budget.

The Annual Report was adopted during the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2013 Court of Auditors of the European Union meeting. Annex 5.2 of the ECA Report contains the results of the individual key requirements tested and the overall assessment of the Maltese Audit Authority. The Court found that organisational arrangements generally complied with EU regulations, however, improvements were considered necessary.

### **Annual Control Report**

The 2013 Annual Control Report (ACR) for both Programmes (OPI and OPII), is based on systems audits and audits on operations that had expenditure declared to the Commission in 2012. The ACR, was submitted by IAID (the sole audit authority responsible to carry out the audits) on 30th December 2013 via SFC, in terms of Article 62 (1) (d) (i) of Council Regulation EC/1083/2006 and Article 18 (2) of Commission Regulation EC/1828/2006.

During the year under review, a follow up of the system audit carried out in previous year at the Employment and Training Corporation was carried out with respect to Operational Programme II. In addition five payment claims were selected from Operational Programme II from a total of 620 periodic payment claims certified in 2012. These claims were related to five (5) operations. Based on professional judgement, following the extraction of the statistical sample, it was deemed necessary to audit a complementary sample of six (6) additional claims for Operational Programme II.

The Annual Control Report reports that no irregularities were detected when carrying out systems audits and audits of operations on Operational Programme II. An unqualified audit opinion was expressed in terms of Article 62 (1) (d) (ii) of EC/1083/2006, which confirms that the management and control systems of the Operational Programme functions well and provides a high level of assurance as derived from the systems audits and audits of operations.

### 2.1.3 Information about the breakdown of use of the funds

The Table below indicates the amounts committed to each Priority Theme and Economic Activity as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

**Table 8 - Cumulative breakdown of allocations of the Community contribution by category (Part C of Annex II)**

| Priority Theme | Form of Finance | Territory | Economic Activity | Location    | Total        |    |             |            |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|-------------|--------------|----|-------------|------------|
| 62             | 1               | 3         | 14                | MT0 - Malta | 1,704,438.40 |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 22                | MT0 - Malta | 956,755.61   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 18                | MT0 - Malta | 1,522,245.26 |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 20                | MT0 - Malta | 459,936.01   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 3                 | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.53   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 4                 | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.53   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 5                 | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.53   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 6                 | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.53   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 7                 | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.53   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 8                 | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.53   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 9                 | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.53   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 10                | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.53   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 11                | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.53   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 12                | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.53   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 13                | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.53   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 15                | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.52   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 16                | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.52   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 19                | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.52   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 21                | MT0 - Malta | 395,993.52   |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 63                | 1           | 3            | 14 | MT0 - Malta | 262,480.91 |
|                |                 |           | 64                | 1           | 3            | 18 | MT0 - Malta | 39,922.80  |
| 65             | 1               | 3         | 0                 | MT0 - Malta | 101,181.08   |    |             |            |
| 66             | 1               | 3         | 1                 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 2                 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 3                 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 4                 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 5                 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |    |             |            |
|                |                 |           | 6                 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |    |             |            |



|    |   |   |    |             |              |
|----|---|---|----|-------------|--------------|
|    |   |   | 7  | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |
|    |   |   | 8  | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |
|    |   |   | 9  | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |
|    |   |   | 10 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |
|    |   |   | 11 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |
|    |   |   | 12 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |
|    |   |   | 13 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |
|    |   |   | 14 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |
|    |   |   | 15 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |
|    |   |   | 16 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |
|    |   |   | 17 | MT0 - Malta | 170,864.24   |
|    |   |   | 18 | MT0 - Malta | 3,201,019.27 |
|    |   |   | 19 | MT0 - Malta | 383,957.24   |
|    |   |   | 20 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |
|    |   |   | 21 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |
|    |   |   | 22 | MT0 - Malta | 32,419.19    |
| 68 | 1 | 3 | 18 | MT0 - Malta | 452,396.84   |
| 69 | 1 | 3 | 18 | MT0 - Malta | 842,712.16   |
|    |   |   | 20 | MT0 - Malta | 259,368.15   |
|    |   |   | 22 | MT0 - Malta | 1,067,815.73 |
| 71 | 1 | 3 | 1  | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 2  | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 3  | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 4  | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 5  | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 6  | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 8  | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 9  | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 10 | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 11 | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 12 | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 13 | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 14 | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 15 | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 16 | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 17 | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 18 | MT0 - Malta | 1,026,009.09 |
|    |   |   | 19 | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 20 | MT0 - Malta | 6,692,293.19 |
|    |   |   | 21 | MT0 - Malta | 573,244.05   |
|    |   |   | 22 | MT0 - Malta | 3,436,068.61 |
|    |   |   | 0  | MT0 - Malta | 56,961.82    |
| 72 | 1 | 3 | 1  | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48   |
|    |   |   | 2  | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48   |
|    |   |   | 3  | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48   |

|    |   |   |    |             |               |
|----|---|---|----|-------------|---------------|
|    |   |   | 4  | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 5  | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 6  | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 7  | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 8  | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 9  | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 10 | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 11 | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 12 | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 13 | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 14 | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 15 | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 16 | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 17 | MT0 - Malta | 1,180,381.49  |
|    |   |   | 18 | MT0 - Malta | 27,161,115.11 |
|    |   |   | 19 | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 20 | MT0 - Malta | 349,846.46    |
|    |   |   | 21 | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
|    |   |   | 22 | MT0 - Malta | 127,515.48    |
| 73 | 1 | 3 | 1  | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 2  | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 3  | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 4  | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 5  | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 6  | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 7  | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 8  | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 9  | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 10 | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 11 | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 12 | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 13 | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 14 | MT0 - Malta | 616,955.35    |
|    |   |   | 15 | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 16 | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 18 | MT0 - Malta | 9,605,842.57  |
|    |   |   | 19 | MT0 - Malta | 155,763.96    |
|    |   |   | 20 | MT0 - Malta | 83,725.66     |
|    |   |   | 21 | MT0 - Malta | 56,193.26     |
|    |   |   | 22 | MT0 - Malta | 296,519.87    |
| 74 | 1 | 3 | 18 | MT0 - Malta | 12,095,239.27 |
| 80 | 1 | 3 | 22 | MT0 - Malta | 244,022.35    |
|    |   |   | 20 | MT0 - Malta | 594,660.00    |
|    |   |   | 18 | MT0 - Malta | 93,216.10     |

|                    |   |   |    |             |                       |
|--------------------|---|---|----|-------------|-----------------------|
| 81                 | 1 | 3 | 17 | MT0 - Malta | 10,590,890.78         |
|                    |   |   | 18 | MT0 – Malta | 521,462.96            |
|                    |   |   | 20 | MT0 - Malta | 58,799.60             |
|                    |   |   | 0  | MT0 - Malta | 104,890.37            |
|                    |   |   | 22 | MT0 - Malta | 397,224.55            |
| 85                 | 1 | 3 | 0  | MT0 - Malta | 2,992,499.80          |
|                    | 1 | 3 | 0  | MT0 - Malta | 1,487,500.00          |
| <b>Grand Total</b> |   |   |    |             | <b>111,463,129.36</b> |

The total value of the Aid Schemes (Articles 107 and 108 (ex-Articles 87 and 88) of the TFEU) committed by the MA to the IB has been included under relevant categories (€23,014,120 of which €14,162,500 are funds allocated for the EAP and €8.851,620 for the TAF). The below values are indicative on the basis of funds approved.

**Table 9 - Training Aid Framework**

| Training Aid Framework |  |               |     |
|------------------------|--|---------------|-----|
| Code                   | Economic Activity                                  | Value         | %   |
| 1                      | Agriculture, hunting and forestry                  | €0.00         | 0%  |
| 2                      | Fishing  | €0.00         | 0%  |
| 3                      | Manufacture of food products and beverages         | €486,023.37   | 5%  |
| 4                      | Manufacture of textile and textile products        | €0.00         | 0%  |
| 5                      | Manufacture of transport equipment                 | €0.00         | 0%  |
| 6                      | Unspecified manufacturing industries               | €1,988,721.77 | 22% |
| 7                      | Mining and quarrying of energy producing materials | €7,203.31     | 0%  |
| 8                      | Electricity, gas, steam and hot water supply       | €0.00         | 0%  |
| 9                      | Collection, purification and distribution of water | €691.16       | 0%  |
| 10                     | Post and telecommunications                        | €399,294.54   | 5%  |
| 11                     | Transport  | €964,270.21   | 11% |
| 12                     | Construction                                       | €277,528.27   | 3%  |
| 13                     | Wholesale and retail trade                         | €1,352,344.64 | 15% |
| 14                     | Hotels and restaurants                             | €755,152.22   | 9%  |
| 15                     | Financial intermediation                           | €417,264.20   | 5%  |

|    |  |                      |             |
|----|--|----------------------|-------------|
| 16 | Real estate, renting and business activities         | €1,568,504.50        | 18%         |
| 17 | Public administration                                | €0.00                | 0%          |
| 18 | Education  | €145,831.81          | 2%          |
| 19 | Human health activities                              | €104,173.21          | 1%          |
| 20 | Social work, community, social and personal services | €211,447.28          | 2%          |
| 21 | Activities linked to the environment                 | €0.00                | 0%          |
| 22 | Other unsepecified services                          | €173,169.53          | 2%          |
| 0  | Not applicable                                       | €0.00                | 0%          |
|    | <b>Total Amount</b>                                  | <b>€8,851,620.00</b> | <b>100%</b> |

In this regard, the total indicative amount committed by EAP by the end of 2013 is divided by code of economic activities, as follows;

**Table 10 - Employment Aid Programme**

| Employment Aid Programme |  |                       |             |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|-------------|
| Code                     | Economic Activity                                    | Value                 | %           |
| 1                        | Agriculture, hunting and forestry                    | €171,472.51           | 1%          |
| 2                        | Fishing  | €0.00                 | 0%          |
| 3                        | Manufacture of food products and beverages           | €389,065.26           | 3%          |
| 4                        | Manufacture of textile and textile products          | €65,018.46            | 0%          |
| 5                        | Manufacture of transport equipment                   | €13,384.11            | 0%          |
| 6                        | Unspecified manufacturing industries                 | €2,259,837.71         | 16%         |
| 7                        | Mining and quarrying of energy producing materials   | €21,996.71            | 0%          |
| 8                        | Electricity, gas, steam and hot water supply         | €0.00                 | 0%          |
| 9                        | Collection, purification and distribution of water   | €1,118,667.54         | 8%          |
| 10                       | Post and telecommunications                          | €355,310.77           | 3%          |
| 11                       | Transport  | €624,139.44           | 4%          |
| 12                       | Construction   | €3,057,542.82         | 22%         |
| 13                       | Wholesale and retail trade                           | €694,576.47           | 5%          |
| 14                       | Hotels and restaurants                               | €485,141.42           | 3%          |
| 15                       | Financial intermediation                             | €3,107,218.63         | 22%         |
| 16                       | Real estate, renting and business activities         | €0.00                 | 0%          |
| 17                       | Public administration                                | €0.00                 | 0%          |
| 18                       | Education  | €256,505.25           | 2%          |
| 19                       | Human health activities                              | €183,337.77           | 1%          |
| 20                       | Social work, community, social and personal services | €26,463.15            | 0%          |
| 21                       | Activities linked to the environment                 | €41,541.98            | 0%          |
| 22                       | Other unsepecified services                          | €1,279,212.80         | 9%          |
| 0                        | Not applicable                                       | €12,067.20            | 0%          |
|                          | <b>Total Amount</b>                                  | <b>€14,162,500.00</b> | <b>100%</b> |

## 2.1.4 Assistance by target groups

During 2013, collation of data in accordance with Commission Regulation 1828/2006, Annex XXIII, continued to be inserted by Beneficiaries in the management and information system (SFD) and to be reported in PPRs. The table below provides the cumulative figures.

Table 11 - Annex XXIII Data on Participants

| AIR 2013                    |   | People Entering |       | People Leaving           |                              | People Carried Over |       |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------|-------|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-------|
|                             |   | Total           | Women | Total (course completed) | Women (course not completed) | Total               | Women |
| Status in the Labour Market | Total Number of participants (Employed+Unemployed+Inactive) | 14428           | 7627  | 13912                    | 6731                         | 516                 | 1514  |
|                             | Employed  | 12222           | 6748  | 10637                    | 5563                         | 1585                | 1297  |
|                             | Self Employed   | 133             | 37    | 124                      | 39                           | 9                   | 6     |
|                             | Unemployed  | 1439            | 480   | 1496                     | 472                          | -57                 | 353   |
|                             | Long Term Unemployed  | 513             | 128   | 529                      | 134                          | -16                 | 105   |
|                             | Inactive  | 767             | 399   | 1779                     | 696                          | -1012               | -136  |
|                             | Inactive in Education and Training                          | 331             | 200   | 277                      | 154                          | 54                  | 74    |
| Age                         | Young People (15-24 years)                                  | 1870            | 1044  | 2545                     | 1082                         | -675                | 147   |
|                             | Older Workers (55-64 years)                                 | 1447            | 695   | 1513                     | 546                          | -66                 | 472   |
| Vulnerable Groups           | Minorities  | 0               | 0     | 0                        | 0                            | 0                   | 0     |
|                             | Migrants  | 110             | 29    | 77                       | 15                           | 33                  | -10   |
|                             | Disabled  | 137             | 29    | 219                      | 47                           | -82                 | -3    |
|                             | Other Disadvantaged People                                  | 117             | 40    | 792                      | 340                          | -675                | -299  |
| Education Attainment        | Primary or Lower secondary education (ISCED 1 & 2)          | 3537            | 1488  | 4145                     | 1531                         | -608                | 389   |
|                             | Upper Secondary education (ISCED 3)                         | 2000            | 1112  | 2009                     | 1070                         | -9                  | 136   |
|                             | Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 3)             | 1707            | 888   | 1639                     | 836                          | 68                  | 97    |
|                             | Tertiary Education (ISCED 5 & 6)                            | 7184            | 4139  | 6119                     | 3294                         | 1065                | 892   |

### 2.1.5 Assistance repaid or re-used

In the year under review, financial corrections amounting to €84,399 were made to amounts already certified under ESF (i.e. assistance repaid or re-used following cancellation of assistance as referred to in Articles 57 and 98 [2] of the Regulation [EC] No 1083/2006). These amounts were deducted from requests for payments made to the Commission during 2013. Amounts cancelled have been committed to newly approved projects. With regards to schemes the amount cancelled under individual operations might be committed by the IB to other Beneficiaries.

Moreover, under ESF 1.36, following the audit mission carried out by DG Regio and DG Employment in June 2012, a 25% financial correction was applied (in 2013) on the total public eligible amount of the training contract. Although there was an adequate degree of publicity at tendering stage, the award was not published on the Official Journal thus leading to non-compliance with the requirement of advertising during the awarding procedure. The correction was in part cancelled off against expenditure paid but not yet certified to the Commission.

### 2.1.6 Qualitative Analysis

In 2013, the Programme implementation presented a number of challenges. As in previous years, the MA maintained the required momentum in evaluating proposals and leading the process towards finalising Grant Agreements but also in guiding beneficiaries in the implementation on the ground. The latter included identifying problems and facilitating their timely resolution. In terms of financial challenges, a concerted effort continued to be done in order to ensure a timely verification of payments. In order to do this, the year under review was also characterised by ongoing coordination between the MA and the CA with considerable effort by both parties to verify and certify payments, in view of the N+3/2 targets. This process did not only require the persistent input by the MA and the IB (the latter in case of the two Aid Schemes under Article 107 of the Treaty) but also by other stakeholders, in particular the DoC, the Line Ministries, the Treasury and most of all the Beneficiaries themselves.

In 2013, a total of 14,428<sup>37</sup> people participated in the various initiatives financed through the Operational Programme. When compared to the previous year this shows a decrease in participants, however, this is explained through the fact that as explained earlier and as will be explained in more detail in Chapter 3, there were a number of operations in their final phase (closure) whilst a number of approved operations were in their initial stages .

Out of 14,428, 6,801 (47%) were male and 7,627(53%) were female. Moreover, 12,222 were *employed*<sup>38</sup> (85%), 1,439 (10%) were *unemployed*<sup>39</sup>, whilst 767 (5%) were *economically inactive*<sup>40</sup>. The participation

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<sup>37</sup> All the figures mentioned refer to Annex XXIII data and they include the number of participants that have engaged in an ESF activity during the year under review.

<sup>38</sup> Of which 133 were *self-employed* – 1% of the total Employed.

<sup>39</sup> Of which 513 were *long term unemployed* – 36% of the total Unemployed.

of young people and older worker was 1,870 (representing 13% of total participants) for the former and 1,447 (10%) for the latter, though it does not compare to the high participation registered in previous years.<sup>41</sup> Apart from the fact that during the year under review various activities were in their final stages and others had not yet commenced, the reduced number of participants is linked to the negligible activities of the TAF and EAP schemes in terms of new participants. The number of new participants to the project are set to increase in 2014 as more activities within mainstream projects will have been set up on the ground. In addition, EAP Gozo is also expected to register an influx of participants, thus contributing directly to its respective indicators. In fact, as at end 2013, 428 applications have already been submitted by Gozitan undertakings to be supported through EAP.

The majority of those assisted or who benefitted through ESF projects were mostly of working age, amounting to 11,111 (77%). Persons coming from different vulnerable groups also benefited from operations implemented under OPII during the reporting year. Out of 364 participants falling in the category of vulnerable groups entered training during 2013, 137 were people with disabilities (38%). In terms of performance and results, as highlighted in *Table 1 Physical progress of the OP*, in 2013 achievements were registered on seventeen (17) output indicators and thirteen (13) result indicators.

### **Operational Programme's contribution towards the Lisbon Objectives**

Malta is committed towards the achievement of the Lisbon Objectives through OPII and has participated voluntarily in the Lisbon Earmarking exercise. OP II targets thirteen (13) Lisbon earmarked categories of expenditure as referred to in Article 9 (3) of 1083/2006 and identified in Annex IV of the same Regulation.

The MA continued its efforts towards the achievement of the OP earmarking targets. In this regard, the committed amounts contributing to the Lisbon Objectives have increased from 77% as at end December 2012 to 84% as at end of the year under review.

Out of a total amount of €110,014,620 committed in terms of the earmarked codes, as at the end of 2013, a total amount of €94,097,054 (98%) was committed in approved projects as at end 2013.<sup>42</sup> The gap will be narrowed down, once the outcome to a PA4 call to be issued in 2014 is known. The main achievements are outlined in Table 4 Cumulative breakdown of allocations of the Community contribution by category (Part C of Annex II). Throughout 2013, the MA continued to monitor the earmarking process. As at end of the year, there were fourteen<sup>43</sup> (14) newly approved projects which contributed towards the categories addressing the improvement of human capital and the social inclusion of less favoured persons. In addition, the newly approved projects ESF3.193, ESF3.234 and ESF4.221 address Code 80. It is the first time that 07 – 13 projects are targeting the promotion of partnerships, pacts and initiatives

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<sup>40</sup> Of which 331 were *inactive in education and training* – 38% of the total Inactive.

<sup>41</sup> During 2012, the people entering into training/support provided through OPII amounted to 24,144 participants. This means that in 2013, there was a decrease of 42% over the participants as at end 2012.

<sup>42</sup> This amount includes the committed projects targeting Codes 80, 81,85 and 86. These do not contribute directly to the Lisbon codes of intervention, but are nevertheless crucial for the Maltese context.

<sup>43</sup> The projects approved in 2013 contribute mainly to Category 72, 74 and 81.



through the networking of relevant stakeholders. Overall, the additional commitment recorded in 2013, lead to an over commitment of some codes of intervention, similar to the previous years of implementation<sup>44</sup>.

The following categories are those most targeted by approved projects under OPII:

- a) Developing lifelong learning systems for employees to step up their adaptability to change and promoting entrepreneurship and innovation (*code 62*);
- b) Implementing active and preventive measures on the labour market (*code 66*);
- c) Supporting the integration and re-entry into employment for disadvantaged people (*code 71*);
- d) Encouraging the designing, introduction and implementation of reforms in education and training systems in order to develop employability, improving the labour market relevance of initial and vocational education and training, updating skills of training personnel (*code 72*);
- e) Increasing participation in education and training with the purpose of reducing early school leaving, gender-based segregation of subjects (*code 73*);
- f) Developing human potential in the field of research and innovation (*code 74*)

On the other hand, some Lisbon-related categories of expenditure remained untapped or with a low commitment. These are codes 63, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69 and 70<sup>45</sup>, which clearly indicate the current difficulties in introducing innovative ways of organising work, especially for small and medium enterprises which are challenged with limited capacity as well as the repercussions deriving from the economic crisis.

Amongst the significant changes, it was noted that the commitment under some codes (62, 69 and 73) , has decreased when compared to previous year. The changes between 2012 and 2013 are the following:

| Codes | Commitment as at end 2012 | Commitment as at end 2013 |
|-------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 62    | 11,767,937.20             | 10,583,278.18             |
| 63    | 262,480.91                | 262,480.91                |
| 64    | 39,922.80                 | 39,922.80                 |
| 69    | 3,141,895.26              | 2,169,896.04              |
| 72    | 29,625,194.15             | 31,114,137.23             |
| 73    | 11,964,570.52             | 11,657,899.63             |
| 74    | 8,917,365.79              | 12,095,239.27             |

The reduction in the commitment was mainly due to the savings registered and returned to the programme under several projects (ESF1.19, ESF1.23, ESF1.34, ESF1.36) as well as difference between the proposed budget and the actual budget when the Grant Agreement was signed (ESF2.204) as well as withdrawal of three projects (ESF3.107, ESF3.112 and ESF2.138).

<sup>44</sup> To date the earmarked that have registered an over commitment are category codes 66,71,72,74, 81 and 85.

<sup>45</sup> Codes 63,64,65,68 and 69 are below the 50% of the targeted percentage allocated in the OP whilst there are still no commitments under Codes 67, 70 and 80.

## **Horizontal Themes**

The horizontal themes are a consistently key element of the implementation of Malta's Structural Funds Programmes. Since the beginning of the implementation of European funding, the Operational Programmes have actively pursued the integration, or mainstreaming, of the horizontal themes such as Equal Opportunities, Environmental Sustainability and Development and particularly to ESF, Social Inclusion, into the design and delivery of projects selected for funding. The responsibility for mainstreaming was present at all operational levels, namely that this has been factored in both the programming of the ESF funds as well as at application stage when projects are being designed. All projects submitted for co-financing, are encouraged to demonstrate how they will promote equal opportunities, sustainable development and social inclusion and to report on their achievements in these respects. Transnationality has also been strongly encouraged and promoted through specific measures. This is also positively rewarded with marks at project selection level. At the same time, the Managing Authority and the Intermediary Body have committed through their capacity to provide the necessary resources and support for projects to do this. Analysis of this for the year under review is provided below.

## **Monitoring Horizontal Themes**

An integral part of the monitoring process is to ensure that the horizontal themes are being instituted as core values within the projects and Beneficiaries were asked to show clear examples and evidence of how the projects have considered and implemented the value of these three themes. The MA carried out this monitoring both through the daily correspondence with the Project Leaders as well as through formal on the spot verifications, whereby findings are compared with commitment taken and included in OTS reports. This mechanism highlights that the project management is thus also responsible for ensuring that partners and contractors in the project also follow the same policy.

### **Mainstreaming the Horizontal Themes – a two-pronged approach**

The OPII has a two-pronged approach to mainstream the horizontal themes, for example by combining a scope for positive action through specific activities within approved projects to ensure that there are equal opportunities for all interested individuals to participate; and mainstreaming – a requirement that all funded projects evidence they address the horizontal themes in their project activities. Under OPII operations, there were a number of positive action projects, for example ESF funding for the Employment Aid Programme contributes directly to improve social inclusion. Similarly, specific projects are focusing their activities on gender equality and the promotion of females in the labour market, thus addressing directly the horizontal theme of equal opportunity such as ESF3.47, ESF3.108 and ESF3.196. The second scenario is whereby the horizontal themes are addressed via the inclusion of specific measures ancillary to the main activities of the projects, which contribute towards for example environmental sustainability. The following sections provide a summary of the activities in 2013 underpinning this embedding of good practice in the various projects in respect to Equal Opportunities, Environmental Sustainability, Transnational Activities and Innovation.

### **Equal Opportunities**

The European Social Fund Regulation 1081/2006, Article 3 (b) (iii) specifies “*mainstreaming and specific action to improve access to employment and increase sustainable participation and progress of women in employment, and to eliminate direct and indirect gender based segregation in the labour market inter alia by addressing the root causes of the gender pay gaps*”. In addition, the Regulation Article 3 (c) requires the “*reinforcing the social inclusion of disadvantaged people with a view to their sustainable integration in employment and combating all forms of discrimination in the labour market...*”

It is this framework which governs the approach to gender equality undertaken in the 2007 – 2013 Programme to ensure that the financed activities are not merely isolated measures with limited impact on the general situation in terms of equality, but rather as part of a long-term strategy.

In fact, specific actions aimed at women are combined with a strong gender mainstreaming approach, which means not only having specific activities for women in different fields, but incorporating the gender dimension into all stages of programming and implementation in order to increase women’s participation and progress in the labour market. Within OPII, gender equality issues are addressed under PA 3 as a separate specific objective and other Priority Axes, within which positive, action – oriented activities are developed, as well as a cross-cutting principle applicable to all ESF priorities.

Similarly to the past years, ample liaison and support on how to best integrate equal opportunities in ESF was sought from the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) and the National Commission for Persons with Disability (KNPD). These two national government agencies have been consulted both by prospective applicants on active measures to be incorporated in the composition of project applications, thus guaranteeing that both gender mainstreaming and equality criteria are fully incorporated.

The implementing beneficiaries have devised several actions horizontally to address the different needs of project participants in order to guarantee equality and ensure that persons with diverse abilities will still have access to the support, training and tutoring which the project perpetrates. Such actions include the following:

- Fully accessible and equipped training venues for persons with limited mobility (ESF4.159, ESF2.201, ESF2.85)
- The delivery of training in both the English and Maltese language (ESF2.201, ESF3.193).
- Specialised training to professionals on how to enhance teaching methods to vulnerable groups was delivered by KNPD (ESF3.102)
- Participants who have children or spouses are provided with a financial allowance to sustain them during the period of study abroad. Moreover, awardees who reside in Gozo following full-time Masters course at the University of Malta are entitled to an additional maintenance supplement (ESF1.225 and ESF1.25)

Meanwhile actions fostering equality and implemented in 2013 include: training in vocational courses to 88 disabled participants under ESF2.201 as well as the creation of manuals online for easy accessibility.

It is forecasted that equal opportunities will also be considerably addressed in the projects approved during 2013. Examples include the following:

- The needs of attendees with partial hearing will be assisted through silent services and the training venues will preferably have good room acoustics. (ESF1.228, ESF4.220)
- Documentation will be printed in easy read and brail format when required. (ESF4.220)
- The provision of childcare for persons with family responsibilities. (ESF1.228)
- Online training making it more accessible and permitting certification at the pace of the student (ESF1.228)
- During training, the inclusion aspect in Education and Sport as well as the Management of Diversity, will be tackled. (ESF4.216)
- An internal and external quality audit to assess aspects in facilitating the involvement of disabled students in higher and further education will be carried out through ESF1.227.

As indicated earlier, a concentration of equal opportunities will be perpetrated considerably through Priority Axis 3 projects. Activities foreseen in 2014 are as follows:

- The promotion of equality through mentoring females to occupy decision-making positions (ESF3.196)
- The creation of awareness of individuals suffering from mental health by giving direct training to employers and carrying out an educational awareness campaign (ESF3.193)
- The integration of youths not in education, training and employment as well as those who fail their exams within mainstream education. This will be done both by the tailor-made support as well as tuition. (ESF3.231)
- The integration of disabled persons through offering sheltered employment and individual job coaching. (ESF3.113)

- Support and professional assistance to families in need through the setting up of Family Resource Centres manned by social professionals who will be giving personal consultations. Additionally, a study on poverty and a comprehensive registry comprising of all disabled persons will be carried out (ESF3.234).

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Environmental Sustainability features on top of the Maltese Government's Agenda and this is reflected in various national and sectoral policies in particular 'The Sustainable Development Strategy for the Maltese Islands' which aims at "ensuring a socially responsible economic development while protecting the resource base and the environment for the benefit of future generations". Environmental sustainability represents one of the four pillars of this strategy which governs the modalities of the maintenance, improvement and protection of environmental resources. The enhancement of environmental sustainability in conjunction with the promotion of cleaner energy represents also one of Malta's strategic thrusts within the National Reform Programme with the aim of mitigating the impact of climate change as well as in various national and sectoral policies. A reflection of these commitments can be found in a number of projects funded by Cohesion Policy.

During the year under review, the MA has continued to promote environmental sustainability by raising awareness of the role of this theme for the economic growth, from the project design planning to project implementation. In this regard, applicants are asked to identify, at submission stage, the contribution of the project towards environmental sustainability benefitting from an additional 5% marks during the project selection process.

The above has evidently been seen as an incentive for potential beneficiaries and, in fact, all projects approved in 2013 under PA1, PA2, PA3 and PA4 had proposed environmental actions. The actions proposed are focused on the environment itself and on environmental awareness raising efforts, depending on the type of foreseen project activities. Some of the measures proposed include: the use of paper to be minimized through the use of electronic tools, the use of memory sticks and CD's to store information, the provision of a web-platform that allows online delivery of course content (1.123, 1.211, 1.33), increased use of recycling materials, and the inclusion of environmental themes as part of the curriculum and content of a number of courses delivered under projects to heighten awareness. (1.228).

Specific and related environmental studies and research were also pursued by Master level students through the STEPS and the MASTER IT! programme, whereby additional marks for choosing this particular field of studies incentivized students in choosing a career path for green jobs.

Project beneficiaries have also been perpetrated and encouraged the use of car pooling and organized transport. In fact, under ESF3.105, ESF3.108 and ESF3.113, specific funding was allotted for transporting collectively the project participants to the training venues. This has reduced the need for individual cars on the road, thus contributing to the reduction of carbon dioxide and other green gas emissions. A similar intervention is expected under ESF2.204. A vast use of online networks has been used to store data as well as to enhance and promote environmental sustainability through the increased

use of e-learning platforms. Training providers have been requested to make notes available online for professionals being trained in dealing with persons with challenging behavior. Under ESF3.110, detainees in the Corradino Correctional Facility will have the opportunity to access all their training material from a tailor-made e-learning platform which will not only ensure sustainability of the training activities once finalized, but will also eliminate the usage of paper.

In terms of direct training, MCAST, through ESF 3.102 has initiated the design of the MQF level 1 courses Introduction to Horticulture and Introduction to Animal Husbandry, under the auspices of its Institute of Agribusiness, which will imply good practices in the safeguarding of the environment. Given that these practices are part of the learning outcomes, students, on completion of these courses are expected to be familiar with the importance of environmental protection in agriculture activities.

Examples on how the newly approved projects will also contribute towards this horizontal priority in the forthcoming future are as follows:

- The use of recycled paper and limitation of printing by using electronic mail (ESF1.227, ESF3.193, ESF3.196, ESF3.231, ESF3.234, ESF4.216).
- Environmental responsibility will be highlighted in all documents. (ESF2.204, ESF3.231, ESF4.220).
- Training content and other material will be directly downloadable from the web instead of printing hard copies (ESF3.231, ESF1.229)
- The use and uploading of video-recorded training sessions will reduce the need to commute for educators. (ESF1.228)
- Encourage beneficiaries to use public transport in order to reduce emissions (ESF2.204, ESF3.234)
- Talks and lectures on environmental sustainability and climate change will be given to the stakeholders involved or integrated in the training courses (ESF3.234, ESF4.216)
- The provision of NWAR services to schools so that all students achieve a basic level of literacy in Maltese and English, thus assisting challenged students and help them in remaining in the education system.(ESF1.229)
- Training in environmental management systems will be provided to all project participants (ESF4.218).

### **Innovative Activities**

Innovation is an important horizontal principle across all four (4) Priority axes (excluding the Technical Assistance Axis). For this reason, projects that meet the principle of innovation, as defined under the Priority axes, also stand to gain additional points in the selection process. Consequently, during the year under review, nine (9) of the thirteen (13) projects approved obtained extra points<sup>46</sup> for innovation.

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<sup>46</sup> ESF 4.220, ESF 4.221, ESF3.196, ESF3.193, ESF 3.231, ESF 3.234, ESF 1.227, ESF 1.228 and ESF 1.229

In the course of 2013, the principle of innovation was addressed through the implementation of specific measures, including, training for public officers using innovative methods such as e-learning, coaching, mentoring as well as modular accredited courses<sup>47</sup>. Training to public officers was also provided through preventative and remedial measures. Such preventative measures included: support to the public sector on a wide scale through awareness training sessions intended to inform, train and assist public employees handling and/or avoiding problems re mental/emotional difficulties, disability, bereavement as well as job stress or anxiety<sup>48</sup>.

During the year under review a number of innovative systems were also introduced in the education sector. This involved the e-portfolio which records and facilitates the management of both clinical as well as personal development through learning, helping trainees record the progressive achievement of their competences<sup>49</sup>. The setting up of an IP and KT framework which was not previously in place at the University is also an example of an innovative system which is currently being implemented<sup>50</sup>. The new systems have also lead to a novel approach of how schools manage the professional development of staff. In fact, ESF1.31 permitted in-house training to Continuing Development Coordinators (CDP) whose responsibility is to assist schools in identifying their training needs which will eventually also be provided by the project. Till today, schools were dependent of central provision even if this did not meet their needs. ESF1.131 permitted schools to identify their individual and specific training needs that were eventually met by the training opportunities provided by the project. The novelty lies in this bottom-up approach to CPD needs.

In addition 2013 also saw the introduction of blended learning. As a result, foreign courses are now tailor-made, as well as have been given a Maltese context and increased relevance for the local scene<sup>51</sup>.

As already mentioned, the principle of innovation will continue to feature strongly in the forthcoming part of the implementation of the Programme. The specific mentoring of women has so far not been implemented in Malta (ESF3.196). In terms of social inclusion, ESF3.234 will instigate the start of a reform in the public institution set-up of social service delivery and welfare system. On similar lines, the Youth Guarantee (ESF3.231) will for the first time offer assistance to the NEET's, through a systematic and tailor-made approach. Studies on its success will also be carried out so that innovative practices may be further set up to address young vulnerable individuals. Innovation in the development of infrastructural tools (previously inexistent) aimed at helping enterprises to set up mental health policies in their workplace will be tackled through ESF3.193). This activity derives from the innovative research on mental health concluded in 2011 through ESF3.71.

Innovative aspects are also foreseen in Education. In fact, external audits at institution and programme level of the educational system in Malta, has never been conducted by a local authority (ESF1.227). The extension of current NWAR literacy basic skill programme, catering specifically for the needs of adolescents will be piloted under ESF1.229 (further details about this are presented in Chapter 3 Priority

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<sup>47</sup> ESF 4.100

<sup>48</sup> ESF 4.97

<sup>49</sup> ESF 1.211

<sup>50</sup> ESF 1.125

<sup>51</sup> ESF 2.139

Axis 1). This is the first of its kind in Malta. Moreover, the project will include the piloting of a numeracy basic skills programme involving a multi-sensory approach that borrows from already existing numeracy programmes that will be adapted to the local context. ESF1.228 will in turn modify conceptually the methods of teaching and assessment in Malta leading to Measurable Learning outcomes with targets to be achieved at the end of three cycles. Innovation will also be integrated in the area of training to transport officials. In fact, ESF4.218 will, through a first time investment provide a holistic and comprehensive training both locally and overseas to human capital within the 10 divisions of Transport Malta. This training will address the skills needed to perform better against the competitiveness and challenges presented in the sector.

Within the context of social dialogue, ESF4.221 introduces a process of innovation by encouraging further participation of social partners and workers to build effective partnerships through the use of web-based training.

### **Transnational Activities**

OPII seeks to encourage transnational partnerships, particularly when combined with innovation. This is evident in the allocation of marks during the project selection process whereby 10% of marks are awarded to transnational and innovative actions. During the year under review ten (10) projects under implementation included a transnational dimension<sup>52</sup> of which six (6) were approved in 2013<sup>53</sup>. Two of the newly approved projects in 2013 have carried out transnational activities within the same year<sup>54</sup>. Transnational cooperation activities during 2013 have taken place with organisations from Italy<sup>55</sup> and Northern Ireland<sup>56</sup>. One of the projects approved in 2013<sup>57</sup> included a very strong transnational element. However, it is foreseen that such activities will commence during 2014.

In the course of 2013 examples of such transnational activities included the sharing of expertise<sup>58</sup>, exchange of best practice, job shadowing<sup>59</sup> as well as delivery of training locally by transnational partners<sup>60</sup> within areas such as health sector as well as local governance and social partners. It is worth noting that during 2013 under ESF 4.164 specialised training in laser-scanning/GIS was carried out in Malta by the University of Ferrara and this has been an outstanding opportunity for the Directorate for Restoration staff to gain practical experience by working side-by-side with experts in the fields. The first training session took place late in the year between the 11 and 15 November 2013. This was also the case under ESF 4.163 where the Autorita' Garante Della Concorrenza e del Mercato, the Italian Partner, provided local training to officials within the Office for Consumer Affairs and Office for Competition.

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<sup>52</sup> ESF1.227, ESF4.159, ESF 4.163, ESF 4.164, ESF 4.174, ESF 4.220, ESF 4.221, ESF 4.100, ESF 3.234 and ESF 3.231

<sup>53</sup> ESF1.227, ESF 3.234, ESF 3.231, ESF 4.174, ESF 4.220 and ESF 4.221

<sup>54</sup> ESF 4.174 and ESF 4.221

<sup>55</sup> ESF 4.159, ESF 4.163, ESF 4.164 and ESF 4.221

<sup>56</sup> ESF 4.174

<sup>57</sup> ESF 3.234

<sup>58</sup> ESF 4.221 and ESF 4.159

<sup>59</sup> ESF 4.174

<sup>60</sup> ESF 4.164 and ESF 4.163



During the year under review transnational activities have helped towards the sharing of expertise on EU social dialogue initiatives where for example under ESF 4.221 2013 saw the expertise provided by CIA<sup>61</sup> in publishing a digital magazine which is scheduled to be issued on a weekly basis for 52 weeks in 2014.

Transnational activities are also envisaged to take place during 2014. Through very strong transnational networking, ESF3.234 will seek best practices, share practical techniques and exchange experiences on social policies and mechanisms with transnational partners (public institutions, employment agencies and NGOs) from Portugal, Ireland and Germany. In order to ensure the success of the Youth Guarantee (ESF3.231), transnational partners from Austria and Sweden will be sharing their lessons learnt so that these can be assessed and transposed into the local activities. Transnationality will also be used by NCFHE to bring good examples on how to effectively bridge the current existing gap between the legislative requirements in the training institutions and local quality assessment methodologies with the ultimate aim to link the emerging Maltese quality assurance system to that of an EC-wide quality assurance strategy.(ESF1.227)

#### **Article 10 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006**

The implementation of the ESF OP foresees the implementation of actions relating to gender, migrants, disadvantaged groups (including people with disabilities), innovative and transnational activities (as explained above).

#### **Gender Mainstreaming**

Operational Programme II is committed to strengthen gender equality and this is a horizontal theme throughout projects. Equality between women and men is one of the main principles of the OP which principle has been actively promoted across all priority axes with special focus under Axis 3. In addition, as already highlighted above, an assessment of gender mainstreaming within proposed projects is done at project selection stage when the Project Selection Committee (PSC) assess the project application inclusion of Equal Opportunities within proposed projects.

Several projects have initiated their gender mainstreaming measures tied to their activities.<sup>62</sup> The actions include: providing opportunities for training and employment for women by targeting a sector which allows for flexible work so as to attract inactive women to enter the labour market;<sup>63</sup> ensuring that the training, promotional material and awareness campaigns are free from any gender stereotypes;<sup>64</sup> the

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<sup>61</sup> CIA is a social partner representation office to the EU institution in Brussels and carries out lobbying, information, networking and promotional initiatives.

<sup>62</sup> ESF1.209; ESF1.211; ESF2.186; ESF2.201; ESF4.174; ESF4.182; ESF4.189; ESF4.175; ESF4.167; ESF4.180; ESF4.181

<sup>63</sup> ESF2.186

<sup>64</sup> ESF4.180. ESF3.193, ESF3.196, ESF3.231,

reimbursement of childcare services for parents who undertake training outside the employee's normal working hours<sup>65</sup>.

Reducing inequalities between men and women in the labour market and at home has become a key objective in this regard, a number of projects under implementation aim at promoting family-friendly measures so as to achieve work and family balance (for both men and women) so that there is more involvement in family life of both parents. Under ESF 2.201, courses are delivered at different times and repeated to guarantee that parents engaged in life-long learning have the necessary flexibility to fully follow the course whilst fulfilling family obligations. Furthermore, during 2013, seven (7) projects<sup>66</sup> offered childcare facilities for parents who participated in ESF funded activities.

Gender disparities have throughout the years also evolved through specific choices in educational pursuits. In this regard, the promotion of education is deemed crucial to reduce gender stereotyping linked to career paths and professions. In this context, ESF 1.25 and the newly approved ESF 1.225 continued to offer in 2013 the opportunity to participants who have children or spouses financial allowance to sustain them during the period of study.

## **Migrants**

OPII targets vulnerable groups including migrants and asylum seekers hence the provision of training and employment is crucial to their integration within Maltese society. Notwithstanding the fact that there is no specific ESF project that directly and solely targets migrants and asylum seekers<sup>67</sup>, these target groups are still being reached through those ESF initiatives, which target a wider spectrum of vulnerable groups.

During the course of 2013, ESF initiatives have assisted migrants in their integration process through the provision of different kind of training and services all aimed at providing them with skills to make them more employable. A total of one hundred and ten (110) migrants have benefitted from ESF during 2013. The majority received support through PA 1 and PA 2 projects. In particular, specifically under ESF2.201 where a total of twenty-one (21) migrants have benefitted through the provision of training under the following areas: Basic skills, Hospitality, ICT, Management & Administration and Trade. A further sixty (60) migrants participated in pharmaceutical vocational training offered under ESF2.85. Under ESF 1.125, thirteen (13) migrants participated in external seminars organised by the University of Malta. Only minimal participation was reported under PA3 and 4.<sup>68</sup> It should be noted that other EU initiatives are targeting this group<sup>69</sup> hence the limited participation of such target group within ESF funded projects. The MA works together with Funds and Programme Division to maximise synergies and minimal risks of overlaps or double funding.

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<sup>65</sup> ESF4.180, ESF4.152; ESF3.234

<sup>66</sup> ESF 1.33, ESF 1.36, ESF 2.4, ESF 2.11, ESF 2.84, ESF 3.48, ESF2.137.

<sup>67</sup> This target group has benefitted from other financial instruments, such as European Refugee Fund.

<sup>68</sup> One (1) on migrant benefitted under PA 3 and five (5) migrants have benefitted from actions under PA 4

<sup>69</sup> Such as the European Refugee Fund and European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals (IF)

## **Minorities and disadvantaged groups**

There is no specific definition of minorities used in Malta and therefore specific action targeting minorities is difficult to quantify.

Disadvantaged groups targeted under OPII include disabled persons, illiterate persons, persons with mental health difficulties, ex-convicts, asylum seekers, unemployed, youths in institutional care, homeless youth, and youth in inappropriate housing, ex-substance abusers and women in difficulty (inactive women, victims of domestic violence), and young school drop outs. Actions under the Operational Programme also targets professionals working with disadvantaged groups.

Following the conclusion of the evaluation of proposals submitted under call 12, PA3, two projects worth €5.2 million address particular cohorts of disadvantaged groups; youths and vulnerable low-income families. Whilst ESF3.231 will offer assistance and support to youths between the age of 16 and 25 who are not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET's), ESF3.234 will carry out studies, as well as create networks to establish Family Resource Centres whereby vulnerable families can receive assistance. Furthermore, the latter is expected to establish a comprehensive database on disabled persons so that policy recommendations can be produced.

As at the end of 2013, eighteen (18) projects under implementation were directly targeting disadvantaged groups, including youths in difficulty aged 16-24 years<sup>70</sup>, disabled persons<sup>71</sup>, ex-convicts<sup>72</sup>, substance abusers<sup>73</sup>, asylum seekers<sup>74</sup>, unemployed<sup>75</sup>, and women in difficulty<sup>76</sup> (inactive women and victims of domestic violence). The majority of these projects offer tailor made training to enhance the possibility of the integration of disadvantaged persons into the labour market.

Some examples of actions being undertaken by projects targeting disadvantaged groups include the provision of specialized training to people working with persons having challenging behaviour<sup>77</sup>, the enhancement of employability and productivity of prisoners<sup>78</sup> and the enhancement of the employability potential of disabled persons to obtain and retain employment<sup>79</sup>. A number of projects also target professionals working with disadvantaged groups in particular disabled persons.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> ESF 3.61, ESF 3.108, ESF3.231

<sup>71</sup> ESF 3.52, ESF 3.62, ESF 3.113, ESF3.234 and ESF 3.114

<sup>72</sup> ESF 3.52

<sup>73</sup> ESF 3.52

<sup>74</sup> ESF 3.52

<sup>75</sup> ESF 2.11, ESF 2.12, ESF 2.4, ESF 2.186 and ESF 2.201

<sup>76</sup> ESF 3.43, ESF 3.48 , ESF 3.54 and ESF 3.66

<sup>77</sup> ESF 3.105

<sup>78</sup> ESF 3.110

<sup>79</sup> ESF 3.62, ESF 3.112, ESF 3.113, and ESF 3.114

<sup>80</sup> ESF 3.105, ESF 3.112 and ESF 3.114 (the latter was eventually integrated into the activities under a revised ESF 3.113).

During the year under review, under ESF 3.105, a total of seventy-one (71) persons with challenging behaviour were assisted with the objective of bringing them closer to the labour market or training opportunities. With regard to ESF 3.64, six hundred fifty-five (655) disadvantaged persons were retained in employment during 2013. On the other hand with regard to ESF 2.201, a total of eighty-eight (88) disabled persons attended ETC courses.

## **2.2 Information about compliance with Community Law**

No significant problems relating to the compliance with Community law have been encountered in the implementation of the operational programme during the period under review.

## **2.3 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them**

### **Absorption of funds**

Whilst the allocation under PA1, 2 and 3 was committed into projects following calls for projects, the commitment under PA4 lagged behind, despite the calls for proposals issued during the year under review. This was set further aback by the withdrawal of two projects under the PA. The overall commitment under the OP stood at 99% at the end of 2013. As will be explained in Chapter 3 PA4 commitments lacked behind due to problems faced during implementation in particular the withdrawal of projects and savings generated during contracting. This will be explained in detail in Chapter 3.

Moreover, the savings registered following the awarding of a number of contracts continued to be a challenge and resulted in the release of funds back to the programme. In 2014 the MA will be issuing additional calls to ensure full absorption of funds available.

### **Public procurement and recruitment processes**

Given that this programming period is now nearing its end one of the major challenges is to ensure a timely closure of procurement process. Weekly meetings are held with the Department of Contracts in order to identify priority vetting of main tenders and to ensure timely signature of contracts once a recommendation for award is in place.

Other problems encountered during the procurement processes include the difficulty in attracting the right training resources, non-submission of bids, non-compliant bids, and over- or under- budgeting of bids submitted when compared to budgets prepared. Different means were used to resolve such issues such

as the republishing of tenders. Still this is all time consuming, giving rise to significant delays in projects under implementation.

Other problems encountered during the recruitment processes include the difficulty in attracting suitably qualified professionals or a very low response to calls. Different means were used to resolve such issues including resorting to internal recruitment in case of educational institutions when the resources may be available internally.

### **The Payment and Verification Process**

The main difficulty faced during the verification process is the high level of fragmentation in terms of components or disbursements, particularly as a result of considerable activities which involve the reimbursement of salaries and fees from professionals. The significant number of documents such as time-sheets, calculations of staff costs, attendance sheets as well as procurement supporting documentation presented a significant burden on the MA and the main stakeholders.

In order to mitigate this, the MA simplified the templates used for verification purposes in order to avoid duplication of work. It also used sampling methods as permitted by the respective regulations and Commission guidance notes on management verifications, reducing the cumbersome checking but at the same time preserving the level of control and soundness of financial management when the volume under a single project warrants such action..

#### ***2.3.1 Significant problems encountered in implementing the actions and activities of Article 10 EC Reg. 1081/2006***

During 2013, no substantive problems in the implementation of actions under Article 10 of EC Regulation 1081/2006 were encountered by the MA.

### **2.4 Changes in the context of the operational programme implementation**

Not applicable for the year under review.

### **2.5 Substantial modification pursuant to Article 57 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006**

To date no substantial modifications have been made under Article 57 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

## **2.6 Complementarity with other instruments**

In accordance with its obligation deriving from Article 9(4) of Regulation EC/1083/2006, the MA co-ordinated assistance from the OP co-financed by the ESF with assistance from the OP co-financed by the ERDF and CF, the programmes financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Fisheries Fund (EFF), and other existing financial instruments. This was maintained mainly through the co-ordination of the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMCC), EU Human Capital Investment Programmes which met on 15 May 2013 with the aim to enhance synergies, ensure complementarity and maximum utilisation of resources whilst monitoring any possibilities of double funding.

As in previous years, the discussion held during the meeting revolved mainly around potential overlaps that may have been encountered by any of the members, based on the guidelines adopted by the MA in 2012. In preparation for the meeting, members were required to exchange lists of projects falling within their respective remits. This triggered the issues for discussion during the Committee meeting whereby exchange of detailed information of projects presenting potential overlaps took place.

### **Complementarity and consistency between ESF and ERDF**

The sustainability of ESF interventions could be enhanced by the complementarity of infrastructural projects in areas targeted by ESF funding. Complementarity within the educational sector continues to be evidenced through the intervention aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of educational tools by funding interactive whiteboards and e-learning platforms making the ESF investment in training more sustainable in the long-term. The same can be said on complementarity within the health sector which is being sustained through the Major Project for the construction of an Oncology Centre and the training of health professionals with the aim to provide high specialised services.

Projects approved in previous years continued to implement the ERDF components through the cross-financing mechanism as per Article 34 of Regulation 1083/2006. By the end of 2013, the MA had committed €2.38M on ERDF expenditure (which included in the majority the purchasing of office equipment) in thirty-three (33) projects being implemented under the ESF OP.

Investments included the purchasing of energy-efficient video conferencing equipment under ESF4.189 with the aim to provide nurses working at the Gozo General Hospital to follow courses delivered at the Institute of Healthcare at Mater Dei Hospital in Malta. MCAST, under its project ESF2.139, also invested in the installation of electronic security systems with the aim to extend access to its laboratories beyond normal working hours as part of the newly introduced blended learning options. Through this measure individuals who are in employment are still able to conduct their practical sessions without impinging on their professional commitments. The installation of electronic security systems would ensure that the College's resources are not jeopardised.

## **Complementarity and consistency between ESF and EAFRD / EFF**

In view of the clear link that exists within OPII financing between vocational training in agriculture and the fishing enterprises and the labour market, close co-operation with the Funds and Programmes Division as the Competent Authority for the EAFRD and Managing Authority for the EFF programmes throughout the year under review ensured the avoidance of double funding as well as the exchange of good practices between both divisions. Taking into consideration the opportunities offered under the Employment Aid Programme, potential double funding between the Aid Schemes and operations under the agriculture and fisheries programmes was also discussed during the IB Network meetings<sup>81</sup>. With a commitment of €171,472 in EAP operations under the agricultural sector, providing support to 29 individuals receiving a placement with 25 undertakings, it is clear that complementarity between the different EU funding mechanisms provides a synergetic impetus. This complementarity calls for constant vigilance in order to avoid double funding, also through the MA's participation in the Monitoring Committees for EFF and EAFRD. Exchange of lists of approved operations between the stakeholders involved helped to confirm that there was no double funding.

## **Complementarity and consistency between ESF and other Education, Training and R&D Programmes**

The participation of representatives of the different Community programmes that relate to education, training, and youth, in the IMCC safeguarded stakeholders' position in ensuring that double funding between ESF and such funding mechanisms is avoided. The participation of the European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA) as the agency responsible for the EU educational programmes in Malta during the IMCC meeting held in May 2013 included a presentation on the opportunities offered by the Youth in Action Programme. This gave rise to a discussion on the potential overlaps that may exist between this programme and other funding mechanisms.

During the year under review, in view of the funding opportunities provided under ESF for research in various areas of study as well as the development of expertise in research and innovation policy design as outlined under Section 5.4.4(c) of the OP, the MA monitored the potential overlaps that could arise from scholarships schemes<sup>82</sup> in areas such as Environmental Technologies and Resources, ICT, Educational Research, including also professional development programmes. The Managing Authority alerted Beneficiaries concerned on the potential overlaps that could arise within their projects and encouraged exchange of information between entities. Lists of applicants and details of the scholarships awarded have been exchanged and through clarifications suspected overlaps have been cleared.

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<sup>81</sup> Discussed in detail under Section 2.1.1

<sup>82</sup> Namely ESF1.25, ESF1.225 and ESF4.100

## **2.7 Monitoring and evaluation**

During 2013, the MA continued to carry out its monitoring obligations in accordance with Article 66 of Council regulation EC1083/2006.

### ***2.7.1 Monitoring and reporting by the MA and IB***

#### **Day-to-day management**

The daily correspondence with Beneficiaries and other stakeholders remained the most tangible form of monitoring by the MA. Officers continued with their desk-based monitoring of the progress of the projects through the Structural Funds Database 2007-13, but also through other forms of communication including e-mail and physical checks when and as necessary. Management verifications, as prescribed by Article 13 of EC 1828/2006, were carried out on all active projects before and after certification of payment to the Commission. This level of monitoring was coupled with other forms, such as the bi-annual Project Progress Reports, the Ministerial Project Steering Committees and the periodic project progress meetings. At IB level, the IB Network and IB Steering Committees' meetings were the main monitoring fora.

#### ***Management verifications***

During 2013, the MA and IB carried out a total of 125<sup>83</sup> documentary checks, which required around 2,522<sup>84</sup> working man hours. In addition, 280<sup>85</sup> physical spot checks were carried out on ongoing project.

#### ***Project Progress Reporting***

Beneficiaries and IBs continued to formally submit the Project Progress Report (PPR) to the MA twice a year – in January (for the period Jul-Dec) and July (Jan-Jun). The PPR provides, amongst others, updates on the main deliverables, indicators, contracts, disbursements and participants' data of each project, which feed in the statistical data required by the MA in the monitoring of the Programme's targets.

#### ***Ministerial Project Steering Committee***

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<sup>83</sup> 261 documentary checks in 2012

<sup>84</sup> 2830 working man hours in 2012

<sup>85</sup> 30 physical spot-checks in 2012



During 2013, Line Ministries encountered inevitable disruptions in their operations as a change in administration following the General Elections of March brought about changes in the existing Ministerial portfolios and also the creation of new Ministries. The frequency of MPSC meetings during this year, therefore, was diminished in the first half of the year but increased in the latter six months. Notwithstanding such disruptions, the respective LMs continued to provide their support, especially in the processing of payments and the day-to-day monitoring of projects and liaison with the office of the respective Permanent Secretaries.

### ***Intermediate Bodies Network***

Two IB Network meetings were held during 2013 – in April and October. These meetings provide IBs with the opportunity to share experiences and promote consistency in the implementation of the schemes not only across both Structural Funds, but also across EAFRD and EFF-funded schemes.

### ***Intermediate Bodies Steering Committees***

Two IBSC meetings were organised during the year by ETC, in June and December, with the participation of the project leaders of the two schemes, the ETC Heads of Division, the MA, Line Ministry, Treasury, project partners and stakeholders from the civil society. A general overview and update on the two schemes was given by the project leaders and the main issues discussed, with particular emphasis on the disbursement process and the effectiveness of the two schemes in reaching the targets set for both. During the December meeting, an overview of the EAP extension for Gozo was also provided whereby details of opening and closing dates, amounts committed, prospective participants, publicity measures held, changes in the eligibility criteria of participants in line with the GBER and simplification measures were given.

### ***Project Progress Meetings (High-level meetings)***

The MA continued to assemble the main stakeholders for periodic meetings to address the most pressing issues arising on key projects. These meetings, which are chaired by the Parliamentary Secretary for EU Presidency 2017 and EU Funds and the Permanent Secretary of the ministry (MEAIM) , invites the Project Leaders (and respective Heads of Organisation) of individual projects to discuss major issues around the table with the A, the Treasury, the Permanent Secretary of the Line Ministry, and the Director General of the Department of Contracts. ESF projects were discussed in 14 out of the 18 meetings held during 2013.

## ***2.7.2 Monitoring Committee***

### ***Meetings of the MC in 2013***

During 2013, the MC was convened twice: on the 19th April and the 18th of October.

The items discussed during April MC meeting included:

- A presentation on the Annual Implementation Report for 2012;
- An overview of the latest development on Programme Implementation from October 2012 to the meeting date;
- A synopsis of the Annual Control Report 2012 by the Audit Authority.

On 6<sup>th</sup> September 2013, a written procedure was launched by the MA to seek the approval of the MC for the extension of the EAP scheme for Gozo, referred to earlier on in this chapter. The proposal was approved on 4th October 2013.

The second meeting of the MC, which took place in October 2013, covered the following items:

- An update on the Implementation of the Programme from April 2013 to the meeting date;
- A presentation on the OPII Thematic Evaluation delivered by Price Waterhouse Coopers.

These meetings are an opportunity for all the stakeholders to get an updated picture of the implementation of the OP. All presentations were made available on [http://www.ppcd.gov.mt/monitoring\\_committees\\_all\\_funds](http://www.ppcd.gov.mt/monitoring_committees_all_funds).

### ***2.7.3 Annual Review Meeting***

In line with Article 68 of the General Regulation, the Annual Review meetings between the MA and the Commission were held on 18th April and 17th October respectively.

### ***2.7.4 Evaluation***

During 2013, the evaluations have gained momentum and progress is well under way. In fact, as detailed out in the next sections, two waves of the Cohort Study were finalised whilst the contractor responsible for the Thematic Evaluation for OPII has started its work in earnest. The bottlenecks presented in the *ex ante* evaluation for structural funds 2014-2020 were mainly related to the delays in the finalisation of the regulatory package covering the 2014-2020 programming period which halted the progress on the *ex ante* evaluation, which were then settled as at end of the reporting year.

## Cohort Study

During this reporting year, the National Statistics Office (NSO) has submitted two reports covering Wave 2 and Wave 3. The participants' data was extracted from the Structural Funds Database 2007-2013 (SFD) by the Managing Authority (MA) and passed on to NSO. Details provided include both the participant's personal details and other details related to the ESF-funded course/training s/he had attended.

Following the first pilot study and discussions held between NSO and the MA, the subsequent waves included two additional questions in order to identify whether the respondents have been seeking employment during the previous four weeks and whether s/he is ready to start working two weeks after work becomes available. If the respondent answers 'no' to any of these questions, the respondent would be classified as 'inactive' and not as 'unemployed' in accordance with the definition provided by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Prior to this, respondents were using the terminologies of unemployment and inactive interchangeably and therefore there were no consistency in their reply. This has reduced the bias of self-perception and interpretation noted in Wave 1. Moreover, the sample size was increased from 300 respondents per wave to 500 respondents per wave in order to further enhance the results accuracy and validity.

### ❖ Wave 2

The first draft report on the second wave was submitted to the MA on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2013.

As can be seen in the tables below, the majority of persons under study were males, persons aged between 25 and 54 years and persons residing in Malta. Taking into consideration other socio-economic characteristics, respondents were mainly unemployed or inactive at entry into training, and had a primary or lower secondary level of education.

Table 12 - Population by Gender

| Population by Gender |                        |            |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------|
|                      | Number of Participants | Percentage |
| Male                 | 3,314                  | 59.9%      |
| Female               | 2,221                  | 40.1%      |
| Total                | 5,535                  | 100%       |

Table 13 - Population by Age Group

| Population by Age Group |
|-------------------------|
|-------------------------|

|       | <b>Number of Participants</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 15-24 | 1,245                         | 22.5%             |
| 25-54 | 3,594                         | 64.9%             |
| 55-64 | 673                           | 12.2%             |
| 65 +  | 23                            | 0.4%              |
| Total | 5,535                         | 100%              |

**Table 14 - Population by Region**

| <b>Population by Region</b> |                               |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
|                             | <b>Number of Participants</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
| Malta                       | 4,829                         | 87.3%             |
| Gozo                        | 706                           | 12.7%             |
| Total                       | 5,535                         | 100%              |

The results show that amongst the 27.2 percent of those who observed a change for the better in the labour market, were mainly the unemployed and inactive and inactive in education and training at the time of the survey. For 71% of the respondents, who perceived a change in the labour market, contributed such change to the ESF training/course they had attended. Moreover, the overall percentage of respondents whose labour status changed for the better and attributed such a positive change to their participation in the course, stood at 81.4 percent. This was particularly true for females and persons with a primary or lower secondary of education and persons with a tertiary level of education.

### ❖ **Wave 3**

In the case of wave three, as can be seen in the tables below, the majority of respondents were males, aged between 25 and 54 years, and Maltese residence. With regard to other socio-economic characteristics, persons were mostly employed when they received the training and had a primary or lower level secondary level of education.

**Table 15 - Population by Gender**

| <b>Population by Gender</b> |                               |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
|                             | <b>Number of Participants</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |

|        |       |       |
|--------|-------|-------|
| Male   | 4,545 | 54.8% |
| Female | 3,753 | 45.2% |
| Total  | 8,298 | 100%  |

**Table 16 - Population by Age Group**

| <b>Population by Age Group</b> |                               |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
|                                | <b>Number of Participants</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
| 15-24                          | 1,249                         | 15.1%             |
| 25-54                          | 5,837                         | 70.3%             |
| 55-64                          | 1,182                         | 14.2%             |
| 65 +                           | 30                            | 0.4%              |
| Total                          | 5,535                         | 100%              |

**Table 17 - Population by Region**

| <b>Population by Region</b> |                               |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
|                             | <b>Number of Participants</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
| Malta                       | 7,473                         | 90.1%             |
| Gozo                        | 825                           | 9.9%              |
| Total                       | 5,535                         | 100%              |

Nearly a third of the respondents experienced a positive change in their labour market. Disadvantaged persons, persons aged 65 and over and those who were unemployed prior to the training were more prone to a positive change. Nearly 91 percent of those who experienced a positive change attributed such change to the ESF training/course. The report showed that of the 602 participants who were previously unemployed and for whom ESF training contributed to a change for the better in labour status, 527 were economically active at the time of the survey. An analysis of the change in labour status by educational level revealed that nearly 71 percent of respondents with a tertiary level of education did not undergo any change in their labour status. However, the training still led to further enhancement in their skills and knowledge. Overall a minority of 2.4 percent claimed that their labour status changed for the worse after completing training. Participants perceived this as being attributed to work-related issues and also the lack of job opportunities.

As a concluding remark, one has to note that such study is mainly based on the participants' perception in view of the training/course received therefore conclusions cannot be interpreted on their own without looking at the broader picture. Conclusions are to be seen from a wider perspective in view of the projects being implemented on the ground as a result of ESF in order to avoid disparities between the participants' perceived perspectives and the measurable results on the ground. Furthermore, the status of individuals at the time of the interview might also lead to some bias. For 2014, the MA will be carrying out minor changes to the questionnaire in order to reduce the participants' bias.

### **Thematic Evaluation Operational Programme II**

The tender for the Thematic Evaluation: *Assessment of the Contribution of Operational Programme II Initiatives to Education and Lifelong Learning and to the Enhancement of Employability and Adaptability of the Workforce* was awarded on 29th May. The inception report was agreed to on 21<sup>st</sup> August.

PwC kicked off the process by organising an information meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> August to familiarise the stakeholders and project leaders with the Thematic Evaluation and the methodology and strategies that PwC is undertaking throughout the course of this evaluation. This was followed by five focus group meetings with stakeholders in order to supplement the desk research prior to delving deeper into the assessment of specific projects. The following themes were discussed: Investment in Education and Lifelong Learning; Increasing Adaptability and Employability of Workers and Entrepreneurs; Increasing Female Employment Rate; Increasing Youth Employment Rate; and Horizontal Priorities and ESF Principles.

Moreover, group interviews with project leaders to assess individual projects in terms of the assessment of the thematic areas were held in October. The group interviews focused on different areas which cover the investment in education and lifelong learning and the adaptability and employability of the workforce. The efforts employed in terms of Horizontal Priorities and ESF Principles were also discussed. PwC also carried out an online survey to assess the extent to which the Training Aid Framework (TAF) Scheme has been successful in addressing skills needs and the Programme's objectives. The survey was sent to the employers who employ people benefiting from TAF in November 2013.

In addition, during the last quarter of 2013, PwC held several one-to-one meetings with several stakeholders and the Employment Training Corporation (ETC), as the Intermediate Body of both schemes. The draft first report will be presented to the MA in the first half of 2014.

### **Ex Ante Evaluation on Structural Funds 2014-2020**

Following a launch for tender on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012 for the drawing up of the *Ex Ante Evaluation on Structural Funds (European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund) for the Programming Period 2014-2020* in 2012, the tender was awarded in 2013.

Following the latest Presidency compromise text, Member States were provided with the possibility to include in the Partnership Agreement either a summary of the ex ante evaluations of the Operational Programmes or key findings of the ex ante evaluations of the Partnership Agreement. These changes were included in the legal text to give Member States increased flexibility; also taking into account the fact that discussion on legal text were still ongoing during 2013 (the text was agreed to in December 2013) and could impinge on the planning process. Thus, following consultation with the contractor, it was agreed to draft the ex ante evaluation of the Partnership Agreement as the drafting of the Operational Programmes was still in its very initial drafting stages and it will therefore enable the finalisation of the Partnership Agreement (including the Ex-Ante Assessment).

The first draft of the ex ante evaluation of the Partnership Agreement was submitted in December 2013. It mainly assessed:

- the Partnership Agreement's contribution to Europe 2020 objectives and targets;
- the internal coherence of the Partnership Agreement's by analysing the formulation of the thematic objectives to assess whether they correspond with national priorities;
- the consistency of budgetary resources with the objectives set out in the partnership agreement; and
- the consistency of the selected theme objectives and the main results.

The work carried out on the evaluation of the Partnership Agreement will serve as a preparatory work for the evaluation of the Operational Programmes which will follow once the Partnership Agreement is finalised.

## **EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS**

### **ESF Evaluation Expert Network**

The MA is in contact with national expert at various stages throughout the year, mainly on a number of issues including but not limited to the Cohort Study, the Thematic Evaluation of Operational Programme II, and ESF indicators. Moreover, a meeting between the national expert and Head OPII was also held in June 2013 to further discuss the Annual Implementation Report and the Cohort Study.

### **Study on the Development of an EU Evaluation Mechanism in the area of Anti-Corruption with a particular focus on identifying and reducing the costs of corruption in Public Procurement involving EU Funds**

In January 2013, the MA received a questionnaire to contribute to a study being undertaken by the European Commission Anti-Fraud Office. The study focused on identifying and reducing cost of corruption in public procurement involving EU Funds.

The objective was to identify negative procurement practices which contribute to the increase of overall corruption costs, as well as positive/best practices that lead to prevention of corruption and to lower costs in the whole tender/grant cycle (preparation, selection, and implementation). The MA liaised with other entities such as the Department of Contract (DoC), Public Administration Human Resources Office (PAHRO), and the Internal Audit and Investigations Department (IAID) in order to submit the necessary feedback. The completed questionnaire was submitted to the EU Secretariat in March 2013.

### **Study on how can Regional and Cohesion policies tackle demographical challenges**

The Institute for Social Research, on behalf of the Committee on Regional Development of the European Parliament, has contacted the MA in order to participate in a study on how can regional and cohesion policies tackle demographical challenges. The aim of the study is to inform the European Parliament in detail about the way Structural Funds have been used in the programming period 2007-2013 to tackle demographical change and the political challenges thereto. Based on this analysis, an outlook on future possibilities will be given, i.e. indications as to how Cohesion Policy could be more effective in addressing these issues during the next programming period, and thus support the EU2020 strategy.

Since Malta was chosen as a case study, the evaluator wanted to carry out a number of interviews with persons working directly or indirectly within the demographical challenges spectrum. Therefore, representatives from the Benefits Department within the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, the Economic Policy Department within the Ministry of Finance, and the National Statistics Office were contacted by the MA in order to provide their feedback on this area.

Since the MA was also asked to identify a best practice related to demographical challenges, a representative from the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality was also present for the interview. The best practice which the MA felt that best fits the purpose of this exercise was ESF3.47 - Unlocking Female Potential.

The set of interviews were carried in April.

## **MEETINGS**

### **Evaluation Steering Group 2007-2013 Meeting**

On 17<sup>th</sup> December 2013, the MA has organised the fourth Evaluation Steering Group (ESG) meeting. During this meeting, the MA presented amendments to the 'Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure' for the members' approval. Amendments were made in order to reflect the ministerial changes, to include a representative of the Funds and Programmes Division, and convene the ESG as often as necessary in order to reflect the evaluation process. Regarding the latter, it was noted that constant updates on the current evaluations being commissioned by the MA are being provided during the Monitoring Committees. During 2013, the role of the ESG in supporting the MA in providing its opinion on reports and other related tasks as listed in the Terms of Reference was quite limited due to the fact that the draft



reports were submitted by the evaluators in Q4 2013 or are in the process of being finalised. However, it is being envisaged that the ESG will play a more active role in the last two years of the programme. During this meeting updates on both the Thematic Evaluations for Operational Programmes I and II and the Cohort Study were presented.

### **ESF Evaluation Partnership Meetings and ESF Performance Target Setting Seminar**

On 14<sup>th</sup> March the MA attended a learning seminar on ESF Performance target setting. The seminar focused on the methodology of setting and adjusting ESF output and result targets in the Operational Programmes and held a discussion about programme indicators.

The ESF Partnership Meetings were held in Brussels on 15<sup>th</sup> March, 13<sup>th</sup> June and between 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> November. At the ESF Evaluation Partnership Meetings, the Commission presented an update on the preparation for the new programming period. Presentations mainly covered: the state of play of negotiations of the draft Regulations; structure of Operational Programmes and Priority Axis; the Partnership Agreement and the Performance Framework; monitoring and indicators; administrative capacity in the period 2014-2020; the transition from SFC2007 to SFC2014, the *ex ante* evaluation for the 2014-2020 programming period; and the *ex post* evaluation of the ESF 2007-2013.

## 3 – Implementation by Priority

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### 3.1 Priority Axis 1 – Improving Education and Skills

#### 3.1.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

Priority Axis (PA) 1 is designed to focus on investing in human capital to increase participation rates in education at all levels, thereby increasing and upgrading the knowledge and skills levels of the labour force. During the year under review, the projects implemented under PA1 continued to improve Malta's educational skills and invest in human capital. Approved projects<sup>86</sup> were at different stages of implementation by December 2013. In fact, three (3)<sup>87</sup> projects had concluded all activities whilst eleven (11) projects were still under implementation<sup>88</sup>. The other nine<sup>89</sup> (9) had concluded all the activities in the previous years.

The additional €4 Million transferred to PA 1 in 2012, bringing the total allocation under this Axis from €37,400,00 to € 41,400,000, was committed in 2013 following the publication of the eleventh (11) ESF Call for project proposals which was issued in Quarter 4 of 2012 and concluded in Q 1 of 2013. Out of the seven (7) projects that were submitted under this call, four (4)<sup>90</sup> projects were approved with an indicative budget of €7.6M.

The newly approved projects seek to, amongst others, improve the education system through the implementation of educational reform and to address important/priority sectors of the economy including but not limited to Research and Innovation. Post graduate education plays an important role in the economic and social development of Malta, and hence this has led the Ministry for Education to propose a follow-up project to the successful implementation of the ESF Project 1.25, Strategic Educational Pathways Scholarships (STEPS). The *MASTER It!* scheme aims to provide more opportunities to promote further specialization at higher level of education at Masters Level. Unlike the STEPS (ESF1.25), which was much broader, the Master It! project (ESF 1.225) is assisting scholars who want to commit themselves to focus their Masters' research in particular priority areas including: High-End Manufacturing; Life Sciences; Educational Services; Financial Services; Transportation and Advanced Logistics; Higher Quality Tourism; Creative Industries; Environment; and ICT. These nine areas reflect Malta's focus for the future. Focusing on these industries and sectors will strengthen Malta, not just from a traditional economic standpoint, but also from the perspective of moving from what is achievable in each industry today to what can be achieved over the long-term. Moreover, through the ESF 1.225 project the Directorate of Lifelong Learning will also conduct a Tracer Study in order to have a sound scientific study of how the local economy is benefitting from the knowledge gained by the awardees and to measure the

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<sup>86</sup> Under this Priority Axis there were twenty (23) approved projects by December 2013.

<sup>87</sup> ESF 1.23; ESF 1.36; and ESF 1.123

<sup>88</sup> Including four (4) projects approved in 2013.

<sup>89</sup> ESF 1.19; ESF 1.21; ESF 1.22; ESF 1.24; ESF 1.28; ESF 1.29; ESF 1.34; ESF 1.40 and ESF 1.31

<sup>90</sup> ESF 1.225; ESF 1.227; ESF 1.228; and ESF 1.229

relevance of the training vis-à-vis the employability of the awardees to provide feedback for the preparation of future projects (including future scholarship schemes).

Another project, ESF 1.228 project, implemented by the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education within the Ministry for Education and Employment, will develop the 'Learning Outcomes Framework' (LOF) and associated 'Learning and Assessment Programmes' for the national curriculum. According to the OPII (pg 15), *the education system needs continuous renewal in order to remain relevant to current economic developments*. As part of this renewal, the LOF is considered a key component of the Maltese Educational System as set out in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). The LOF together with the NCF will form the backbone of the Maltese education programmes and will serve as national benchmark of excellence for all schools. Once established, the LOF will allow educators and learners themselves to gauge learning. The project is considered innovative because it conceptually modifies the methods of teaching and assessment in Malta and changes the focus of teaching and learning to measurable Learning Outcomes.

Finally ESF 1.227 and ESF 1.229 projects, also approved in 2013, whilst smaller in nature, also invest in Malta's educational system and both have an innovative component. Specifically, ESF 1.227 'Making Quality Visible (MQV)', which is being implemented by the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE), will put in implementation Legal Notice 291 of 2012 Regulations on Licensing, Accreditation and Quality Assurance. This will be done through the preparation of procedures and mechanisms for the auditing of Further and Higher Education entities in Malta and the conduction of internal and external pilot audits which will serve as case studies/best practices. The three self-accrediting further and higher educational Maltese institutions namely MCAST, University of Malta (UoM) and Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) are partners within this project. The DLL has also been identified as the fourth partner within this project given that it has over 16,000 participants in its courses, making it a major player in adult education, thus the national quality assurance framework should be comprehensive enough to include further, higher, VET, academic and adult education, something which is new within an EU context. On the other hand, the ESF 1.229 project 'Skills Acquisition for Children and Adolescents', which is being implemented by the Foundation for Educational Services, is aimed at improving the education and skills of children and adolescents through the piloting of two basic skills programme focusing on numeracy and literacy respectively. It also aims to provide better play work provision, which is essential in the building of soft skills in children through the training of play workers. This project will result in an improvement in basic numeracy skills of children in Years 4 to Form II; an improvement in basic literacy skills in those adolescents who undergo the NWAR literacy programme; and a better quality of play work related education.

Following the approval of the above-mentioned projects, as at end 2013, the priority Axis was fully committed.

### 3.1.2 Information on the physical and financial progress

#### a) Analysis of Indicators

Table 18 - Priority Axis 1 Indicators (Output and Result Indicators)

| Priority Axis 1 – Improving education skills |   |   |                           |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |                     |      |
|--|---|---|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---------------------|------|
|  |   |   |                           | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | Total <sup>91</sup> |      |
| Output                                       | A | Indicator 1: Number of persons participating in further or higher education & training programmes               | Achievement <sup>92</sup> | 0    | 0    | 140  | 155  | 147  | 45   | 158  | 645                 |      |
|  |   |   | Target                    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | 600                 |      |
|  |   |   | Baseline                  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 |      |
|  | B | Indicator 2: Number of persons participating in S&T or ICT in further or higher education & training programmes | Achievement <sup>93</sup> | 0    | 15   | 583  | 605  | 745  | 397  | 167  | 2,512               |      |
|  |   |   | Target                    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | 3000 |
|  |   |   | Baseline                  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a  |
|  |   | Indicator 3: Number of persons participating in S&T or ICT capacity building education & training               | Achievement <sup>94</sup> | 0    | 0    | 1    | 27   | 52   | 2    | 0    | 82                  |      |
|  |   |   | Target                    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | 250  |
|  |   |   | Baseline                  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a  |
|  |   | Indicator 4: Number of S&T or ICT actions/studies/campaigns/research activities carried out                     | Achievement               | 0    | 0    | 0    | 5    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 6                   |      |
|  |   |   | Target                    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | 10   |
|  |   |   | Baseline                  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a  |
|  | C | Indicator 5: Number of persons trained through capacity building courses  | Achievement <sup>95</sup> | 0    | 0    | 96   | 545  | 49   | 150  | 314  | 1,154               |      |
|  |   |   | Target                    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | 750  |
|  |   |   | Baseline                  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a  |

<sup>91</sup> Includes repeat participants.

<sup>92</sup> Achievements under ESF 1.25 were revised for all years given that output indicators were being recorded by signature date of contract rather than start date of contract.

<sup>93</sup> Achievements under ESF 1.25 were revised for all years given that output indicators were being recorded by signature date of contract rather than start date of contract; whereas ESF 1.36 was erroneously reported for 2011.

<sup>94</sup> ESF 1.36 erroneously reported the figures for 2009 and 2010. These have been corrected.

<sup>95</sup> Following addendum to the Grant Agreement figures were revised for ESF 1.36 and have been adjusted to reflect better the type of courses that were being delivered; and ESF 1.123 erroneously reported values for 2012 since nationally funded training was also included. This is now excluded.

|         |   |  |             |     |     |       |       |                   |       |        |     |
|---------|---|--|-------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|--------|-----|
|         | Indicator 6: Number of persons trained through supplementary courses, modules or credits for better skills matches    | Achievement  | 0           | 213 | 211 | 1,503 | 3,871 | 4,374             | 3,731 | 13,903 |     |
|         |   | Target   | n/a         | n/a | n/a | n/a   | n/a   | n/a               | n/a   | 3,000  |     |
|         |   | Baseline   | n/a         | n/a | n/a | n/a   | n/a   | n/a               | n/a   | n/a    |     |
|         | Indicator 7: Number of actions supporting educational quality, relevance, structures, systems, campaigns and research | Achievement  | 0           | 0   | 1   | 4     | 6     | 1 <sup>96</sup>   | 1     | 13     |     |
|         |   | Target   | n/a         | n/a | n/a | n/a   | n/a   | n/a               | n/a   | 20     |     |
|         |   | Baseline   | n/a         | n/a | n/a | n/a   | n/a   | n/a               | n/a   | n/a    |     |
| Results | A   | Indicator 1: % of participants gaining a further or higher education & training qualification                              | Achievement | 0%  | 0%  | 0%    | 28%   | 38%               | 59%   | 63%    | 63% |
|         |   |  | Target      | n/a | n/a | n/a   | n/a   | n/a               | n/a   | n/a    | 75% |
|         |   |  | Baseline    | n/a | n/a | n/a   | n/a   | n/a               | n/a   | n/a    | n/a |
|         | B   | Indicator 2: % of participants gaining a further or higher education & training qualification in S&T or ICT                | Achievement | 0%  | 0%  | 0%    | 18%   | 27% <sup>97</sup> | 47%   | 65%    | 65% |
|         |   |  | Target      | n/a | n/a | n/a   | n/a   | n/a               | n/a   | n/a    | 75% |
|         |   |  | Baseline    | n/a | n/a | n/a   | n/a   | n/a               | n/a   | n/a    | n/a |
|         |   | Indicator 3: % of participants gaining a qualification/certification in capacity building education/training <sup>98</sup> | Achievement | 0%  | 0%  | 0%    | 29%   | 90%               | 96%   | 96%    | 96% |
|         |   |  | Target      | n/a | n/a | n/a   | n/a   | n/a               | n/a   | n/a    | 80% |
|         |   |  | Baseline    | n/a | n/a | n/a   | n/a   | n/a               | n/a   | n/a    | n/a |
|         | C   | Indicator 4: % of participants gaining a qualification/certification <sup>99</sup>   | Achievement | 0%  | 0%  | 3%    | 53%   | 63%               | 88%   | 87%    | 87% |
|         |   |  | Target      | n/a | n/a | n/a   | n/a   | n/a               | n/a   | n/a    | 80% |
|         |   |  | Baseline    | n/a | n/a | n/a   | n/a   | n/a               | n/a   | n/a    | n/a |

<sup>96</sup> ESF 1.130 was erroneously reported for 2012.

<sup>97</sup> ESF 1.25 was erroneously reported for 2011.

<sup>98</sup> Achievements for 2009 - 2012 were revised for ESF 1.36 following shift in indicators.

<sup>99</sup> Including certificates of attendance. Achievements for 2009 - 2012 were revised for ESF 1.36 following shift in indicators.

As indicated in Table 18, progress on the indicators continued to be registered under Priority Axis 1 with the exception of output indicator 3 'Number of persons participating in S&T or ICT capacity building education & training'. Following the full commitment of funds under PA 1, the projects contributed towards indicators that were already achieved. In fact, it is worth noting that under indicators 5 'Number of persons trained through capacity building courses' and 6 'Number of persons trained through supplementary courses, modules or credits for better skills matches' a significant change has been recorded from 2009 till 2012 given that in 2013, following an addendum, the target indicators for ESF 1.36 were split between 'Number of persons trained through capacity building' and 'Number of persons trained through supplementary courses, modules or credits for better skills matches' in order to record better the training that was actually being implemented on the ground. This shift also had a significant impact on the reporting of the result indicators (3 and 4) for previous years. This was done in order to ensure better recording of data and ensuring that data reflects better the activities being implemented. It is also worth highlighting that *output indicators 5 and 6*, which are mainly related to capacity building have significantly exceeded the OP target. An explanation is provided in the qualitative analysis below.

Moreover given that most of the projects are now at an advanced stage in implementation, significant progress was also registered in relation to the result indicators. In fact, all result indicators continued to confirm the positive trends demonstrated in the previous years.

## b) Data on Participants

The table below depicts the physical progress under Axis 1 in 2013, in accordance with Commission Regulation 1828/2006 Annex XXIII

Table 19 - Data on Participants Priority Axis 1

| TOTALS<br>PA 1 2012         |  | People Entering |       | People Leaving |       |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------|-------|----------------|-------|
|                             |  | Total           | Women | Total          | Women |
| Status in the Labour Market | Total Number of participants<br>(Employed+Unemployed+Inactive) | 4370            | 2983  | 3599           | 2013  |
|                             | Employed   | 4055            | 2845  | 2826           | 1838  |
|                             | Self Employed  | 87              | 24    | 82             | 27    |
|                             | Unemployed   | 66              | 25    | 78             | 24    |
|                             | Long Term Unemployed   | 4               | 2     | 4              | 2     |
|                             | Inactive   | 249             | 113   | 695            | 151   |
|                             | Inactive in Education and Training                             | 220             | 101   | 171            | 57    |

|                             |  |      |      |      |      |
|-----------------------------|--|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Age</b>                  | Young People (15-24 years)                         | 654  | 422  | 986  | 332  |
|                             | Older Workers (55-64 years)                        | 319  | 231  | 246  | 157  |
| <b>Vulnerable Groups</b>    | Minorities   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
|                             | Migrants   | 22   | 4    | 23   | 4    |
|                             | Disabled   | 5    | 2    | 26   | 8    |
|                             | Other Disadvantaged People                         | 0    | 0    | 30   | 5    |
| <b>Education Attainment</b> | Primary or Lower secondary education (ISCED 1 & 2) | 383  | 333  | 699  | 265  |
|                             | Upper Secondary education (ISCED 3)                | 316  | 249  | 247  | 185  |
|                             | Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 3)    | 242  | 165  | 204  | 114  |
|                             | Tertiary Education (ISCED 5 & 6)                   | 3429 | 2236 | 2449 | 1449 |

It is worth noting that, the significant progress recorded under this Axis in 2013 is mainly reflected through the number of participants benefitting from the training opportunities offered. In fact the number of participants amounted to 4,370, out of which 68% were women.

### c) Financial Progress

Table 20 - Financial Progress Priority Axis 1

| Priority Axis  | A<br>Total<br>contribution | Financial progress |                 |               |            |            |            |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
|  |                            | B<br>Commitments   | C<br>Contracted | D<br>Payments | (B/A)<br>% | (C/A)<br>% | (D/A)<br>% |
| Priority Axis 1<br><i>Improving<br/>education and<br/>Skills</i> | 41,400,000.00              | 41,731,039         | 30,970,703      | 27,786,151    | 100.8%     | 75%        | 67%        |

PA 1 continued to register the highest level of payments across OPII. Following the approval of four (4) new projects, amounting to around €7.6M, Priority Axis 1 was fully committed as at end 2013<sup>100</sup>. The approval of these projects also led to a slight overcommitment on PA 1 which in part will mitigate savings usually registered during contracting.

<sup>100</sup> As at end 2012, the committed amount was €35,970,958.

### 3.1.3 Qualitative analysis

As at end 2013, the majority of the projects under this Axis were at an advanced stage of implementation and continued to deliver significant results in terms of qualification and skills attainment. During the period under review, almost all projects approved under this Axis registered substantial progress with three (3) of them concluding all the activities foreseen within the project.

In a knowledge-based economy, it is imperative to have a strong base of Masters graduates in particular, graduates in research and innovation that ultimately lead to intellectual and economic growth within society. The ESF 1.225 project has already started to yield significant outputs. In fact as at end 2013, under the 'Master IT' project €3.5 Million were made available with €2.7 Million committed in Call 1 (were more than 300 students benefited from grants to study at Masters level) with the remaining €0.8 Million committed in a second call in February 2014. The scholarships were awarded in various areas including financial services, environment and life sciences. During the year under review, ESF 1.225 mainly contributed to the achievements that were registered under *output indicators 1 and 2*. Through this project it is targeted that 95% of participants will gain a qualification at MQF level 7. On the other hand no further calls were issued under ESF 1.25 – STEPS in 2013, given that all the funds allocated under this project were committed by 2012. It is worth noting that STEPS contributed directly to a remarkable increase of students following post-graduate courses while increasing the availability and employment of high-level graduates in the priority sectors for Malta. In a span of four years more than 854 scholars benefited from such scheme. In total, as at end of 2013, 689 awardees have obtained their MA or PhD degree, of which 116 were in Capacity Building in Education, 311 in Addressing Skills Mismatches, 215 in Research & Innovation in Science and technology and 47 in ICT. It is worth highlighting that out of the 689 that concluded their studies under ESF 1.25, 47 were actually at EQF level 8. The increase in both the contracted and disbursed amounts under PA 1 was mainly attributed to two scholarships projects (ESF 1.25 and ESF 1.225).

Apart from scholarships, level rated courses for students were also implemented under PA 1 in order to increase the number of persons in further and higher education. In fact, under ESF 1.125, an Intensive Training Programme (EQF level 7) in science and technology entrepreneurship was initiated in 2013. This training is aimed to developing human potential in innovation and entrepreneurship through post-graduate training. A distance learning format for the modules is also being developed to allow online delivery of the content. ESF 1.23 and ESF 1.36 also continued to offer tertiary level degrees. In the case of the former B.Com Finance and Tourism and B.Com Finance and IT which were initiated in 2010 continued to be implemented and 21 students completed their studies in 2013, whereas under ESF 1.36, 25 students obtained top-up degrees in 2013. Furthermore, training at a lower level (in terms of academic qualification), that aims to address an important sector of the economy, namely ICT, continued to be offered under ESF 1.33 with all courses supported through ESF completed in 2013. During the year under review, 375<sup>101</sup> students (including students that have completed a scholarship in financial services) were certified in ICT under ESF 1.33.

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<sup>101</sup> Including repeat participants.



This axis also continued to support training for capacity building of educators and administrators, namely through ESF 1.36; ESF 1.123; ESF 1.125 and ESF 1.131. The continuous professional development TED programme (ESF 1.131) which was delivered, to Catholic schools ran from mid-2012 to end of December 2013. The main focus of the ESF 1.131 programme was to support staff to more effectively teach mixed ability classes, with training, mentoring and coaching primarily being delivered in the following areas: lesson planning; instruction/ delivery of lessons/behaviour management; and assessment. The five most common topics covered by trainers were: lesson delivery; differentiation; ICT in teaching and learning; learning difficulties and disabilities; and assessment and monitoring of pupil progress. The training was held with staff of around 30 different schools and included primary, secondary schools as well as kindergartens. With regards to coaching and mentoring, training was delivered in over 20 schools and some of the schools also took part in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Mark (Malta) - an international quality mark designed to improve CPD standards throughout the education sector - and were reported to be judged eligible for the Bronze Award. During 2013, the teachers had undergone more than one course in relation to diversity depending on the needs of the school, thus having a significant impact on *output indicators 5 and 6*.

ESF 1.123 provided training on the e-Learning Solution, on the use of the Platform and the use of the Management Information System. In total, through the project implementation, more than 5,000 teachers within State schools (numbers include support teachers, peripatetic, LSAs, supply & kindergarten assistantants and administration) were trained in both the use of Interactive Whiteboards and the eLearning Platform. Specifically, during 2013, 347 members of staff from the Senior Management Team and clerical staff were trained in 'e1 Foundation' and 'e1 Additional' training related to the Management Information System. With regards to the sustainability, the trainers who had undergone a "*Train the Trainer*" training financed under this project, continued to provide training to teachers in Secondary State Schools and Higher Secondary State Schools on the eLearning platform (VLE). In fact in 2013, 2807 teachers in all Secondary State Schools and two Higher Secondary State Schools were trained on the eLearning platform (VLE) through national funds by using the 'train-the-trainer' method. Given that ESF 1.123 aimed to train all teachers in IWB and e-learning platform, this project on its own exceeded the OP target (output indicator 6). Although the training was of a short duration it had a significant impact on the education system. In fact, following the completion of the IWB training offered under ESF 1.123 educators have started to deliver lessons using IWB. Teachers also started to upload and share their own lessons with pupils and colleagues following the training related to the e-learning platform which was implemented in 2013. Data logins, of both the students' and teachers' logins increased in 2013 when compared with previous years. Further increase is expected in 2014, ultimately highlighting the sustainability and the importance of this project.

Under ESF 1.36, Malta's vocational institute (MCAST) continued to implement a staff development programme, including the provision of a wide range of courses, such as BTEC course and various short courses related to skills for specific professionals including Effective briefing and presentation skills, and Professional Writing Skills. The aim of these courses was to improve on the continuous professional

development of MCAST academic and administrative staff. It should be noted that the participants, participated in courses of varying duration and/or benefitted from more than one short course in order to enhance their pedagogic skills. As a result this had a significant impact on *output indicators 5 and 6*.

Moreover, under ESF 1.125, a training programme was initiated in 2013 in order to address the lack of expertise with respect to Intellectual Property (IP) and Knowledge Transfer by supporting the development of a holistic IP and Knowledge Transfer Framework. In fact, during the period under review, Business Incubation (BIC) and Knowledge Transfer (KT) training was offered to UoM staff and partner organisations. In 2013, seminars for the ecosystem (researchers, students, business representatives, entrepreneurs and potential investors) were also implemented in order to support an effective institutional rapport between education and industry. The external seminars included Parenting for Tech Businesses, Managing Intellectual Property in ICT and Seed Funding for Technology Start-Ups. Whereas, the internal seminars included amongst others an introduction to Entrepreneurship and Opportunities, Managing Intellectual Property in ICT, Teaching Confidentiality and Navigating Copyright and Managing Intellectual Property in Engineering and Manufacturing.

Furthermore, the course leading to the Post-Graduate Diploma in Educational Leadership for Gozitan educators (EQF level 7) and Diploma Course in Facilitating Inclusive Education for Learning Support Assistants (EQF level 5) started to be implemented under ESF 1.209. In 2013, 73 participants (of which 32 are educators and 41 are LSAs) were participating in courses assisted through ESF under this project. The aim of these courses is to increase the overall participation rates within the Gozitan education system and increasing the knowledge and skills levels of the future Gozitan labour force as well as to improve the education system in Gozo. On the other hand, during 2013, under ESF 1.211, the initial preparation for the development of an electronic portfolio for trainees and trainers in postgraduate medical training took place. This innovative system will function as an educational tool which will set standards and improve the accreditation process and it will also serve as an evaluation tool for training of the future medical specialists.

The ESF 1.130 project, which is being delivered by MCAST, contributed towards the investments in the education system through a number of actions. During the period under review, ESF 1.130 continued the process to engage experts to review existing courses structure including learning outcomes, syllabi, assessment methodologies, level rating, and teaching material of all MCAST Level 4 and MQF 5 home grown courses, such as MCAST Certificate/Diploma in Banking and Financial Services and MCAST Diploma in Green Energy Technologies. These courses will be reformulated to meet latest industrial needs and address formal accreditation requirements. The team of experts is also designing and writing the courses structure/syllabus and the teaching material of various new courses, such as Agri-tourism, Eco-Friendly Agricultural Practices, BioMedical Engineering and Creative Digital Mobile Technologies, ultimately increasing MCAST course offerings. Furthermore, it is envisaged that the review and redesign of all MQF Level 4 and MQF 5 courses that are currently being delivered by MCAST (and certified through foreign accredited bodies) will start to be delivered in 2014 in order to suit better Malta's economic requirements.

An overview of the financial progress shows that 75%<sup>102</sup> of the committed amount was contracted<sup>103</sup>, resulting in over 8% increase when compared to 2012. The increase in the contracted amount was mainly due to contracting under ESF 1.130 (with over €1.86 contracted in 2013) following the contracting of the main tender '*Services of Experts to design syllabi, teaching, and learning resources I*', and ESF 1.225 (with over €1.25M)<sup>104</sup> following the signature of the contracts with scholars. Moreover, under ESF 1.130 the tender for *Services of Experts to design syllabi, teaching, and learning resources II* (estimated value of €2.35M) was launched in 2013 and is expected to be awarded in Q1 of 2014. The call for local VET experts was also issued in 2013 as part of this project. The two (2) projects that were approved in 2012, namely ESF 1.211 and 1.209, also concluded the main procurement/calls under this Priority Axis. In fact, during 2013, the ESF 1.211 e-portfolio tender was awarded, whereas under ESF 1.209 the call for lecturers was concluded.

During the year under review, the Axis also continued to register an increase in the disbursed amount when compared to previous years<sup>105</sup> with a disbursement in 2013 of €5.27Million. The disbursement as at end 2013 represents 90% of the contracted amount. This is mainly attributed to ESF 1.25 (around €1.99M) followed by ESF 1.130 (€1.14M) and ESF 1.125 (€0.6M). ESF 1.225, which is one of the newly approved projects in 2013, also started to register disbursement with around €0.3M disbursed during the year under review. The other newly approved projects are expected to pick up as implementation progresses and in 2014 the MA should report an increase in the contracting and disbursed amounts under such projects. In the year under review, ESF 1.288 focused primarily on the drafting of the Learning Outcomes Framework and the Learning and Assessment Programmes tender (estimated value of €2.56M) which was launched in 2013. Under the same project the call for local experts who will assess the work prepared by the main contractor was also published. Moreover, under ESF 1.229 the main work focus on the drafting various calls for trainers since it is planned that the courses will start in the first quarter of 2014.

With regards to the management verifications in 2013 the amount of €6.36M was verified by the MA. The same amount was certified to the EC by the CA during the same year. Furthermore, the MA checked additional invoices under PA 1, amounting to around €1.2 which will be included in the SOE planned to be raised at the beginning of 2014.

The ERDF type of expenditure<sup>106</sup> made in previous years has made the ESF investments more sustainable in the long-term. In particular, the ERDF investment under ESF 1.36, continued to complement the delivery of the MCAST Vocational Degree Programmes that are now being delivered by MCAST staff which have undergone job shadowing during the ESF implementation years. The areas of study include: Agriculture, Arts and Design, Business & Commerce, Electrical & Electronics Engineering,

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<sup>102</sup> This includes the contracts signed between MEDE and students under STEPS.

<sup>103</sup> Total Contracted Public Eligible amount as the end of 2012 was €27,713,093 whilst in 2011 this was €21,804,745.

<sup>104</sup> The remaining contracting under ESF 1.225 (of the 2.7M) occurred in 2014.

<sup>105</sup> Amount paid in 2012 was €22,515,490 and in 2011 was €13,495,513.

<sup>106</sup> Various equipment related to the courses offered were acquired.

Information & Communication Technology, Building Construction and Engineering, Community Services and Mechanical Engineering. Moreover, ESF 1.123 is complementary to ERDF 159 eXS4ALL whereby school classrooms as well as science and design and technology laboratories are equipped with Interactive whiteboards. This is just one example of how the two programmes (OPI and OPII) complement each other and increase the added value of the investments undertaken.

In addition, in 2013, further ERDF investment was made, in particular under the ESF 1.125 project. This included the procurement and contracting of the necessary physical infrastructure in relation to the setting up of a functional Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO) and an Intellectual Property Rights Office (IPRO) at the University of Malta. It is also worth noting that ESF 1.125 has in particular contributed towards the increase in employment rate through the engagement of six persons (of which 3 were employed in 2013) that have been employed at the UoM to support the KT/IP framework. The staff include a Manager - Corporate Research and Knowledge Transfer, Manager - Business Incubation Centre and Legal Executive, and a Corporate Research and Knowledge Transfer Officer. The engagement of this team supports the sustainability of this project. This project complements an investment under the ERDF in excess of €20 Million i.e. the Lifesciences project.

Gender equality was a horizontal theme throughout PA 1 projects. For instance, under both ESF 1.25 and ESF 1.225 scholarship schemes, a financial allowance is given to participants who have children, in order to sustain them during the period of study.

It is to be noted that whilst PA 1 does not target disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, disadvantaged groups (including persons with disabilities and migrants), have benefited from the training implemented under this Axis. In particular, under ESF 1.125, thirteen (13) migrants participated in external seminars organised by the University of Malta.

The implementation of the PA 1 also included innovative activities. A detailed analysis in relation to Article 10 has been included under Chapter 2.

### ***3.1.4 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them***

The below points summarise the main problems arising from the implementation of projects during 2013 under PA 1. Nevertheless, none of the problems being reported resulted in serious problems pursuant to the procedure in Article 62(1)(d)(i) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

#### *i. Procurement*

Given that this programming period is now nearing its end one of the major challenges is to ensure a timely procurement process and ultimately timely disbursement. In fact, weekly meetings are being held with the Department of Contracts in order to identify priority vetting of main tenders and to ensure that issues are flagged as early as possible. Tenders under both ESF 1.130 and ESF 1.228 (amounting to €4.91M) were prioritised to ensure that there is enough time for their implementation. This proved to be

beneficial given that both tenders were published in 2013 and it is envisaged that the tenders will be awarded in the beginning of 2014 and that planned activities will be implemented concurrently over a shorter period of time in order to make up for lost time.

*ii. Verification process*

Due to the significant number of documents such as time-sheets, calculations of staff costs, attendance sheets as well as procurement supporting documentation, the verification process proved to be another challenge. Nevertheless, in order to mitigate against this the templates used for verification purposes have been simplified in order to avoid duplication of work. Moreover, the experience learnt from concluded projects implemented under this Axis is being used by the MA in order to simplify the implementation of the projects that are currently undergoing.

*iii. Financial corrections*

In relation to ESF 1.36, following the audit mission carried out by DG Regio and DG Employment in June 2012, a 25% financial correction was applied (in 2013) on the total public eligible amount of the training contract. The Commission deemed that although there was an adequate degree of publicity at tendering stage, the award was not published on the Official Journal thus leading to non-compliance with the requirement of advertising during the awarding procedure. The amounts cancelled have been returned to the PA and were committed to newly approved projects. It is also worth noting that the necessary action has been taken by the MA and the relevant stakeholders informed in order to prevent the reoccurrence of such an irregularity.

## **3.2 Priority Axis 2 – Investing in Employability and Adaptability of the Workforce**

### ***3.2.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress***

Priority Axis 2 (PA2) aims to invest in human capital to ensure workforce adaptability to the dynamic labour market, by providing opportunities for training, up-skilling and re-skilling for employed, unemployed and inactive persons alike. Fourteen (14) mainstream projects and the Training Aid Framework aid scheme (under Article 107 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) continued to provide the thrust towards the goals of the PA. No new calls were issued during the year under review; however, one (1) project<sup>107</sup> was approved in April 2013 (from Call 10), following the registration of savings under

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<sup>107</sup> ESF2.204

the Axis and one (1) project<sup>108</sup> was withdrawn. All public funds budgeted in the OP under the PA (€30,995,000) were allocated, with a slight over-commitment to ensure full commitment of funds allocated (an overcommitment of €484,740). Four (4) projects<sup>109</sup> ended their activities in 2013, leaving eight (8) active projects under the PA. The other two (2) projects<sup>110</sup> approved under the same PA concluded all their activities in the previous years.

## Information on the physical and financial progress of the Priority Axis

### a) Analysis of Indicators

Table 21 - Priority Axis 2 Indicators (Output and Result Indicators)

| Priority Axis 2 – Investing in employability and adaptability of the workforce |   |   |             | 2007 | 2008 | 2009  | 2010   | 2011   | 2012  | 2013  | Total  |       |
|--|---|---|-------------|------|------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| Output   | A | Indicator 1: Number of persons trained/supported  | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 4,773 | 14,025 | 15,311 | 6,773 | 3,784 | 44,666 |       |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 45000 |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
|  |   | Indicator 2: Number of actions supporting educational structures, systems, campaigns and research | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 0     | 0      | 1      | 1     | 3     | 5      |       |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 5     |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
|  | B | Indicator 3: Number of undertakings supported   | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 148   | 916    | 1,001  | 991   | 12    | 3,068  |       |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 700   |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
| Results  | A | Indicator 1: % of participants in employment or further study 6 month after receiving assistance  | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 37%   | 51%    | 73%    | 77%   | 71%   | 71%    |       |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 20%   |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
|  |   | Indicator 2: % of participants gaining a qualification/certification                              | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 77%   | 83%    | 87%    | 89%   | 86%   | 86%    |       |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 60%   |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
|  | B | Indicator 3: % of participants gaining a qualification/certification                              | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 93%   | 95%    | 99%    | 99%   | 99%   | 99%    |       |
|  |   |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 60%   |
|  |   |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a    | n/a    | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |

<sup>108</sup> ESF2.138

<sup>109</sup> ESF2.11, ESF2.12, ESF2.72 and ESF2.78

<sup>110</sup> ESF2.7 and ESF2.84

As compared to 2012, the number of persons trained in 2013 and supported under the PA registered a 45% decrease over the previous year, primarily due to the closure of the activities under ESF2.4, and the low activity (in terms of implementation) of the newly approved projects. 2013 has been another transition year in terms of numbers of persons trained, as the strongest potential contributors – ESF2.204 and ESF2.201 (which target to collectively assist 13,000 trainees over the next 18 months) – were still going through the preparatory stages of their activities. The OP target of 45,000 trainees, though, is clearly attainable.

The target number of actions supporting educational structures, systems, campaigns and research was achieved during the year, thanks to the contribution of three tools launched under two projects during the year under review. ESF2.137 contributed through the development of an e-learning platform that was launched in April 2013, providing participants with an online portal containing additional course material and a student-teacher communication tool. On the other hand, ESF2.78 developed a training manual and an interactive online tool (launched in April 2013). More actions are planned to feed into this indicator in the coming months, as activities under the main MCAST project ESF2.139 are realised. These will include platforms for the accreditation of prior learning and prior experiential learning, and a portfolio of courses reformulated into blended learning mode. This increases the actions under this indicator to eight (8), exceeding the target of five (5) within the OP.

The number of undertakings supported decreased to 3068 from 3253 during the year under review, due to a number of decommitments made under the TAF scheme, which closed in June 2012. Payments, hence the check on claims, continued to be made in 2013 and will continue in 2014.. Nonetheless, this still exceeds the OP target of 700.

All result indicators continued to confirm the positive trends demonstrated in the previous years, as all three targets have been superseded. This shows how the funds have contributed successfully to the retention of employees, their re-training prospects and their increased qualifications. Most notably, the number of persons gaining a qualification continued to increase, reaching 38,204 persons or 86% of the number of persons trained.

## **b) Data on Participants**

The table below depicts the physical progress under Axis 2 in 2013, in accordance with the Commission Regulation 1828/2006 Annex XXIII.

Table 22 - Data on Participants Priority Axis 2

| TOTALS<br>PA 2 2013         |   | People Entering |       | People Leaving |       | People Carried Over |       |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------|-------|----------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
|                             |   | Total           | Women | Total          | Women | Total               | Women |
| Status in the Labour Market | Total Number of participants (Employed+Unemployed+Inactive) | 2498            | 893   | 2307           | 809   | 191                 | 702   |
|                             | Employed  | 705             | 238   | 607            | 210   | 98                  | 140   |
|                             | Self Employed   | 46              | 13    | 42             | 12    | 4                   | 9     |
|                             | Unemployed  | 1355            | 444   | 1291           | 409   | 64                  | 380   |
|                             | Long Term Unemployed  | 504             | 123   | 494            | 121   | 10                  | 113   |
|                             | Inactive  | 438             | 211   | 409            | 190   | 29                  | 182   |
|                             | Inactive in Education and Training                          | 37              | 29    | 36             | 29    | 1                   | 28    |
| Age                         | Young People (15-24 years)                                  | 722             | 273   | 664            | 243   | 58                  | 215   |
|                             | Older Workers (55-64 years)                                 | 225             | 134   | 437            | 111   | -212                | 346   |
| Vulnerable Groups           | Minorities  | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     | 0                   | 0     |
|                             | Migrants  | 82              | 23    | 49             | 9     | 33                  | -10   |
|                             | Disabled  | 88              | 17    | 87             | 16    | 1                   | 16    |
|                             | Other Disadvantaged People                                  | 21              | 1     | 21             | 1     | 0                   | 1     |
| Education Attainment        | Primary or Lower secondary education (ISCED 1 & 2)          | 1763            | 567   | 1662           | 533   | 101                 | 466   |
|                             | Upper Secondary education (ISCED 3)                         | 324             | 153   | 294            | 124   | 30                  | 123   |
|                             | Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 3)             | 216             | 81    | 187            | 74    | 29                  | 52    |
|                             | Tertiary Education (ISCED 5 & 6)                            | 195             | 92    | 164            | 78    | 31                  | 61    |

On a general note, the number of participants in training decreased during the year (from 6842 in the previous year to 2498 this year), particularly due to the transitional period of the axis. The main contributor of the PA to training – ESF2.4 – had completed its hefty training activity prior to 2013 and the new projects – mainly ESF2.201 and ESF2.204 – were in the initial or preparatory stages of their training activities.

Despite the decline in persons trained, the proportion of women attending training remained stable at 36%. Of particular interest is the fact that the percentage participation of women increased under the unemployed, long-term unemployed and the inactive over the percentages reported in 2012.



c) **Financial Progress**

Table 23 - Financial Progress Priority Axis 2

| Priority Axis  | A<br>Total<br>contribution | Financial progress |                 |               |            |            |            |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
|  |                            | B<br>Commitments   | C<br>Contracted | D<br>Payments | (B/A)<br>% | (C/A)<br>% | (D/A)<br>% |
| Priority Axis 2<br><br>Investing in<br>Employability<br>and<br>Adaptability<br>of the<br>Workforce | 30,995,000                 | 31,479,740         | 24,886,656      | 15,619,701    | 102%       | 81%        | 51%        |

PA2 registered positive trends on the financial side, with progress registered most notably in the amounts paid and contracted. The amounts committed exceeded the amounts allocated under the PA, resulting in an over-commitment of €484,740, mainly attributable to the approval of project ESF2.137 (budgeted at €462,779) and increased budgets under two ongoing projects, following justified requests by MCAST and ETC to increase activities under project ESF2.85 (by €347,745) and ESF2.201 (by €300,000). Contracted amounts increased by 31% over 2012<sup>111</sup>, as a result of a €4.8m- contract signed under project ESF2.139. Payments increased by 71%<sup>112</sup>. The major contributor towards this increase was ESF2.139 with €2,303,255 paid during the year under review, together with ESF2.65 and ESF2.4 with €1,943,117 and €1,092,691 paid in 2013 respectively.

The year 2013 was a challenging financial year for the OP because of the ambitious cumulative N+3/2 target. The target was eventually achieved, also thanks to the contribution of the thirteen (13) PA2 projects/schemes, providing a total of €8.68m in verified payments in 2013 (out of a verification of €28.8m in 2013). The total value of verified payment under PA 2 stood at €14m by the end of 2013.

<sup>111</sup> Contracted as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012 was €18,995,997 and €24,886,656 as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

<sup>112</sup> Paid as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012 was €9,154,314 and €15,619,701 as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

### 3.2.2 Qualitative analysis

The year 2013 brought together new projects<sup>113</sup> in their early stages of their activities with others reaching their maturity<sup>114</sup>. Whilst the physical and financial contribution of the former will be felt in the coming months, the successes of the mature projects was essential in gauging progress towards the headline indicators of the PA and the achievement of the N+3/2 financial targets for the year under review. The main contributors towards the achievement of the PA's financial objectives were ESF2.4 – *The Employability Programme* and the scheme ESF2.65 – *Training Aid Framework* as already explained above.

Addressing the focus area of continuous training and education, ESF2.4 aimed to enhance the knowledge, skills and competences of the working age population through a mix of short-courses, scholarships (at level 5 and level 6) and traineeships. The project concluded a significant part of its activities in 2013, wrapping up the highly intensive short courses and the traineeships. Payments under the project, therefore, ramped up on these two activities. As the previous section confirms, this project was highly successful with its cumulative 38,646 persons trained and supported, remaining the flagship project under the Priority Axis. The project did not contribute further to this indicator during 2013, given that all participants were accounted for in the previous years and no new training courses commenced. €2.4m (public share) were certified in 2013 linked to this project.

The success of ESF2.4 is expected to be replicated by its sister project, ESF2.201 – *Enhancing Employability through Training*, similarly implemented by the Employment and Training Corporation and for which €3.68m have been committed. The project is proceeding steadily, with 3,434 persons already trained during its first year of operation. This represents 43% of the target of 8,080 persons under this project, confirming yet again the need for short courses amongst the unemployed, inactive and employed population. The numbers are expected to increase significantly during 2014 when the majority of the short and academic courses will be carried out, together with the new traineeship scheme under this project. The project aims to facilitate the access to developing the knowledge, skills and competences of the working age population. The scope behind it is to offer training assistance to jobseekers needing to improve their skills to enter the labour market and to upgrade the existing skills of those individuals who wish to re-enter the labour market, find alternative employment and/or acquire new skills to meet the labour market demands.

The *Training Aid Framework* (TAF) – the scheme supporting the private sector through subsidies for training cost was fully committed in 2012 with the total number of undertakings supported reaching 3,068,

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<sup>113</sup> ESF2.201, ESF2.204, ESF2.139, ESF2.186

<sup>114</sup> ESF2.4, ESF2.65, ESF2.137

more than four times the target of 700 in the Operational Programme. During the year under review, the focus of the Intermediate Body, shifted to the administrative verification and reimbursement of claims for approved operations (training interventions carried out by enterprises in the previous years) pending at its end. The IB started the year with a stock of unpaid claims of 3056 for a value of €8.19m, triggering a major re-think of the system of checks and the administrative capacity required to perform the onerous tasks of verifying the intricate nature of the claims under the Scheme. Eventually, by the end of the year, the MA managed to recommend €2.9m (public share) for certification as compared to €0.48m by December 2012, proving that the restructuring efforts within the IB were successful. More importantly, the revamped system of payments provided the much-needed financial assistance on the ground, where enterprises from fifteen (15) different economic sectors (including 60 enterprises established in Gozo) received reimbursement for their investments. This was welcomed by social partners, as attested by their response during the IB Steering Committee meeting of December 2013. Faithful to its promise in the OP, the main sector assisted was the manufacturing one, representing 22% of the budget distribution under TAF. The IB plan to disburse all amounts under the Scheme in 2014.

Four projects closed their activities during 2013. ESF2.11 – *Developing Leaders for Change and Innovation in Tourism* implemented by the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA), was highly successful on all headline indicators as explained below. It was designed to up-skill and certify owners, managers and supervisors in tourism, jobseekers and unemployed persons, providing practical and result-focused mentoring programmes. Through an overall expenditure of €3.14m, the project trained 1,453 persons, out of which 1,356 were adults, 10% were from Gozo. 94% of the persons participating in the training activities gained a qualification exceeding the targets agreed to when the project was approved. In 2013, the same Authority closed its other project ESF2.78 – *Retaining and attracting people within tourism through diversity management*. With a total value of €0.3m, this project was unique in its intent to garner awareness about and training in diversity management to attract skilled individuals towards the tourism industry and up-skill the existing workforce. Apart from the fact that 85% of the 100 persons trained gained a qualification, the project was also successful in promoting the benefits of social inclusion through an awareness campaign on diversity management, through different media – TV and radio programmes, articles on local newspapers, billboards, mail shots, a three-day diversity festival on campus of the Institute of Tourism Studies in Malta and another day-festival on campus at ITS Gozo, workshops for University and ITS students, conferences and the development of a website<sup>115</sup>. In 2009, The Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA) embarked on the project ESF2.12 – *The Second Step Programme*, with a budget of just above €1m. Upon closure, this project trained 242 persons (exceeding the target of 200), including a healthy mix of adults, women and youths, helping 56% of them to gain a diploma in Information Technology, Information Systems or Computing. However, this fell short of the 70% target, mainly due to absences and students not attaining the pass marks. ESF2.72 – *EPITOME (Empowerment Programme for IT use: Outreach for Micro-Entrepreneurship)* developed and delivered a training curriculum on ICT as an entrepreneurial tool, to improve the flexibility and competitiveness of

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<sup>115</sup> [www.diversityintourism.com](http://www.diversityintourism.com)

micro-enterprises. Notwithstanding the challenges faced in attracting the target audience to a relatively time-consuming training programme, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) still managed to train 200 persons (out of a target of 300) with a budget of €0.36m. Yet, the experience of this project shows that investment in entrepreneurial skills should be tailored to the needs of the entrepreneur but also flexible enough to fit into her demanding schedules. Different modes of training will be considered, such as online courses and short but intensive workshops.

During 2013, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) was active on its two ongoing projects under the Axis, namely ESF2.139 – *Increasing Accessibility, Flexibility and Innovation to MCAST Lifelong Learning Course Offer* and ESF2.85 – *Linking Industrial Needs and VET to Optimise Human Capital*. After the initial contracting difficulties, ESF2.139 is now well on track, with 38% of the €7.3m budget already disbursed. The electronic prior learning and prior experiential learning accreditation platforms, together with the blended learning platform are currently being developed. This will innovate the learning experience of the student at the College, where traditional methods of learning will be merged with modern electronic methods. Further to this, the project will provide an important tool to assess the learners' current knowledge and experience and perform electronic accreditation of such competences. The project is expected to conclude in 2015. ESF2.85 is currently addressing the skills gaps and educational needs of the present workforce within ten industrial sectors. Training continued steadily, assisting a further 173 persons during 2013 to be added to the 189 trained in 2012. The project will close in 2015, with 561 persons expected to be trained out of whom 70% will receive certification.

The St. Paul's Bay Local Council is also contributing to the focus area of continuous training and education through the organisation of training courses in customer care management, hospitality English, ICT and Maltese culture and heritage within the context of its project ESF2.137 – *Train to Succeed*. This tourism-oriented programme aims to equip individuals with social and academic skills needed to increase participation in the tourism sector and to promote lifelong learning. So far, this €0.1m project has attracted 77 participants and is expected to be completed by the first half of 2014. The target number of persons to be trained is 100, out of whom 80% will receive certification.

In 2014 it is expected that further progress will be registered for those projects that were approved between 2011 and 2013. As already mentioned, ESF2.201 and ESF2.139 are major projects within the PA which aim to provide a significant thrust towards the achievement of the Priority Axis targets on physical and financial performance. Three other projects are also going through their intensive contracting and implementation stages with the first results expected to be reported on in 2014 and 2015. The newly-approved project, ESF2.204 – *NETWORKED: ICT competences for better employability and workforce adaptability*, is currently in its final preparatory stages to start delivering training in basic ICT skills to at least 3500 individuals. Strong interest has already been expressed in response to the first call for participants for the two courses on offer – Basic ICT Skills and ICT Skills at Work. ESF2.186 – *Re-*

*skilling of workforce for the Local Film Industry* overcame its initial contracting hurdles and is now expected to launch its courses in April 2014, also following commendable response from the sector-specific and also the non-sector public. Over a 100 participants are expected to receive training. Finally, ESF2.141 – *Skills upgrading for the tourism sector in Gozo* will be providing a mentoring programme to 70 Gozitan employees in the tourism sector, to identify the educational paths needed to address their skills gaps, and eventually providing the training to receive accreditation for their knowledge and experience.

***ERDF co-financing – Analysis of the use of the Funds in accordance with Article 34(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.***

By the end of 2013, the percentage committed to ERDF interventions under PA2 reached 1.89%. These include investments in computer equipment (ESF2.4, ESF2.11, ESF2.78), training equipment (ESF2.85, ESF2.186) and a computer-lab surveillance system (ESF2.139).

***3.2.3 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them***

The following summarises the main problems arising from the implementation of projects during 2013 under PA 2. None of the problems being reported to here resulted in serious problems pursuant to the procedure in Article 62(1)(d)(i) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

*i. Fragmentation in the verification process*

As explained in previous years, almost 70% of the budget allocation under the PA is concentrated on two projects and one Aid Scheme (ESF2.4, ESF2.139 and ESF2.65), two of which are highly fragmented in terms of components or disbursements with resulting elaborate verifications needed to check expenditure incurred. The problem of fragmentation was not on disbursement as in previous years (disbursement ramped up considerably on all three main operations/group of operations during 2013); however, it shifted to the management verification stage. Under the TAF aid scheme, the MA and IB had a stock of more than a thousand paid claims to verify in 2013. This represented a significant challenge for both stakeholders, especially on their human resources. The staff complement within the IB increased during the year under review and simplified procedures were introduced in both implementation and control units. This was successful in boosting disbursement to €4.2m (public share); yet, this resulted in a challenging task on the pre-Statement of Expenditure verifications by the MA. Sampling methodologies were applied, in line with the recommendations of the COCOF on management verifications (COCOF 08/0020/04-EN) and the channels of communication between the MA and IB were constantly active, where solutions to individual problems were discussed in a highly efficient and collaborative manner. Eventually, €2.9m were recommended for verification under the Scheme during 2013.

Disbursements under another main project – ESF2.4 – reached 79% of the budget allocated during the year. These were spread, however, over 5500 invoices, with an average value of just €770. Yet, the MA was successful in verifying €2.4m in the year under review.

*ii. Fragmentation of project components and slow payment process*

Fragmentation was in a different form under the project ESF2.85. The large number of training instances under ten different modules and the complementary high-volume but low-value course materials resulted in a multitude of reimbursement claims which clogged the disbursement stream under the project. Although training was being delivered at a good pace, this was not reflected in the amounts available for certification in the system. In fact, only 26% of the project had been disbursed by the end of 2013, despite having more than 60% of the project training fully delivered. The MA and Beneficiary discussed the matter on different occasions, identifying the need to enhance the administrative capacity but also to revise the payment procedures adopted. By the end of the year, the Beneficiary was in the process to engage fourteen quality assurance officers to assist the project leader in the verification and control of documents supporting payment claims. This should expedite the payment process in 2014.

*iii. Procurement*

Three projects faced procurement problems during this year. Following months of discussions and tender preparations, in October 2013 ESF2.201 launched four tenders under its main training component, for which over €1.5m were budgeted. No bids were received for two of them, while another one received one non-compliant bid. This raised a point of concern, as it was evident that the consolidated procurement process adopted was not suitable for the relatively fragmented market of trainers in the fields required (mostly numeracy, clerical, trade, ICT-related). In the light of the experience under the ESF2.4 project where the short-course training components resulted in a cumbersome 138-tender process (resulting in 700 different contracts), the Beneficiary had opted to gather training courses in similar fields under fourteen tenders to be published by the Department of Contracts. This proved to be an inadequate procurement procedure for the trainer supply market. Considering that another nine tenders were in the pipeline and the tight implementation timeframes on the project, the Beneficiary (together with the MA and relevant stakeholders) started to re-think the system, opting to proceed with the part-time recruitment option.

The Malta Film Commission (MFC), on the other hand, published five tenders through the Department of Contracts, all of which were unsuccessful, mainly because the bidders did not meet the necessary accreditation required of the courses on offer. By the end of the year, it was decided that the tenders would be republished under fourteen separate headings, one for each training course, while MFC will be providing a consultative role to the National Council for Higher Education (NCFHE) to accredit courses. ESF2.141 also experienced problems in procuring the services of mentors and trainers, as there was

very low response to a call published in 2013. This was mitigated by recruiting internal resources within the Institute of Tourism Studies and training will now be held in Q2-2014.

*iv. Low supply of trainers*

As already mentioned, ESF2.201 and ESF2.141 found difficulty in attracting appropriate training resources. Similarly, a shortage of supply of trainers under the pharmaceuticals, plastics and printing sectors under ESF2.85 was experienced. While the former two were adequately served by a limited number of trainers during 2013, the same could not be said of the printing sector. This also affected the train-the-trainers component under the project, where the Beneficiary could not find suitably experienced individuals to be trained and then deliver the content to the printing sector. The Beneficiary is constantly on the lookout for trainers in this field.

### **3.3 Priority Axis 3 – Promoting an Equal and Inclusive Labour Market**

#### ***3.3.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress***

The objective of Priority Axis 3 is to address the labour market gaps for specific vulnerable groups that are currently experiencing various barriers to participate fully in the economy, particularly in employment, including those created by gender inequalities and wider inequalities. Whilst it is clear that the ESF OP is geared towards the creation of more and better jobs, this Axis places its focus on specialised measures which aim at the integration, retention and progression of disadvantaged groups together with the promotion and enhancement of female participation in the labour market. Intrinsicly, this Axis finances actions which help low-income individuals and vulnerable families' access pathways to economic mobility, well-being, healthy development and a high quality of life. This is especially valid when employment is contextualised against the challenges which vulnerable groups are currently facing, due mostly to financial and economic difficulties. Additionally, the fact that Malta's sole natural resource is that of its capacity of the workforce, it is crucial to carry out actions which can widen an improvement in the standard of living across all society as well as to maximise people's potential in contributing towards economic growth. In this regard, this Axis is devoted to combat social exclusion. Social exclusion arises when for a variety of reasons: an individual, or a group, faces difficulties or discrimination in some aspects of their everyday lives. As a consequence to the broad barriers, the target group of this Axis is particularly wide varying from persons with specific physical and intellectual disabilities, individuals suffering from mental health problems, the inactive, youths, the long-term unemployed, ex-offenders as well as parents and educators. Gender inequality and the improvement of Malta's position with regards its female participation in the labour market is also tackled specifically through Priority Axis 3 projects.

As at the end of 2013, there were twenty-three (23) mainstream projects and one Aid Scheme (under Article 107 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) under implementation addressing

one or more of the focus area of intervention under the Axis. By December 2013, out of twenty-three (23), a total of fourteen (14)<sup>116</sup> projects were either closed or had completed their implementation on the ground by December 2012. ESF3.107 and ESF3.112, which were approved under Call IX, subsequently withdrew their interest to pursue their activities within the first quarter of 2013.

The twenty-three (23) mainstream projects approved under PA 3 include also the two (2) projects approved under Call 9<sup>117</sup> and two (2) newly approved projects under PA 3 following a call that was published in Quarter 2 2013 and approved in Quarter 3 of 2013 worth €5.2m.

The newly approved projects reflect two crucial initiatives which reflect the government's current priorities: that of identifying innovative ways leading to social reform and in offering a Youth Guarantee to youths not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

Following the Council Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee, adopted in April 2013, asking Member States to 'ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education' the Government embarked on formulating a Youth Guarantee Plan partly financed by the ESF. Although Malta's NEETs rate is low compared at EU level, one must consider that about half of these are already on long-term benefits and that 67.6% of NEETs have a level-of education that is lower than secondary schooling. In conjunction with having one of the highest early school leaving rates, the government recognises that this has a dramatic impact on young people in terms of their autonomy, well-being and levels of social inclusion and thus placed the objective of youth employment high in its agenda. In this regard, ESF3.231 seeks to engage 350 NEETs into a programme of profiling and familiarisation and personalised support leading to motivational and behavioural training and communication skills. In addition, the project, mainly through its partners, also envisages the creation of a tailor-made and apposite guidance on employment. In fact, the Employment Training Corporation, which is the government entity responsible for employment as well as training, together with representatives of Trade Unions and the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development will be able to meet the participants and provide information and training on their rights and obligations at work. Once this initial common tuition is undertaken, the project participants will choose to either carry out an experience at work or else go for further training. Since this project is part of a more holistic plan, a qualitative assessment of the Youth Guarantee Initiative will be carried out by experts in order to identify the main areas of improvement for future developments in this area.

Faced with significant changes in the economic and social landscape of Malta, as well as the need to maintain employment and limit the increase in social disparities and exclusion, the government is intent on adopting innovative ways which would lead to a structural social reform. Worth a total of €3 million, ESF3.234 aims at combating social exclusion and poverty through a number of interventions which include the development of a cluster based network system at both regional and local levels to foster

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<sup>116</sup> The projects which are closed are (ESF3.42, ESF3.43, ESF3.56 and ESF3.71), whilst 10 projects concluded their activities in 2012 but still had payments to be processed and certified in 2013 and 2014 (ESF3.47, ESF3.48, ESF3.49, ESF3.52, ESF3.54, ESF3.60, ESF3.61, ESF3.62 and ESF3.66). The two projects which were withdrawn during 2013 were ESF3.107 and ESF3.112. The newly approved projects are ESF3.231 and ESF3.234.

<sup>117</sup> ESF3.193 and ESF3.196 approved under Call 9, which was launched and evaluated in the last quarter of 2012.



social cohesion and mobility in various vulnerable localities. The project also has a strong transnational element, through which identification of European best practices will be sought. A specific activity of the project is that offering traineeships within NGOs and government entities for vulnerable persons, thus giving them the initial platform for integration within the labour market. Recognising the importance of social NGO's in providing professional social services together with the social workers, the project also foresees capacity building activities in order to enhance and improve service delivery. In addition the project includes the development of a national strategy on anti-poverty together with a consolidated national database for persons suffering from disability.

Further to the newly approved projects, seven (7) projects were in full swing carrying out their respective proposed activities. In most instances, the major procurement of services linked to the initiatives of the projects have been successfully completed, leading to the effective contracting for the commencing of the services required. As a result, activities carried out under Priority Axis 3 concerned the updating of curricula for vulnerable groups, capacity building to professionals working with challenging behaviour, assistance and support to young vulnerable women, research on gender quotas and the mentoring of females as well as research studies on the skilling on inmates and support to the disabled.

As highlighted in Chapter two (2) of this report, the awareness of the EAP benefits for the industry and the integration of disadvantaged individuals and persons with disabilities, continued to give positive results in 2013.

The committed amount under this Priority Axis up to the end of 2013 totalled €37,466,955, or 102% of the total PA allocation (including a slight over-commitment). The 13% increase in commitments over the 2012 allocation is due to the commitment of €682,692 for ESF3.193 and ESF3.196 approved under Call IX, €5.2 million towards ESF3.231 and ESF3.234, approved under Call XII as well as the commitment of €1.96 million allocated to the EAP Aid Scheme as MC approval dated the 4th October 2013. The amount contracted at the end of 2013 reached €25,402,671 under this Axis representing 69% of the overall allocation. Axis 3 registered the second highest level of expenditure in comparison with the other PAs, with a total of €17,895,997 paid by year end, representing 70% of the contracted amount and 48% over the overall OP allocation.

### 3.3.2 Information on the physical and financial progress

#### a) Analysis of Indicators

Table 24 - Priority Axis 3 Indicators (Output and Result Indicators)

| Priority Axis 3 – Promoting an equal and inclusive labour market |  |  |   | 2007        | 2008 | 2009 | 2010                | 2011                | 2012                | 2013 | Total |     |
|--|--|--|---|-------------|------|------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------|-------|-----|
| Output   | A  | Indicator 1: Number of actions supporting a lifecycle approach to work   | Achievement   | 0           | 0    | 0    | 0                   | 1                   | 2                   | 0    | 3     |     |
|  |  |  | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | 10    |     |
|  |  |  | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | n/a   |     |
|  |  | Indicator 2: Number of women trained/supported   | Achievement   | 0           | 0    | 23   | 275                 | 374                 | 253                 | 67   | 992   |     |
|  |  |  | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | 2,000 |     |
|  |  |  | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | n/a   |     |
|  |  | Indicator 3: Number of families benefiting from childcare  | Achievement   | 0           | 0    | 0    | 0                   | 0                   | 0                   | 0    | 0     |     |
|  |  |  | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | 1,600 |     |
|  |  |  | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | n/a   |     |
|  | B  | Indicator 4: Number of vulnerable persons trained/supported  | Achievement   | 0           | 0    | 504  | 3498 <sup>118</sup> | 4311 <sup>119</sup> | 1651 <sup>120</sup> | 86   | 10050 |     |
|  |  |  | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | 6,500 |     |
|  |  |  | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | n/a   |     |
|  |  | Indicator 5: Number of persons trained in capacity building courses  | Achievement   | 0           | 0    | 22   | 258                 | 30                  | 61                  | 346  | 717   |     |
|  |  |  | Target  | n/a         | 0    | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | 600   |     |
|  |  |  | Baseline  | n/a         | 0    | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | n/a   |     |
|  |  | Indicator 6: Number of studies, actions, campaigns, research activities carried out                                    | Achievement   | 0           | 0    | 0    | 4                   | 9                   | 1                   | 3    | 17    |     |
|  |  |  | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | 10    |     |
|  |  |  | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | n/a   |     |
| Indicator 7: Number of civil society projects                    |  | Achievement  | 0   | 0           | 2    | 0    | 1                   | 1                   | 0                   | 4    |       |     |
|  |  | Target   | n/a   | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | 50   |       |     |
|  |  | Baseline   | n/a   | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  |       |     |
| Results  |  | A  | Indicator 1: % of participants in employment or further study 6 months after receiving assistance | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 0%                  | 0%                  | 15%                 | 40%  | 37%   | 37% |
|  |  |  |   | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | n/a   | 20% |
|  |  |  |   | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | na                  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a |
|  | Indicator 2: % of participants gaining a qualification/certification |  | Achievement   | 0%          | 0%   | 0%   | 75%                 | 61%                 | 50%                 | 47%  | 45%   |     |
|  |  |  | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | 50%   |     |
|  |  |  | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | n/a   |     |
|  | B  | Indicator 3: % of vulnerable persons in employment or further study 6 months after receiving assistance <sup>121</sup> | Achievement   | 0%          | 0%   | 0%   | 13%                 | 41%                 | 70%                 | 76%  | 76%   |     |
|  |  |  | Target  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | 20%   |     |
|  |  |  | Baseline  | n/a         | n/a  | n/a  | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a                 | n/a  | n/a   |     |

<sup>118</sup> In AIR 2012, this was reported as 3,509. However, due to de-committment under ESF3.64, this figure has been updated to 3,498.

<sup>119</sup> In AIR 2012, this was reported as 4,372. However, due to de-committment under ESF3.64, this figure has been updated to 4,311.

<sup>120</sup> In AIR 2012, this was reported as 1,725. However, due to de-committment under ESF3.64, this figure has been updated to 1651.

<sup>121</sup> Achievements under ESF 3.64 were revised for all years given that data on results are affected from de-committment and other criteria determining termination of contracts.

|  |   |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                    |
|--|---|-------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|
|  | Indicator 4: % of participants in capacity building gaining a qualification/certification | Achievement | 0%  | 0%  | 0%  | 81% | 83% | 69% | 36% | 37% <sup>122</sup> |
|  |   | Target      | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 80%                |
|  |   | Baseline    | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a                |

The progress in terms of indicators have been marginal during the year under review, mostly because a substantial number of projects completed their activities in the previous year, and the rest of the approved projects were at the starting phases of the implementation of their actions in the year under review.

## b) Data on Participants

The table below depicts the physical progress under Axis 3 in 2013, in accordance with the Commission Regulation 1812/2006 Annex XXIII.

Table 25 - Data on Participants Priority Axis 3

| TOTALS<br>PA 3 2013         |   | People Entering |       | People Leaving |       |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------|-------|----------------|-------|
|                             |   | Total           | Women | Total          | Women |
| Status in the Labour Market | Total Number of participants (Employed+Unemployed+Inactive) | 418             | 263   | 801            | 393   |
|                             | Employed  | 321             | 178   | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Self Employed   | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Unemployed  | 18              | 11    | 127            | 39    |
|                             | Long Term Unemployed  | 5               | 3     | 31             | 11    |
|                             | Inactive  | 79              | 74    | 674            | 354   |
|                             | Inactive in Education and Training                          | 74              | 70    | 70             | 68    |
| Age                         | Young People (15-24 years)                                  | 134             | 123   | 485            | 255   |
|                             | Older Workers (55-64 years)                                 | 129             | 69    | 45             | 13    |
| Vulnerable Groups           | Minorities  | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Migrants  | 1               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Disabled  | 12              | 4     | 71             | 17    |
|                             | Other Disadvantaged People                                  | 18              | 14    | 663            | 309   |
| Education Attainment        | Primary or Lower secondary education (ISCED 1 & 2)          | 92              | 85    | 483            | 229   |
|                             | Upper Secondary education (ISCED 3)                         | 35              | 20    | 128            | 61    |
|                             | Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 3)             | 41              | 17    | 32             | 19    |
|                             | Tertiary Education (ISCED 5 & 6)                            | 250             | 141   | 158            | 84    |

<sup>122</sup> The percentages do not reflect the actual results achieved, some of the training initiatives are still ongoing. Achievement will be reported on once the training is complete.

On a general note, the number of participants in training decreased during 2013 (from 2121 participants in the previous year to 418 participants), particularly due to the transitional period of the axis.

c) Financial Progress

**Table 26 - Financial Progress Priority Axis 3**

| Priority axis  | A<br>Total contribution | Financial progress |                 |               |            |            |            |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
|  |                         | B<br>Commitments   | C<br>Contracted | D<br>Payments | (B/A)<br>% | (C/A)<br>% | (D/A)<br>% |
| Priority Axis 3<br><i>Promoting an Equal and Inclusive Labour Market</i> | €36,900,000.00          | €37,466,955        | €25,402,671     | €17,895,997   | 102%       | 69%        | 48%        |

### 3.3.3 Qualitative Analysis

Following an intense period of contracting in 2012, during the year under review, contracting under the PA registered a moderate increase of 29% in contracting over the previous year<sup>123</sup>. A major contributing factor to the increase in contracting is the successful award and contracting of a tender worth €4.2 million under ESF3.102.<sup>124</sup> The gap between the commitment and the contracting is expected to be narrowed with the progress in implementation of ESF3.231 and ESF3.234 as well as the commitment of the additional funds allocated in 2013 under the EAP for the Gozo component.

Since a good number of projects have commenced, continued or finalised their respective initiatives, progress on mainstream projects as well as the Aid Scheme was recorded in both the number of females integrated in the labour market as well as the inclusion of vulnerable groups in training initiatives or employment.

In order to partially address the low female participation rate in the labour market, a project approved in 2012, ESF3.196<sup>125</sup> aims at creating gender balance in decision making processes. The project activities were launched in 2013 through a national half-day conference attended by 75 participants. In order to

<sup>123</sup> The total contracted amount as at end of 2012 was €19,646,876 whilst the contracted amount as at the end of 2011 was €14,752,054, thus representing a 33% increase.

<sup>124</sup> This tender is towards the services of experts to design syllabi, teaching and learning resources and the production of course resource packs under ESF3.102 – 'Inclusion for Employment'.

<sup>125</sup> ESF3.196, 'Gender-Balance in Decision-Making', implemented by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality.

obtain formal qualitative and quantitative data on the contribution of females in decision-making processes, both at political level as well as in the private sector, the Beneficiary initiated discussions with the National Statistics Office whereby, a research study was launched. As a result of a tender for the qualitative aspect, the project will provide comprehensive research tools to the NSO which will be then analysed in a way that policy recommendations incorporating an action plan delineating what and how gender-balanced representation in decisions-making can be achieved in Malta. Another activity that is included in the project is a Mentoring Programme. The programme will be implemented with the view of mentoring women aspiring to hold decision-making positions by persons who occupy high-level jobs. This programme will see women occupying high-level positions, both in the private and public sector through the offer of job-shadowing opportunities within a field of interest of the mentee's choice. After the initial awareness campaign and selection, the activity will start in 2014.

Young women were also targeted through a project whose activities are being carried out in Gozo. ESF3.108 aims at combating exclusion of young women perpetrated either due to teenage pregnancies or the lack of an adequate educational attainment. Specialised support and assistance has been devised, both for them and their families. The aim of this type of support is to make them aware of what they can do in order to overcome their challenges together with showing them the opportunities in terms of training and employment in which they can potentially participate. Discussions were held for a total of four hundred and sixty-eight (468) students. A total of twenty-four (24) talks for parents were held, and a total of seventeen (17) workshops were led by different professionals such as psychologists and therapists, and during which one-hundred and sixty two (162) young women participated, focused on the importance of making informed decisions on sexual health, personal and professional relationships as well as on issues concerning boundaries and relationships. Through these meetings, hundred and thirteen (113) women who proved to be particularly vulnerable were then referred for one-to-one support by the same professionals. A more structured training was also offered throughout 2013 in areas which could lead to eventual employment or even entrepreneurship. Training Programmes were offered in beauty care, hairdressing and crafts, where a total of fifty-two (52) students participated. An accredited training course was also delivered in ICT. By the end of 2013, fifteen (15) young women underwent training, of which three (3) obtained an overall diploma in computing (Level 3), and the remaining eleven (11) obtained individual certificates at Level 3 in different modules, thus making them more employable. Following these studies, the students have been fully integrated within mainstream education and are currently following courses at MCAST.

An integral focus of this Axis is that of assisting disadvantaged groups, both adults who are marginalised from the labour market because of their social-economic status, as well as youths who because of their disabilities cannot contribute positively in the place of work or cannot pursue training which could enhance their skills and chances of finding remunerated work. It is widely recognised that a disabled person as an individual has substantially reduced prospects of securing, retaining and advancing in suitable employment as a result of a recognised physical or mental impairment. In this regard, eight (8) young disabled participants were integrated or brought closer to the labour market through direct assessments and support services that include Learning Support Assistance for those who are enrolled

in a training course and Job Coaching and Personal Assistance allowance to employers during work exposure or actual employment. These type of activities underlined that disabled persons apart from being provided with holistic training that includes work-specific tasks as well as personal development also need specialised guidance within a sheltered employment environment, in order to ensure the possibility that long employability is enhanced.

Conscious of this fact, during 2013, ETC proposed that these services are amplified to a more structured activity for the fostering of skills and potential of young disabled persons. This is to be achieved by teaching independent living skills, social skills and employability skills based on a one-to-one approach. Ultimately, the aim is to create a direct link between the participants receiving assistance with prospective or current employer, thus facilitating their recruitment and retention in the labour market. A formal request to merge the two projects and to create sheltered employment for those that are not capable of retaining their own employment without the adequate support was sent to the MA on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2013.<sup>126</sup>

Meanwhile, it is believed and evidenced, that investment in youths is crucial for economic growth. This is particularly so especially in cases of vulnerable students who because of learning difficulties are proving to be a barrier for the continuation of their studies, even at a basic level. Therefore, MCAST is carrying out a series of actions, which aim at providing a reform in the way which its basic level of tuition is delivered.<sup>127</sup> This restructuring is based on an audit finalised in 2013 upon which curriculum and training experts are identifying new and innovative methodologies on schooling, resources and aids for learning with the aim of making them more appropriate for the targeted cohort. Investment is also being directed to the capacity building of all the staff of the institutes in order to better equip them with the specialised skills required to deal and to assist the disabled and challenged students in their respective classes. During 2013, a total of hundred fifty-four (154) members of staff and tutors have attended training delivered by the project partners.<sup>128</sup>

With more people enduring mental health problems as well as with learning disabilities, employers and social professionals working with people with challenging behaviour need to be well trained and supported in order to ensure the best possible outcomes for the people they support. In this regard, as a result of a study carried out in 2012 highlighting the need for training for professionals dealing with persons with challenging behaviour, a tailored made NQF Level 6 training reflecting the needs of the disabled persons concerned and staff working with them was launched. As a result, in 2013, sixty-nine (69) professionals have undergone training in understanding what elements triggers challenging behaviour and how to deal with them; to provide alternate means of communication and self-expression to prevent future occurrences of challenging behaviour; to establish a trustful relationship with the families and primary caregivers of each disabled person; and to develop a person centred plan for each disabled person which is oriented towards community inclusion, especially engaging in lifelong education and employment. As part of the hands-on training component of the course, this multi-disciplinary programme also involved 16 professionals taking part in three study visits to centres in the United

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<sup>126</sup> ESF3.113, Employment Support for Persons with Disabilities, implemented by ETC.

<sup>127</sup> ESF3.102, 'Promoting an equal and inclusive labour market', implemented by MCAST.

<sup>128</sup> The project partners of ESF3.102 are KNPD.

Kingdom where disabled persons with challenging behaviour receive support.<sup>129</sup> The issue of the integration in the labour market of persons suffering from mental health difficulties is being dealt with through the activities of ESF3.193. This project aims at raising awareness on mental health issue in the workplace by investing in actions that focus on employers and employees in a leading position to equip them with the necessary tools to increase their knowledge on mental health problems within the work environment. A preliminary research carried out in 2013 identified the mental health policies, if any, which have been included in enterprises whereby it was found that 76.3% of the businesses are not even aware that there can be mental health policies in place, even though the majority of respondents agreed that its existence can improve considerably mental well-being in the workplace. On the strength of these findings, the project has designed and implemented an awareness campaign encouraging business to participate in initiatives and training that are conducive to better mental health in the workplace. In order to substantiate the publicity, management tools and guidelines for enterprises targeting the training of key personnel on how to formulate and implement effective mental health strategies were developed in order to be used in training planned for early 2014.

The EAP Aid Scheme (ESF3.64) continues to be crucial both in terms of the integration of vulnerable disadvantaged individuals within the labour force as well as in reaching the PA 3 financial and physical indicator targets. In this regard, the *Employment Aid Programme* received additional financial assistance in 2013, for the benefit of Gozo. The additional €1.96 Million were given to the Intermediate Body following a justified request identifying the need for further investment in Gozo (in terms of employment). The additional Gozo component was launched in October 2013 and aims to assist seven groups of disadvantaged persons as defined in the regulation. This was a success, as the IB received more than 400 applications by the end of the year, for individuals who are expected to be employed for at least one year with their respective enterprise. Activity within the EAP scheme during 2013 was not restricted to this new initiative though. As mentioned in the previous chapter, EAP – together with the other scheme, TAF – contributed heavily towards the achievement of the N+3/2 targets of the OP, with €5.79m being certified during the year under review under this EAP scheme. This reflects concerted efforts by the IB to enhance the processing of payment claims and the corresponding management verifications. Cumulatively, the number of vulnerable persons receiving EAP assistance stood at 2540, out of which 1866 were still in employment after six months. These figures are expected to increase in 2014.

Despite the progress indicated was at a slower pace than the previous years, the project activities as described above have fed effectively into their respective indicators. In fact, the output indicators 2, 4, 5, and 6 registered an increase, albeit at a less rate than in previous years. A positive advancement has been recorded in terms of Output Indicator 5 whereby 48% of the total achievement has been accomplished during 2013, resulting in an overachievement of the target forecasted under the OP. Progress is being registered on the indicators linked to vulnerable persons, both in terms of participation (Output Indicator 4) and in terms of retention in employment or participation in further education (Result Indicator 3), especially in view of the high level success reached by EAP. As forecasted in the previous

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<sup>129</sup> ESF3.105, 'Promoting the Social Inclusion of Disabled Persons', implemented by KNPD.

years, the result indicator of the percentage of vulnerable persons in employment or further study 6 months after receiving assistance exceeded successfully the OP target.

The overachievement which is being registered within the output indicators is in part the result of lower cost associated to the services needed to achieved planned result, lower that originally forecasted. The increased EAP allocation has also impacted on the relevant indicator.<sup>130</sup>

Considering that the indicator related to the support and training of females is only directly addressed by four (4) projects<sup>131</sup>, limited progress has still been achieved in 2013 through the training offered in Gozo under ESF3.108. Despite the year on year increase noted for this indicator and the various efforts to prioritise projects proposals that address increased female participation it is evident that reaching the target is a challenge. Similarly, the indicator supporting a lifecycle approach to work generated little interest from project proponents. Following a long, nation-wide and intensive campaign on the promotion of work/life balance, government felt the need to shift its investment towards actions related to social inclusion on a general scale, especially in view of the economic crises.<sup>132</sup> Females have been assisted across the whole Axis though, thus bringing women closer to the labour market and training opportunities and addressing the aims of this indicator, indirectly. Additionally, it must be highlighted that ESF3.196, which includes mentoring initiatives to women has already generated a very satisfactory interest and it is envisaged that this project will contribute positively in 2014 towards the achievement of this target.

On the other hand, a further three-hundred forty-six (346) professionals working in the social and vocational sector have commenced training during 2013, contributing to the output indicator *number of persons trained in capacity building courses* and surpassing the OPII target. During recent years, it was noted that social professionals showed increased interest in pursuing training and studies in order to broaden their knowledge on how deal with different vulnerable groups and in other circumstances, the need was felt to specialise in dealing with a certain cohort of disadvantaged, for example individuals suffering from challenging behaviour. Its linked result indicator did not register any improvement predominantly because the training of the professionals involved is still undergoing and completion and certification will take place in 2014.<sup>133</sup> Consequently, it is forecasted that the result indicator *persons trained in capacity building courses* will report an achievement in 2014.

Over-achievement is also been recorded with regards the output indicator *number of studies, actions, campaigns, research activities carried out*. During the implementation of PA3 projects, it became evident that qualitative and quantitative research and studies, taking into consideration the Maltese socio-economic context were lacking on various areas within the social field, ranging from gender and equality related themes as well as the identification of skills needed for vulnerable individuals and linked professionals. This reflects the high interest generated by project proponents to carry out such studies both in order to ensure that the activities proposed are in line to what is really required as well as to carry out evaluation exercises to see their effectiveness and sustainability.

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<sup>130</sup> Over achievements throughout the years were registered under ESF3.62, ESF3.61, ESF3.64, ESF3.60, ESF3.66. and ESF3.49

<sup>131</sup> ESF 3.48; ESF 3.54; ESF 3.107 and 3.108

<sup>132</sup> Nista' campaign, funded through ESF3.59

<sup>133</sup> Projects contributing towards this indicator are ESF3.102, ESF3.105 and ESF3.193.



As was indicated in previous reporting period, with regards to the output indicator *number of families supporting benefiting from childcare*, no achievement has been registered to date as no project selected under this axis is contributing to this indicator. It is positive to report that this indicator is now being addressed through an initiative which is now being supported through national funds.

The MA continues to experience challenges in involving stakeholders from Civil Society to partake fully from the funds available under this Axis. To date, only four (4) projects are being implemented primarily by NGOs. However, NGOs tend to be involved as partners; in fact NGOs are involved in a further ten (10) projects, including the Aid Scheme as partners.<sup>134</sup>

Following the approval of a further €1.96 million under the EAP as well as the approval under Call IX and Call XII of 4 projects, worth together in excess of €5.9m the Axis is now fully committed.<sup>135</sup> Contracting has also continued to increase in 2013, reaching 69% of the allocated amount representing an increase of 29% (€5,755,795) over the cumulative contracting as at 2012<sup>136</sup>. Substantial activity was recorded under one (1) project which finalised the evaluation process of a DoC tender and signed the respective contract.<sup>137</sup> It is also expected that major contracting will take place in 2014, which would inherently mean that the level of payments will continue to increase with the same rhythm as in the year under review.

Noteworthy improvement has also been registered in terms of payments. As at the end of 2013, payments amounted to €17,895,997 representing 48% of the committed amount and 49% of the total PA allocation. The amount paid in 2013 has in actual fact almost doubled over the payments processed in 2012.<sup>138</sup> Whilst disbursement remains low compared to the PA allocation, the increase in payments have invariably proven that the MA's and stakeholders efforts to coordinate better the whole process and address the identified bottlenecks identified under the EAP gave positive outcomes. In fact EAP paid €5.5m in 2013. In 2013, management verification by the MA amounted to €9,386,573<sup>139</sup> out of which €8,787,169 were proposed for certification and €8,745,314<sup>140</sup> were eventually certified by the CA within the same year (2013) and bringing the total certified amounts under the Priority Axis up to €16,204,269.

As explained in detail in the previous sections, all the initiatives financed under the auspices of PA 3 target in essence disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including actions related to gender, migrants, transnational and innovative activities. Detailed review of OPII continuation to Article 10 is included in Chapter 2.

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<sup>134</sup> Social partners assisted in the dissemination of information on the Scheme.

<sup>135</sup> The budget allocated to the Aid Scheme has been increased from €8.2million to €12.2 million; Call IX was launched and evaluated in 2012. The projects approved under this Call were ESF3.193 and ESF3.196, for a total public eligible cost of €717,086.

<sup>136</sup> The total contracted amount as at the end of 2013 is €25,402,671, the total contracted amount as at the end of 2012 was €19,646,876.

<sup>137</sup> CT3041 – Services of Experts to design syllabi, teaching and learning resources, production of course packs., which was launched under ESF 3.102 with a total value of €5,059,250 in 2012.

<sup>138</sup> The total amount paid up to December 2012 was that of €9,949,209.

<sup>139</sup> This includes the amount on which the MA was waiting for clarifications from Beneficiaries.

<sup>140</sup> The remaining amount was certified in 2013.

### ***3.3.4 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them***

The implementation challenges in this Axis are more or less similar to those which have been identified under the other Priority Axes. In addition no problems arose from the procedure laid out in Article 62(1) (d) (i) of Regulation (EC) NO 1083/2006.

#### *i. Fragmentation of project components, commitments and payments*

Projects and initiatives funded under this Axis, particularly those approved in the early stages of the programme were designed with a lot of fragmentation both at component level as well as commitment levels resulting in fragmented payments. This has invariably posed a serious burden on the MA during the verification processes. In order to mitigate the impact of fragmented payments, for the new projects the MA actively guides beneficiaries to consolidate actions and contracts (as much as possible).

In addition to mitigate the impact of delayed verification from the point of view of the MA, the MA embarked on an exercise to identify sampling mechanisms which on the one hand would give and portray all the assurances required to verify payments whilst on the other reducing the burden of checking multiple invoices under the same contracts. This facilitated the verification process.

#### *ii. Difficulties found in procurement processes and the supply of professionals in the social field.*

In terms of procurement, recruiting suitably qualified professionals who work in the social field continued to be a challenge and the supply is limited, and those who are of the right calibre in terms of qualifications are already employed in the Public Sector. After exploring different ways of procurement with the assistance and approval of the DoC, suitable candidates were found to fill in the required posts.

#### *iii. Challenges pertaining to specific cohorts*

Of particularity relevance to this Axis is the different cohorts the Axis addresses, namely those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. As can be expected, these target groups are more volatile and require constant effort and motivation in order to pursue training and support. Project beneficiaries noted that sometimes it is even difficult to obtain information to fulfil the Annex XXIII Data obligations, with the result that relevant documentation remains incomplete or absent. The MA acknowledges the constant monitoring and efforts needed by Beneficiaries who often go out of their way in order to help and assist challenged individuals especially in order to help them retain their attendance in training and employment. Where possible, the MA therefore tried to identify new means through which data to verify results, can be easily obtained, for example by searching national databases and building positive working relationships with the Social Security Department and the National Statistics Office.

## 3.4 Priority Axis 4 – Strengthening of institutional and administrative capacity

### 3.4.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

During the year under review, implementation of projects under Priority Axis 4 (PA4) continued with the momentum gained in previous years aiming to invest in human resources development and mechanisms in order to strengthen institutional capacity and efficiency of public administrations and social partners. In 2013, seven (7) new projects<sup>141</sup> were approved under two separate selection processes<sup>142</sup>. During the same year three projects concluded their activities<sup>143</sup>.

Following the call for project proposals which closed in December 2012, a total of ten (10) projects were received amounting to €5.3M, out of which five (5) projects were selected for funding with one being withdrawn prior to the signing of the Grant Agreement because of issues faced in the implementation of the proposed project. A second selection process took place in the second half of the year under review following a call for project proposals which closed in October. Out of the three projects submitted, amounting to €2.1M, one (1) was selected. The total public eligible value of the five (5) approved projects in 2013 amounted to €4,769,335, representing 27.7% of the total budget allocated under this Axis<sup>144</sup> and 3.6% of the total allocation of the OP. The newly approved projects target a wide range of public officials working in sectors such as Transport, Sports and EU Affairs.

One (1)<sup>145</sup> of the five (5) approved projects aims to invest in the human capital of Transport Malta Authority (TM) so as to address the competitiveness and challenges in sectors which include civil aviation, marine, land transport, roads and infrastructure, ports and yachting, enforcement and integrated transport systems. Another project<sup>146</sup> targets public service sports administrators with the aim to equip them with a skills-set for optimal administration of publicly-funded sports resources, train them in meeting good governance requirements and in developing competencies to operate within EU fora effectively. Through this project the Malta Sports Council's (KMS) institutional and administrative capacity will be strengthened to support local sports from grassroots to elite level, as a means of promoting social cohesion. A third approved project<sup>147</sup> submitted by the Ministry for European Affairs and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto (MEAIM) is aimed at further strengthening the administrative capacity of the Public Administration in general to continue to reap the full benefits and meet Government obligations emanating from EU membership. The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE)

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<sup>141</sup> Projects approved in 2013: ESF4.216 'SUCCESS-Capacity Building Programme for Public Service Sports Administrator', amounting to €691,760; ESF4.218 'Capacity Building for Transport Malta Employees' amounting to €1,808,658; ESF4.220 'Developing a Culture of Rights through Capacity Building' amounting to €324,578; ESF4.221 'Voice of the Workers' amounting to €337,735; ESF4.222 'Introducing a competence Assessment Framework for Health Care Professionals' which was eventually withdrawn and ESF4.236 'Strengthening the administrative capacity to reap the full benefits of EU membership' amounting to €1,606,603.

<sup>142</sup> Call 11 closed on 14th December 2012 and Call 13 closed on 18th October 2013.

<sup>143</sup> ESF4.87, ESF4.98 and ESF4.152

<sup>144</sup> Total allocation under PA4 is €17,199,118.

<sup>145</sup> ESF4.218

<sup>146</sup> ESF4.216

<sup>147</sup> ESF4.236

through its newly approved project<sup>148</sup> will not only train its staff and members but also targets other public administration officials in clerical grades and Local Councils, tele-managers as well as staff of NGOs and Social Partners aiming to extend their level of knowledge on equality and non-discrimination. The internal training aims to train NCPE's staff on discrimination grounds that were not previously within the Commission's remit such as age, sexual orientation, religion or belief and gender identity. The fifth project approved during the year under review submitted by a prominent trade union, namely Union Haddiema Maghqudin, aims to improve knowledge and skills of workers on family-friendly measures and on the skills needed to constructively engage in social dialogue. It also aims to facilitate workers' participation in effective partnerships through training and the development of web-based services. The activities, which target the participation of at least 300 workers, also include the setting up of a web portal which would allow accessibility to relevant information related to social dialogue (the activities include a digital weekly magazine focusing on social dialogue issues of relevance at that particular point in time).

The projects approved in 2013 brought the total number of projects under Priority Axis 4 to twenty (20)<sup>149</sup>, three (3) of which aimed at the strengthening of partnership between socioeconomic experts addressing Operational Objective B *to contribute towards the development of effective partnerships in a wide range of policy areas*, whilst the rest of the projects (17) addressing Operational Objective A with the aim *to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector*.

It is worth noting that during the year under review projects under this Axis were at different stages of implementation. Whilst some of projects approved in 2009 started to close off their activities, others approved<sup>150</sup> during the same year requested to extend<sup>151</sup> the project timeframe in view of the positive take-up and the need to implement additional activities. Projects approved during consecutive years showed significant progress in the implementation of their activities providing training opportunities to a variety of individuals during the year under review. Out of the three (3) projects approved in 2011, one (1) closed off its activities in 2013 whilst the other two (2) were at an advanced stage in their implementation. The same can be said with a significant number of projects approved in 2012, which although faced with a number of challenges during their procurement processes, started off with the implementation of activities in 2013.

The total amount committed under this Axis amounted to €15,184,769 representing 88% of the total amount allocated under PA 4, of which 47% had been contracted. During the year under review, although still not at the desirable rate, the payments made under this Axis kept the same momentum obtained in 2012 with 122%<sup>151</sup> increase over the previous year, amounting to €2.2M in 2013<sup>152</sup>.

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<sup>148</sup> ESF4.220

<sup>149</sup> Two projects were withdrawn, namely ESF4.167 and ESF4.182.

<sup>150</sup> ESF4.97 and ESF4.100

<sup>151</sup> Payments made in 2012 only amounted to €1,837,101.

<sup>152</sup> €2,244,801 to be precise.

### 3.4.2 Information on the physical and financial progress

#### a) Analysis of Indicators

Table 27 - Priority Axis 4 Indicators (Output and Result Indicators)

| Priority Axis 4 – Strengthening of institutional and administrative capacity |   |  |             | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011  | 2012  | 2013  | Total  |       |
|--|---|--|-------------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| Output   | A | Number of persons participating in training <sup>153</sup>   | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 3    | 226  | 2,286 | 8,436 | 7,094 | 18,045 |       |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 9,000 |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
|  |   | Number of studies/actions/campaigns/research activities carried out  | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 1     | 4     | 2     | 8      |       |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 30    |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
|  | B | Number of projects supporting partnership  | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 2    | 0    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 2      |       |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 7     |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
| Results  | A | % of participants gaining a qualification/certification <sup>154</sup>   | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 0%   | 22%  | 61%   | 86%   | 90%   | 90%    |       |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 80%   |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |
|  | B | % increase in the technical capacity (secretariat) at MCESD to support Council (and sub-committees) in reaching informed opinions in policy issues | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 0%   | 57%  | 0%    | 0%    | 0%    | 57%    |       |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | 50%   |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a    | n/a   |

Progress under Priority Axis 4 continued to be registered as reflected in the achievement of indicators. Ten (10)<sup>155</sup> out of the twenty (20) projects under this Axis contributed towards the achievement of the output indicator *Number of persons participating in training* during 2013. Significant progress was registered in the result indicator *% of participants gaining a qualification/certification* with more than 6,700 participants gaining certification in a variety of qualification levels.

It should be highlighted that in 2013 the output indicator *Number of projects supporting partnership* registered the achievement of one (1) project following the approval of ESF4.221 submitted by the Union Haddiema Maghqudin. During the same year no progress was registered under the indicator *Number of studies/actions/campaigns/research activities carried out* since the projects targeting this indicator are in the initial stages of implementation and measures contributing towards this indicator are still on-going<sup>156</sup>. It should be highlighted that despite the under achievement of these two (2) indicators, the indicator

<sup>153</sup> Output indicator was erroneously reported in previous years. This has been corrected.

<sup>154</sup> Result indicator from previous years has been corrected in line with the update on Output Indicator.

<sup>155</sup> ESF4.97, ESF4.98, ESF4.100, ESF4.152, ESF4.159, ESF4.163, ESF4.164, ESF4.174, ESF4.175, and ESF4.189

<sup>156</sup> Projects that will contribute towards the achievement of this indicator are ESF4.164, ESF4.174, ESF4.180, ESF4.181, ESF4.216, ESF4.221.

Number of persons participating in training was on the other hand overachieved, showing that the projects' focus was more targeted towards the training of public officials.

## b) Data on Participants

The table below depicts the physical progress under this Axis in accordance with Commission Regulation 1828/2006 Annex XXIII.

Table 28 - Data on Participants Priority Axis 4

| TOTALS<br>PA 4 2013         |   | People Entering |       | People Leaving |       |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------|-------|----------------|-------|
|                             |   | Total           | Women | Total          | Women |
| Status in the Labour Market | Total Number of participants (Employed+Unemployed+Inactive) | 7094            | 3458  | 7157           | 3486  |
|                             | Employed  | 7094            | 3458  | 7157           | 3486  |
|                             | Self Employed   | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Unemployed  | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Long Term Unemployed  | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Inactive  | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Inactive in Education and Training                          | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
| Age                         | Young People (15-24 years)                                  | 358             | 225   | 408            | 251   |
|                             | Older Workers (55-64 years)                                 | 770             | 259   | 781            | 263   |
| Vulnerable Groups           | Minorities  | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Migrants  | 5               | 2     | 5              | 2     |
|                             | Disabled  | 32              | 6     | 35             | 6     |
|                             | Other Disadvantaged People                                  | 78              | 25    | 78             | 25    |
| Education Attainment        | Primary or Lower secondary education (ISCED 1 & 2)          | 1299            | 503   | 1301           | 504   |
|                             | Upper Secondary education (ISCED 3)                         | 1324            | 689   | 1339           | 699   |
|                             | Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)             | 1207            | 624   | 1215           | 628   |
|                             | Tertiary Education (ISCED 5 & 6)                            | 3264            | 1642  | 3302           | 1655  |

As in the previous year, the significant progress recorded under this Axis in 2013 is mainly reflected through the number of participants benefitting from the training opportunities offered, which amounted to 7,094 out of which 49% were women.

c) Financial Progress

Table 29 - Financial Progress Priority Axis 4

| Priority Axis  | A<br>Total contribution | Financial progress |                 |               |            |            |            |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
|  |                         | B<br>Commitments   | C<br>Contracted | D<br>Payments | (B/A)<br>% | (C/A)<br>% | (D/A)<br>% |
| Priority Axis 4<br><i>Strengthening of Institutional and Administrative capacity</i> | 17,199,117              | 15,184,769.48      | 7,186,385.71    | 5,563,096.84  | 88%        | 42%        | 32%        |

### 3.4.3 Qualitative Analysis

During the course of 2013, projects approved in 2012 picked up and started achieving the desired results ensuring efficiency and effectiveness of the public service and the involvement of social partners for an effective social and civil dialogue in Malta. Projects approved at a later stage were mainly involved in procurement facing the expected challenges linked to procurement.

As already reported in the previous years, ESF4.100 continued to provide a wide range of training opportunities with the aim to enhance the productivity of the Public Service. In 2013, the total number of scholarships awarded to public service employees amounted to 113 bringing the total number of scholarships to 251. By the end of the year, 109 participants successfully completed their course, out of which 26 were awarded a Master's degree, 11 a Bachelor's Degree, 54 a Diploma and 18 a Certificate. As reported in the previous years predominant themes in which applicants applied for ESF support included studies on public policy and governance, business administration and human resources management as well as sustainable development. Following the launch of the short modular courses component in 2012, 2013 started reaping the results with 3,739 participants gaining a certification. The 3,849 participants of these short courses obtained skills in one or more of the eleven key areas<sup>157</sup> identified in the Public Service-wide Learning Needs Analysis held in 2010. In addition, the project also provided international opportunities to public officials through participation in a total of 50 training events held in

<sup>157</sup> The key areas are: Leadership & Strategic Thinking; Project Management & Evaluation; Information Management; Human Resources & General Management; Financial Management & Budgeting; Continuous Personal Development; EU Structures & Processes; Analysis & Use of Evidence; Governance, Strategy & Policy Development; Sustainable Development & Planning; Equality.

Malta<sup>158</sup> or abroad<sup>159</sup>. The predominant themes were financial management, public administration and EU administration and procedures. It should be noted that ESF4.100 was still the major contributor towards the output indicator *Number of persons participating in training* with a total of 4,200 public officials benefitting from different training opportunities in a number of key areas. As reflected in the previous year ESF4.97 was another high contributor towards this indicator registering a total of 2,567 participants in training and awareness sessions on a myriad of psycho-social/disability with the ultimate aim of strengthening their efficiency and effectiveness at the workplace. Other projects reporting achievements on this output indicator included ESF4.98 with 57 participants; ESF4.159 with 112 participants and ESF4.152 with 43 participants amongst others.

The enhancement of the health services through capacity building and research is also amongst the activities supported through Priority Axis 4. In fact the three (3) projects<sup>160</sup> approved in 2012 started off with their implementation during the year. ESF4.175 – Capacity Building for Medical Physics Services in Malta aims to develop staff expertise through post-graduate training at MSc in medical physics, specifically in Diagnostic and Interventional Radiology, Nuclear Medicine, or Radiation Oncology approved by the European Federation of Organisations for Medical Physics. The Master degree course is being offered by the University of Malta as partner in the project. In total six (6) students are benefitting from this opportunity whilst at the same time are engaged with the Ministry for Health as Medical Physics trainees. The participants are also involved in a two-year placement with the Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust. Another project which focuses on the health sector is ESF4.174 – Training Health Care Professionals for integrating acute and community care which identified the training required to address the gaps in the skills and competencies of healthcare professionals to provide a seamless and optimal institutional to community service through research. Following the research, a training programme has been structured with the aim to provide healthcare professionals with skills to address potential gaps in the system enabling a smooth transition from acute to community settings and prevent unnecessary further demand on the acute care department. Two groups of 8 nurses and 2 midwives have attended job shadowing at the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) in Northern Ireland with the aim to enhance the basic knowledge on the subject of integration of services in order to improve nurses' and midwives' skills in managing transition of patients from institutional to community care. During their 4 weeks experience the healthcare professionals observed "the discharge planning service implemented by NHSCT through one-to-one mentoring. The job-shadowing consisted not only of theoretical explanations of the system but participants were also involved hands-on in acute settings and community care. ESF4.189 - *Continuous Training and Development for the Public Sector in Gozo*, aims to provide the public health and social care employees in Gozo with the necessary training to upgrade their skills and thus enable them to continue to deliver a quality service to the general public. Training offered to nurses and healthcare professionals under this project was at the initial stages during the year under review.

The Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA) through its project *Training of Consumer and Competition Officials and Awareness Campaign* (ESF4.163), was engaged in enhancing the knowledge and

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<sup>158</sup> International trainers are brought over to Malta.

<sup>159</sup> Participants attend training abroad.

<sup>160</sup> ESF4.174, ESF4.175 and ESF4.189



capabilities of its employees with the aim to improve the services provided within the field of consumer affairs and competition. In addition an awareness campaign is informing consumers and traders about the new elements of the newly set up Authority and amendments to legislation which have a direct immediate impact on their life and work as well as inform the general public on the rights and responsibilities as consumers and encourage undertakings to become more aware of the application and enforcement of the national and EU competition rules. The activities include amongst others seminars, TV, radio and newspaper adverts and dissemination of leaflets to the general public. A project by the Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST), ESF4.152, focused on the improvement of the skills and competencies of the Council's staff. The training offered, gave the employees of MCST expertise in science communication, the management and maintenance of an interactive science centre and general project management skills.

With an aim to develop the skills and competencies of public officers in the application of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), and central competencies, the Malta Efficiency Unit through its project *ESF4.159 – Developing the Quality Management in the Public Administration through CAF* was engaged in providing training and networking with experienced CAF users and experts during the year under review. Following training offered to 150 public employees in CAF quality management techniques a number of organizations have been recognised as CAF sites<sup>161</sup>.

Despite the approval of the five (5) new projects, the amount committed under Axis 4 registered a marginal 16% increase (€2,106,162) when compared to the previous year<sup>162</sup>. Notwithstanding the persisting uncommitted allocation under this PA, it should be emphasised that this is not a reflection of the need but a reflection of circumstances faced and linked to the implementation of projects. In fact if one had to take into consideration the value of projects which were withdrawn in 2013<sup>163</sup> as well as taking into consideration the request for additional funds to be allocated to one of the projects under implementation<sup>164</sup>, the total commitment on PA4 projects would have exceeded the allocation under this PA during the year under review<sup>165</sup>. This proves that the demand for capacity building projects exists, however the various challenges faced by the Beneficiaries impinged the actual realisation of the projects on the ground.

As at the end of 2013, 47% of the committed amount was contracted. The amount contracted in 2013 only was €2,145,273 bringing the total amount contracted under Axis 4 to €7,186,385 by year end. Despite progress registered, contracted amounts remain low in view of the fragmentation of the contracts under the projects being implemented under PA 4<sup>166</sup> and the savings registered when contracting services. During the year under review an increase in the payments made under Priority Axis 4 can be

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<sup>161</sup> Namely, Department for Environmental Health – Food Safety Unit; Foundation for Social Welfare Services; Agenzija Appogg; Agenzija Sapport; Agenzija Sedqa; Gozo Public Library; Gozo Sports Complex; and National Blood Transfusion Service.

<sup>162</sup> Committed amount in 2012 was €13,078,607.

<sup>163</sup> ESF4.167 amounting to €907,095 and ESF4.182 amounting to €117,447 (approved in 2012 and withdrawn in 2013) and ESF4.222 amounting to €538,879 (approved and withdrawn in 2013).

<sup>164</sup> In 2013, the MA approved an additional allocation of circa €1.2M for the inclusion of a second cohort as well as the purchase of equipment under ESF4.175. This is not being officially recorded in the total commitment of the PA since till year end discussions on the additional budget required were still ongoing.

<sup>165</sup> Total PA commitment in 2013 would be €17.9M.

<sup>166</sup> Specifically on ESF4.100.

noted. A total of €2,244,801 were paid in 2013 bringing the total amount paid to €5,563,096, representing 77% of the contracted amount but only 37% of the committed amount.

In 2013, the amount which was proposed for certification by the MA and actually certified was €2,459,444 bringing the total amount of certified payments under this Axis to €4,797,175.

#### **3.4.4 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them**

The following summarises the main problems arising from the implementation of projects during 2013 under PA 4. It should be noted that none of the problems encountered during the year under review resulted in serious problems pursuant to the procedure in Article 62(1)(d)(i) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

##### *i. Absorption of funds*

The full absorption of funds under Priority Axis 4 remained the main challenge during the year under review. Despite the additional call for proposals issued in 2013 and the evaluation of an ongoing call (launched in 2012), by year end the Axis was still not fully committed. By the end of the year €2M representing 12% of the allocated amount under PA 4 remained uncommitted. It should be also noted that the withdrawal of three projects as indicated earlier is in part the reason why the axis is not fully committed. The withdrawal is in part the result of additional complexities usually associated with the implementation of public sector projects.

Same as reported last year, the savings registered following the awarding of a number of contracts continue to also be a challenge to ensure full allocation of funds under the Priority Axis. It is planned that in the first half of 2014, a new call for proposals will be issued with the aim to re-allocate un-utilised savings on new projects.

##### *ii. Procurement and Contracting*

As previously mentioned, challenges faced through procurement processes repeated themselves from previous years including a court case as well as non-submission of bids and over- or under-budgeting of bids submitted when compared to available budgets. Such factors have noticeably caused delays both in the issuance and contracting of tenders as well as in payments expected in 2013.

Furthermore, newly approved projects faced difficulties in recruiting project administrators during the year under review. In this regard, despite potential problems that could be faced in procuring project management through a service contract, the MA approved a requests to change the component from an employment procedure to a procurement procedure. In addition the MA is working closely with DoC in order to ensure that contracting is facilitated whilst respecting the obligations emanating from the Public Contract Regulation.

##### *iii. Fragmentation of verification checks*

Despite measures taken towards the simplification of verification checks on a number of projects<sup>167</sup>, certain payments still required considerable documentation to be checked which is time-consuming and presented major difficulties also under PA 4. As a mitigating measure the MA adopted sampling methodologies which were applied in line with the recommendations of the COCOF note on management verifications (*COCOF 08/0020/04-EN – Guidance document on management verifications*).

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<sup>167</sup> Such as ESF4.97 and ESF4.100.

## 3.5 Priority Axis 5 – Technical Assistance

### 3.5.1 Achievement of targets and analysis of the progress

In accordance with Article 46 of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 TA continued to receive requests in order to finance activities relating to management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities, as well as measures aiming to reinforce the administrative capacity in the implementation of the OP. In this regard, sixty-nine requests were approved in 2013. Most of the requests in 2013 were submitted under the *Capacity Building* component (35.7%), *Implementation of Cohesion Policy* (20%), *Information and Publicity* (21.4%), *Furniture and Equipment* (14.3%) and *Evaluation* (8.6%).

In accordance with the OP obligation, all requests were either approved on a 70-30 basis (activities affecting both programmes such as the annual information activity) or 100% financed from the ESF TA (activities relating to OP II such as the engagement of assessors to assist in management verifications).

With regards to the financial progress, during the year under review the contracted amounts undoubtedly increased. The bulk of the contracts financed under TA related to employment contracts of stakeholders both within and outside the MA, information and publicity, implementation costs, followed by those relating to capacity building, furniture and equipment and evaluation. 314 payments were processed during the year under review. Most of the payments processed were under the component Implementation of Cohesion Policy followed by Information and Publicity, Capacity Building, Furniture and Equipment and Evaluation.

### 3.5.2 Information on the physical and financial progress

#### a) Analysis of Indicators

Table 30 - Priority Axis 5 Indicators (Output and Result Indicators)

| Priority Axis 5 - Technical Assistance |   |  |             | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013             | Total              |                     |     |
|--|---|--|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----|
| Output                                 | A | Indicator 1:<br>Number of<br>Persons Trained                               | Achievement | 0    | 86   | 57   | 71   | 31   | 44   | 48               | 337 <sup>168</sup> |                     |     |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a              | n/a                | 350 <sup>169</sup>  |     |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a              | n/a                | n/a                 |     |
|  |   | Indicator 2:<br>Number of<br>evaluations<br>carried out                    | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0                | 0                  | 1                   |     |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a              | n/a                | n/a                 | 4   |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a              | n/a                | n/a                 | n/a |
|  |   | Indicator 3:<br>Number of<br>Publicity<br>measures<br>undertaken           | Achievement | 3    | 5    | 4    | 5    | 5    | 3    | 4 <sup>170</sup> | 4 <sup>170</sup>   | 29 <sup>171</sup>   |     |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a              | n/a                | n/a                 | 15  |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a              | n/a                | n/a                 | n/a |
|  |   | Indicator 4:<br>Number of<br>studies/research<br>activities carried<br>out | Achievement | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0                | 0                  | 1                   | 2   |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a              | n/a                | n/a                 | 5   |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a              | n/a                | n/a                 | n/a |
| Result                                 | A | Indicator 1:<br>Reaching<br>N+3/N+2 targets                                | Achievement | 0%   | 0%   | 0%   | 0%   | 100% | 100% | 100%             | 100%               | 100% <sup>172</sup> |     |
|  |   |  | Target      | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a              | n/a                | n/a                 | 80% |
|  |   |  | Baseline    | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a              | n/a                | n/a                 | n/a |

During the year under review, output indicators have continued to witness an overall increase: *Number of Persons Trained, Number of studies/Research activities carried out and Number of publicity measures undertaken*. A further forty-eight officers have been trained either locally or overseas. The number of

<sup>168</sup> This figure does not include repeat participants. Achievements registered in previous years included repeat participants and as at end 2011 amounted to a total of 468. This figure has now been revised to eliminate any repeat participants in accordance with the TA's OP target. Furthermore, the figure quoted in 2007 erroneously reported 3 participants which has now been corrected.

<sup>169</sup> Does not include repeat trainees.

<sup>170</sup> This figures includes: 1 (Annual Event); 1 (Local network meeting), 1 (call for proposals) and 1 (promotional items and information tools, including adverts).

<sup>171</sup> Achievement between 2007 and 2010 was reported as per Communication Plan, but reported as micro-publicity actions and as at end 2011 amounted to 34. These have now been revised to include macro- publicity actions in order to be in line with the TA OP target.

<sup>172</sup> Under this indicator the total achievements are not being calculated cumulatively but are reflecting the final reporting year.

publicity measures continued to increase steadily and included a number of publicity activities such as the procurement of promotional items as well as the annual event. Under indicator 2: *Number of evaluations carried out* the result registered a nil achievement in 2013 due to the fact that the current evaluations are still on-going. It is pertinent to note that the thematic evaluation and cohort study are ongoing activities which should be completed in 2015, while the ex-ante evaluation covering the 2014-2020 programming period is expected to be completed by 2014 given that the regulatory package was only agreed upon in December 2013. Therefore, by 2015 all evaluation targets shall be met. With regards to the Number of studies/research activities one achievement was recorded in 2013 (the MA identified the need for the engagement of assessors required for management verifications in the field of IT, education and the finance sector). Additional studies are expected to be contract in 2014 and 2015.

With regard to the indicator *reaching the N+3 target*, the MA succeeded to fully achieve the target for the year 2013.

## b) Data on Participants

The table below depicts the physical progress under this Axis in accordance with Commission Regulation 1828/2006 Annex XXIII.

**Table 31 - Data on Participants Priority Axis 5**

| PA 5 – 2013                 |                                    | People Entering |       | People Leaving |       |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|----------------|-------|
|                             |                                    | Total           | Women | Total          | Women |
| Status in the Labour Market | Total Number of participants       | 48              | 30    | 48             | 30    |
|                             | Employed                           | 47              | 29    | 47             | 29    |
|                             | Self Employed                      | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Unemployed                         | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Long Term Unemployed               | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Inactive                           | 1               | 1     | 1              | 1     |
|                             | Inactive in Education and Training | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
| Age                         | Young People (15-24 years)         | 2               | 1     | 2              | 1     |
|                             | Older Workers (55-64 years)        | 4               | 2     | 4              | 2     |
| Vulnerable Groups           | Minorities                         | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Migrants                           | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Disabled                           | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |
|                             | Other Disadvantaged People         | 0               | 0     | 0              | 0     |

|                             |  |    |    |    |    |
|-----------------------------|--|----|----|----|----|
| <b>Education Attainment</b> | Primary or Lower secondary education (ISCED 1 & 2) | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
|                             | Upper Secondary education (ISCED 3)                | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  |
|                             | Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)    | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  |
|                             | Tertiary Education (ISCED 5 & 6)                   | 46 | 28 | 46 | 28 |

As indicated above, in 2013, forty-eight (48) officers have been trained either locally or overseas out of which 63% were women.

### c) Financial Progress

Table 32 - Financial Progress Priority Axis 5

| Priority Axis  | A<br>Total<br>contribution | Financial progress |                 |               |            |            |            |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
|  |                            | B<br>Commitments   | C<br>Contracted | D<br>Payments | (B/A)<br>% | (C/A)<br>% | (D/A)<br>% |
| Priority Axis 5<br><i>Investing in the employability and adaptability of the workforce</i> | 5,270,588                  | 5,270,588          | 4,133,235       | 2,700,051     | 100%       | 78.42%     | 51.23%     |

Disbursement in 2013 under Technical Assistance registered a substantial increase<sup>173</sup> (€875,544) when compared to 2012. As at the end of 2013 €2,458,309.61 were verified by the MA and certified by the CA.

### 3.5.3 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis related to the Technical Assistance is being included in Chapter 5 of this report.

### 3.5.4 Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them

The following summarises the main problems arising from the implementation of projects during 2013 under Technical Assistance. It should be noted that none of the problems encountered during the year under review resulted in serious problems pursuant to the procedure in Article 62(1)(d)(i) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

<sup>173</sup> As at end 2012 the amount paid totalled €1,824,507.10 whilst as at end of 2013 the total amount totalled €2,700,051.

### ***i. Fragmented nature of implementation of TA and payments***

The TA fragmented nature under this Axis continues to pose problems for the overall implementation process, mainly related to payment as well as verification processes. Having garnered experience, the MA has sought ways of how to reduce such administrative burden. In this regard, during 2013 a number of simplification procedures were adopted. This included the introduction of the adjustment checklist as well as the tying up of the diverse contracts under one pay period used when reimbursing staff salaries, thus reducing the time and number of payments processed and ensure a smooth and efficient TA implementation.

### ***ii. Procurement process of activities financed through TA funds***

2013 also saw a number of procurement processes which were used in the financing of TA activities. In order, to endeavour to ensure that the procurement process used is correct, constant liaison with different stakeholders took place. In addition different departments were provided with guidance on the required documentation. Such TA checklists served as a guideline to ensure that the correct documentation is retained and ensures that the requested documentation was received in a correct and timely manner.

### ***iii. Verification of TA funds***

Due to the significant number of documents such as calculation of salaries, the verification of Technical Assistance continues to be another challenge. In order to mitigate against this the templates used for verification purposes have been simplified in order to avoid duplication of work. In addition, the templates have been drafted according to the nature of the payment (travel, adverts etc) in order to ensure a clearer audit trail aiding for future purposes.



## 4 – ESF programmes: Coherence and Concentration

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In accordance with Article 4(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006, actions supported by the ESF shall be consistent with and contribute to actions undertaken in pursuance of the European Employment Strategy (EES). Malta's ESF Operational Programme (OP) reflects and builds on the key priorities identified within the National Reform Programmes and the Community Strategic Guidelines/Integrated Employment Guidelines 2007-2013, essential components of the European Employment Strategy (EES) as explained in the same Operational Programme<sup>174</sup>.

During the year under review, project proponents have continued to specify which of the Community Strategic Guidelines/Integrated Employment Guidelines will be addressed through the activities proposed within the project and also provide details of how the project will contribute towards the relevant priorities, as identified in the current National Reform Programme under the Europe 2020 Strategy which was updated in 2013.

The Applicants of proposals approved in 2013 under Calls 11, 12 and 13<sup>175</sup> were requested to explain how the projects will contribute towards the objectives and targets of the NRP under the Europe 2020 Strategy which focuses on the following priority themes (i) Employment, (ii) Research and Development, (iii) Energy, (iv) Education and (v) Poverty.

Given that the current NRP builds on the achievements of the previous NRP's (while drawing upon the Europe 2020 Strategy and national priorities), projects approved in previous years still contribute in one way or another to the current NRP. Given the nature of the ESF, the NRP theme which remains mostly targeted is "Education", which is addressed by all the projects approved in the year under review. Similarly all projects approved in 2013, address the CSG to "Increase investment in human capital through better education and skills".

### 4.1 Links with the NRP

*NRP 2005-2008, NRP 2008-2010*

Projects approved under first calls<sup>176</sup> contribute to the NRP 2005-2008. The latter is divided into five Strategic Themes (i) Sustainability of Public Finances, (ii) Competitiveness, (iii) Employment, (iv) Education and Training and (v) Environment. On the other hand projects approved under Calls 6 and 7 contribute to the NRP 2008-2010, whose main thrusts are based on four (4) Strategic Themes, (i) *Unlocking Business Potential*; (ii) *Investing in Knowledge and Innovation*; (iii) *Energy and Climate*

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<sup>174</sup> OP II Chapter 3 "Strategic Direction".

<sup>175</sup> In addition in the year under review the MA, after consultation with the Monitoring Committee, extended the Employment Aid Programme further to the benefit of Gozo. In addition the MA approved ESF2.137 which was on the reserve following savings registered under the Priority Axis.

<sup>176</sup> Calls 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

*Change*; and (iv) *Investing in People and Modernising Labour Markets*. All projects approved up to 2012 continue to contribute through their implementation to the respective NRP and given that the strategic thrusts of the previous NRP are linked to the current NRP, previously approved projects are all interlinked with the NRP under the Europe 2020 Strategy.

#### *Malta's National Reform Programme under the Europe 2020 Strategy*

Malta's current National Reform Programme continues to address Malta's challenges by building on the targets identified under the Europe 2020 Strategy. In 2013 the NRP was updated with new and revised measures aimed at reaching the set national Europe 2020 targets in the areas of Employment, R&D, Energy, Education and Poverty Reduction.

The above mentioned areas are deemed as crucial in addressing Malta's labour productivity and improving market functioning which in turn address Malta's competitiveness. The current NRP which was updated in 2013 reports on Malta's aim of revising its targets regarding education (the part concerning early school leaving); employment; and research & development, in view of the latest statistical data.

The ESF Operational Programme, is currently sustaining investment in all of the targets indicated in the NRP. As stated above project applications during the year under review, as in other years, have been asked to link their projects to the above mentioned thrusts. Education remains the highest targeted theme, with all the projects approved during 2013 addressing this theme (amongst others). Significant contribution of the newly approved projects also goes towards the Employment theme.

#### **Target 1 Employment**

In line with its commitment to reach the EU2020 Strategy targets and in order to counter the challenges it faces, Malta places particular emphasis on *Employment* as one of its main thrusts under the NRP. Malta has set its employment rate target at 62.9% by 2020. As per NSO statistics Labour Force Survey Q4 2013, the current employment rate stands at 49.4%. The main aims under this area are to: increase the employment prospects of women and older workers; finding effective and sustainable solutions in order to make work pay; combating undeclared work; addressing the challenges of an increasing ageing population and tackling the weak uptake of work-life balance measures, including childcare. Hence through the current programme (and the future programme) Malta seeks to promote incentives to address these challenges.

Employment is a cross-cutting theme across the OP in that all of the Priority Axes support the education system, continuous training and education, the skills level of the workers to respond to the enterprises' efforts to expand, re-structure and adapt, and to achieve inclusive labour markets.

One of the newly approved projects under PA1 seeks to address this theme by attracting more people to further their research in the priority sectors of our economy through the provision of scholarships at

Masters level<sup>177</sup>. A project which was on the reserve list from the previous call under PA 2, but eventually approved in 2013, also addresses this target by providing basic ICT courses to whoever does not currently possess this skill in order to make them more employable<sup>178</sup>.

Both projects approved under PA 3 during 2013 address this theme by targeting the employability of vulnerable persons. Through training, personalised assistance and job exposure, the Youth Guarantee project contributes to improving the employability of the younger population<sup>179</sup>. Family-Friendly measures aimed at encouraging the use of childcare facilities, and thus reducing the employment impact of parenthood are also being targeted through another project under PA3. The project will be promoting family-friendly measures through the interventions proposed whereby vulnerable groups can participate in traineeships and can do so by providing them with the necessary support such as childcare, teleworking and flexible working hours. Moreover, the project will be promoting inactive women to join the labour force<sup>180</sup>. The extension of the Employment Aid Programme to Gozo is continuing to address this target by extending its support to vulnerable people in Gozo, and hence it is envisaged that it will be a major contributor to this theme.

One project which was approved under the PA 4 seeks to address the employment target by training officers in the public service/sector, to adapt to individual's needs in developing and implementing policies, programmes and services from an equality perspective<sup>181</sup>.

## **Target 2 Research and Development**

In line with the Europe 2020 Strategy, particularly with the Innovative Union Flagship Initiative, the NRP focuses on the need to increase efforts on research and development which in turn would result in innovative products and services. Malta has set its national Research & Development target at 0.67% of the Gross Domestic Product by 2020. The updated NRP reports that Malta is currently working on an innovation strategy for smart specialisation. The main objective of this strategy is to identify areas within the national economy with the greatest potential for innovation-based growth in order to direct funding and efforts towards building critical mass in these areas.

One (1) project under PA1 seeks to address this theme by offering scholarships that will expose more learners to entrepreneurial “culture” by fostering new ideas through research and developing better strategies.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> ESF1.225

<sup>178</sup> ESF2.204

<sup>179</sup> ESF3.231

<sup>180</sup> ESF3.234

<sup>181</sup> ESF4.220

<sup>182</sup> ESF1.225

### **Target 3 Energy**

Malta has set ambitious targets for energy efficiency, renewable energy and greenhouse gas emission reduction. The Maltese government deems energy efficiency as a key objective of energy policy. Energy efficiency finds synergy in the achievement of all Government's objectives - it can assist the economy, as well as help to achieve social and environmental objectives. The updated NRP identifies several actions which will identify this target such as the implementation of the national renewable energy plan, improving energy efficiency in transport, increasing energy efficiency in the hospitality sector, promotion of uptake of renewable energy sources, switching fuel to gas and so on.

A novelty this year is that the ESF has started to contribute to the Energy theme through educational/training measures. Scholarships offered through the Master It!, a project which was approved in 2013 under PA 1, has identified as one of the priority areas students who want to pursue studies related to energy efficiency, renewable energy and greenhouse gas emission reductions<sup>183</sup>.

### **Target 4 Education**

Education has always been one of the crucial areas for intervention of the Maltese Government. This can be seen from the NRP 2005-2008 which lists Education and Training as one of its primary targets while the NRP of 2008-2010 focuses on education as a cross-cutting theme across the major policies of the island. The current NRP places further emphasis on this theme while listing challenging measures to be addressed in order to improve this sector, such as, reducing school drop-out rates to 29% by 2020 and increasing the percentage of people aged between 30-34 that complete tertiary level education to 33% by 2020.

All ESF projects approved during the year under review address this theme. PA 1 projects approved in 2013 provide scholarships at Masters level<sup>184</sup> and assist in the setting up of a National System for Accreditation and Licensing of Further and Higher Education Programmes and Providers, and of the Recognition of Non- Formal and Informal Prior Learning.<sup>185</sup> Another intervention delivers training in basic literacy skills for students of compulsory school age and supports the up-skilling of play-workers.<sup>186</sup>

Another project under this Axis aims to contribute to reaching the target of reducing the early school dropout rate to 29% by 2020. This shall be done through the introduction of a more equitable and decentratilised national educational curriculum system. It seeks to present a seamless curriculum which reflects smooth transitions between different levels of education, while building and extending on the firm foundations in early childhood education. In sum, one can say that the project is intended to lead to an increased participation rate in post-secondary, tertiary education and lifelong learning<sup>187</sup>.

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<sup>183</sup> ESF1.225

<sup>184</sup> ESF1.225

<sup>185</sup> ESF1.227

<sup>186</sup> ESF1.229

<sup>187</sup> ES1.228

Another project which was approved under PA2 also offers basic ICT training to low skilled and/or inactive persons with the aim of increasing their educational levels to eventually make them more employable<sup>188</sup>.

Projects approved under PA3 address this theme through interventions for vulnerable persons. The Youth Guarantee project provides for new training possibilities for youth who are not in employment, education or training to either access the labour market or else to access further study<sup>189</sup>. Another project will address this theme by providing on-the-job skills to those most vulnerable thus supporting them to facilitate their integration into employment, increase their employability and facilitate labour market integration. Furthermore this project will contribute towards the Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy by providing recommendations through the network systems so as to help disadvantaged youths to start their own business through social enterprises<sup>190</sup>.

All projects approved under PA 4 also address the Education theme. This is being done through technical training – both locally and abroad – in areas related to transportation<sup>191</sup>, equality training for the public administration and local councils<sup>192</sup>; training to public service sports administrators on EU directives related to sports<sup>193</sup>, as well as training for worker representatives in areas related to employability, through distance learning and digital dissemination of information to foster bipartite and tripartite social dialogue<sup>194</sup>.

### **Target 5 Poverty**

In contributing to the EU headline target to reduce Poverty and social exclusion across the EU, the NRP states that Malta will be primarily focused on those people who are materially deprived and at risk of poverty. Three particular target groups have been identified - children, the elderly and jobless households. These are backed up by the measures aimed at achieving the employment and education targets, in line with the belief that innovative social protection intervention must be combined with a broad set of policies including those on employment and education. The government believes that education and training systems are instrumental in supporting upward social mobility. In the long-term perspective, reducing school drop-outs would be a strong contribution to poverty reduction, since a sufficient level of skills and competences is indispensable for employability.

Vulnerable people are more at risk of poverty, given their high possibility of social exclusion, This is exactly what the Youth Guarantee project, as mentioned earlier, seeks to address by designing an instrument designed to support upward social mobility of youths at risk of poverty<sup>195</sup>.

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<sup>188</sup> ESF2.204

<sup>189</sup> ESF3.231

<sup>190</sup> ESF3.234

<sup>191</sup> ESF4.218

<sup>192</sup> ESF4.220

<sup>193</sup> ESF4.216

<sup>194</sup> ESF4.221

<sup>195</sup> ESF3.231

Another project will embark on implementing a National Strategy on anti-poverty. The project focuses on combating child poverty through the provision of a network system that can help analyse and locate child poverty at the local level, thus referring these cases to the right entity for the necessary support. Low income families and teenage mothers/parents as well as other vulnerable families are also being assisted to help them integrate within the labour market. Through this project, tangible ways of how to combat child poverty will also be recommended through the national strategy on anti-poverty. Moreover, training to social and community workers to help obtain the necessary knowledge and best practices on how to support such vulnerable individuals shall also be delivered <sup>196</sup>.

## 4.2 Links with the CSGs and IEGs

The Community Strategic Guidelines have focused Cohesion Policy priorities for the period 2007-2013 on three priorities:

- (i) *improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities by improving accessibility, ensuring adequate quality and level of services, and preserving the environment,*
- (ii) *encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by research and innovation capacities, including new information and communication technologies, and*
- (iii) *creating more and better jobs by attracting more people into employment or entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises and increasing investment in human capital.*

On the other hand, in terms of human capital development, the Integrated Employment Guidelines highlight three priorities for action for Member States' policies:

- (i) attract and retain more people in employment and modernise social protection systems;
- (ii) improve adaptability of workers and enterprises and the flexibility of the labour markets,
- (iii) increase investment in human capital through better education and skills.

In addition to these priorities, focus should also be given to improving the efficiency in the public administration.

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<sup>196</sup> ESF3.234

The Table below shows how OP II links to the CSGs as follows

Table 33 - Cross Referencing of OP II - Priority Axes and CSGs

| <b>Cross Referencing of OP II - Priority Axes and CSGs</b>  |   |  |   |   |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| <b>CSGs</b>   | <b>PA 1:<br/>Improving<br/>education<br/>and skills<br/>level</b> | <b>PA2: Investing<br/>in<br/>employability<br/>and<br/>adaptability of<br/>the workforce</b> | <b>PA3:<br/>Supporting<br/>an equal and<br/>inclusive<br/>labour<br/>market</b> | <b>PA4:Strengthening<br/>institutional and<br/>administrative<br/>capacity.</b> |
| <b>Attract and retain<br/>more people in<br/>employment,<br/>increase labour<br/>supply and<br/>modernise social<br/>protection systems</b> | x   | x  | x   | x   |
| <b>Improve adaptability<br/>of workers and<br/>enterprises</b>  |   | x  | x   |   |
| <b>Increase investment<br/>in Human capital<br/>through better<br/>education and skills</b>   | x   | x  | x   | x   |
| <b>Administrative<br/>capacity.</b>   |   |  |   | x   |

Projects approved in 2013, continued to link their projects to the CSGs. The Table below shows how the projects approved under OP11 address the CSGs:

|      | <b>Attract and retain more people in employment, increase labour supply and modernise social protection system</b> | <b>Improve adaptability of workers and enterprises</b> | <b>Increase investment in human capital through better education and skills</b> | <b>Administrative Capacity</b> |
|------|--|--|---|--------------------------------|
| PA 1 | 5  | 1  | 23  | 0                              |
| PA 2 | 8  | 10   | 15  | 0                              |
| PA 3 | 20   | 4  | 16  | 1                              |
| PA 4 | 1  | 0  | 18  | 20                             |

### **4.3 Links with the European Employment Strategy**

In accordance with Article 2 (1) of Regulation EC No1081/2006, the ESF shall support actions that are in line with measures of the guidelines adopted under the European Employment Strategy, as incorporated into the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs and accompanying recommendations. The European employment strategy seeks to create more and better jobs throughout the EU. The strategy draws upon the Europe 2020 growth strategy as well as on the renewed Lisbon Agenda. Operational Programme II is fully in line with this strategy as it seeks to increase human capital and quality of work through education and training.

To reach the Europe 2020 objectives, the European Employment Strategy encourages measures to meet three headline targets by 2020, namely the increase of employment rates of people between 20-64; reducing school drop-out rates while focusing on lifelong learning; and reducing the risk of poverty and social exclusion. The national priorities of the Maltese Government also seek to address these objectives; this endeavour can clearly be seen in published national documents such as the budget documents and the National Reform Programme under the Europe 2020 Strategy which was updated in 2013. The largest share of the expenditure in the NRP relates to expenditure in the Employment and Poverty themes – these two themes absorb around 60 per cent of the entire aggregate expenditure.



The 2013 European Commission Recommendations for Malta state that Malta needs to make use of its greatest asset, that is, human capital. Both the CSRs and the Draft Joint Employment Report (JER) of 2014 make reference to Malta having a low employment rate, with a high number of school leavers and a low take up of tertiary education level. The number of women actively at work also remains very low. The CSRs urge Malta to continue to take measures to address skills gaps and facilitate the integration of women into the labour market through providing affordable child-minding facilities.

The budget allocated towards employment in the NRP shows Malta's commitment to the European Employment Strategy in general. The ESF is a high contributor towards improving the employment rate in Malta. During 2013, the ESF has continued to invest in projects promoting education and skills development to help growth through more and better jobs. The PAs continue to address the challenges noted above in one way or another. In this context, PA 1 continues to fund projects that invest in human capital with the objective of increasing a higher participation rate in higher and further levels of education. Thus, addressing early school leavers and increasing the uptake of tertiary education levels is intrinsically enshrined within this PA. In fact 2013, saw the start up of a new scheme which aims to provide scholarships for Masters Programmes in order to increase our knowledge-based economy. The educational system is also being addressed through projects that will design the Learning Outcomes Framework and Associated Learning and Assessment programmes, which together with the National Curriculum Framework will form the backbone of our compulsory education programmes. Early school leaving reduction is being addressed through another project which was approved during 2013 which seeks to pilot a numeracy skills programme for children and a literacy skills programme for adolescents as well as providing the necessary training to tutors and coordinators. It aims to enhance the quality of play work provision through the training of play workers engaged in delivering these services.

PA 2 has continued to align itself with these priorities and with the *Inclusive Growth* engine under the EU2020 Strategy, particularly with the flagship initiative of 'An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs'. This is being done through training which seeks to address skills mismatches in the workforce, up-skilling of the employed/unemployed in general particularly through training which is deemed as drivers of the Maltese economy such as ICT and skills related to the Tourism Sector. Although during the year under review, the Training Aid Framework did not receive any further applications, payment of grants have continued to be processed, and one can say that this scheme has been a major contributor to upskilling the employees of enterprises which would in turn help Malta increase its competitive edge.

During the year under review, PA3 has continued to sustain investment to increase the employment rate of vulnerable people including that of women. This is being done through projects targeting gender balance in decision-making through the provision of mentoring for women seeking to occupy decision-making jobs; as well as upskilling mothers to make them more employable. In order to further increase the employment levels in Malta, and given the high success that the Employment Aid Programme (EAP) has had in integrating socially excluded/vulnerable persons into employment by providing subsidies for employers, a further €1.96 million was approved on the EAP to specifically target the unemployment

levels of Gozo. The EAP Gozo will target an estimate of 380 vulnerable people who were previously unemployed or in part-time employment.

The European Employment Strategy also draws inspiration from the EU2020 flagship initiative of the “European platform against poverty” which seeks to ensure social and territorial cohesion such that the benefits of growth and jobs are widely shared and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion are enabled to live in dignity and take an active part in society. The poverty rate in Malta is increasing<sup>197</sup> and taking account of Malta commitment to promote social inclusion particularly through the reduction of poverty, various measures are being undertaken that target child poverty, female employment rate, the elderly and jobless households. Particular attention is being given to the implementation of active inclusion strategies and affordable and social services. The NRP highlights the importance of having a poverty and social inclusion strategy in Malta which will seek to develop a multi-policy approach directed to address the link between poverty and social inclusion by addressing those major areas that directly or indirectly impact the prospects for inclusion. The strategy design will reflect the Maltese government’s philosophy that the prospects for enhanced and effective social inclusion through poverty eradication require a holistic community-based approach which includes a horizontal focus that incorporates diverse vulnerable groups in order to promote social cohesion.

In this regard, the ESF has an important role to play, particularly through PA 3 which seeks to address social inclusion of vulnerable groups. In fact a project which was approved during 2013 is fully in line with the European Employment Strategy and the NRP objectives in this regard. It seeks to combat poverty, for children, low income families, persons with disability and teenage single mothers. The project will propose tangible ways and recommendations on how to combat child poverty through the anti-poverty national strategy; strengthen support services of jobless households and provide training to social and community workers to help obtain the necessary knowledge and skills (best practices) on how to support such vulnerable individuals.

The EU is working to reduce youth unemployment and to increase the youth-employment rate in line with the wider EU target of achieving a 75% employment rate for the working-age population (20-64 years). As the JER 2014 reports, youth unemployment in Malta remains high. The National Youth Employment Strategy 2015 is very much in line with the flagship initiative ‘Youth on the Move’ and it targets not only young job-seekers and inactive youth but also young people who are already in the labour market. This is because this Strategy is aiming to provide a second chance to young people who would have left school earlier and thus these youths would be able to avail themselves of re-training and up-skilling opportunities. The ESF has continued to provide incentives for young people, particularly through projects co-financed under PA3, which provide training for youth with challenging behaviour or unemployed youth, job exposure and personalised assistance. The Employment Aid Programme also played a major role in this regard. Financial incentives have continued to be provided to employers to

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<sup>197</sup> The National strategy against poverty and social exclusion.

(amongst others) employ young single adults looking after dependants, graduates who have not attained their first regular employment, as well as any young people falling under the other target groups of this scheme such as Registered Disabled Persons, or long-term unemployed. The Youth Guarantee, another project which was approved during 2013, offers the opportunity to those who are not in employment, education or training to either access the labour market or education. Through this project, young people who are younger than 25 years old are being provided with training, job exposure and personalised assistance.

## 5 – Technical Assistance

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During the seventh year of implementation of Operational Programme II, Technical Assistance (TA) has continued to aim to assist towards the effective implementation of the Programme. During the year under review TA financing continued to be used for all components namely: the supply of furniture and equipment, capacity building measures, actions related to the implementation and evaluation, and for information and publicity actions.

A number of demand-driven requests were received throughout 2013 for the use of TA funds submitted by the different units within the MA (including the horizontal units) as well as from a number of horizontal stakeholders, including the Treasury Department, IAID and Department of Contracts. The continuous flow of requests received emphasise the pivotal role TA has in the implementation of the programme. The requests received were linked to necessary actions for Malta to achieve its N+3/2 targets in 2013, activities linked to the ongoing thematic evaluation, as well as activities linked to the preparation for the new programming period.

A substantial amount of the requests received were of a fragmented nature and continue to be administratively burdensome on a number of the stakeholders involved in the management, monitoring, implementation and payment process<sup>198</sup> linked to Technical Assistance. During the year under review, the TA contracting figures has witnessed a small increase (2%) when compared to 2012 with the number of payments paid increasing by 48%<sup>199</sup>. Below follows an analysis on a component by component basis.

### 5.1 Furniture and Equipment

Under this component a number of requests were handled during the year under review to cater for needs of the MA as well as horizontal stakeholders. The requests received under this component are essential in facilitating officers' ability to carry out their tasks relating to the day-to-day monitoring, implementation and management of the Operational Programme. The increase in administrative capacity has had a direct impact in the number of requests received under this component. In addition, taking into account the obligations emanating from the regulation, in particular Article 90 of the General Regulation with regards to retention of documents, a number of requests handled in the year under review, looked at the options of how to retain important documentation linked to verification of expenditure for subsequent Audit by relevant bodies such as the Audit Authority, the Commission Auditors and the European Court of Auditors.

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<sup>198</sup> Including the MA (as the Beneficiary), the Line Ministry, the Treasury as well as the Director Cooperative Services.

<sup>199</sup> Refers to percentage increase in amount contracted as well as paid through TA as at end December 2013. Figure contracted as at end 2012 amounted to € 4,034,615 whilst as at end 2013 amounted to € 4,133,235. Figure paid as at end 2012 amounted to €1,824,507 whilst as at end 2013 amounted to €2,700,051.

## **5.2 Implementation of Cohesion Policy**

Technical Assistance continues to play a key role for stakeholders in particular the MA in fulfilling its role of first level of control. In line with Article 60 of the General Regulation and Article 13 of the Implementing Regulation, 2013 was characterised by intensive volume of verification linked to the programme N+3/2 targets in 2013. This generated the need to support the necessary capacity within the MA to undertake such function, which included the funding of activities in relation to expert advice required in the verification of expenditure incurred (when such expertise was not available within the MA). One particular assessment was the engagement of three (3) assessors on a temporary assignment to provide technical assistance to the MA in the assessment of applications that were handled on one project with respect to scholarships in the Financial, Education and IT sector. Furthermore, TA continued to support the project selection process for projects applications handled by the MA. Other TA costs were also required to aid in the day-to-day implementation of the MA as well as other stakeholders such as Treasury.

In preparation for the next Programming Period, TA continued to finance costs relating to the future of Cohesion Policy activities. TA supported requests in connection with the hiring of venue and adverts as well as publications related to the launch of the Public Consultation on the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020.

The increased activity linked to the preparation of the new programming period was also reflected in the continued development and enhancement of the SFD. 2013 saw the signing of a contract related to E-Cohesion with a view to assess the gap between the current system and the obligations emanating from the 2014-2020 programming period (Article 74 of EC 1303/2013).

As per Articles 60, 63-68 of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 the requirement to monitor the implementation of the Operational Programme generated requests related to monitoring activities. This included the preparation and the holding of Monitoring Committees (held in April and October 2013); supporting the (national) high level bilateral meetings held on a monthly basis; the holding of Inter-Ministerial Co-ordination Committee (IMCC) meeting held in May 2013 to monitor double funding between Cohesion Policy funding schemes as well as National/other EU funded schemes; and the holding of Senior Management meeting to assess the current level of implementation and the steps to be taken in the months to follow held in July 2013.

## **5.3 Information and Publicity**

Article 2 of Regulation (EC) 1828/2006 stipulates the need for all Member states to draft a Communication plan in order to carry out a number of information and publicity actions. The aim is to create awareness on the implementation of the Operational Programme and the promotion of results achieved through the various projects and schemes implemented under the Programme. In this regard, a number of requests were received during the course of 2013 for TA funding to ensure that such obligation is adhered to.

In addition, in line with Article 7 of Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, the Member States are obliged to organise at least one major information activity per year presenting the achievements of the OP. The annual event for 2013 involved the participation of the MA in *Notte Bianca – Lejl Imdawwal*, which took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2013. The event was promoted on the local newspapers and a number of promotional items were also procured for the event. This was followed by adverts published on Sunday local newspapers for 11 weeks which aimed to promote the ‘Investing in Your Future’ website, giving details on the various themes covered by Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 in Malta. Further details and the achievement of the annual activity for 2013 are reported to in Chapter 6 on publicity actions taken in 2013.

Furthermore, the electronic leader board adverts featured in April as well as between September and November 2013 to promote the ‘Investing in Your Future’ website featuring approved projects under Operational Programme I and Operational Programme II were also financed through Technical Assistance. Further details are provided in Chapter 6.

In line with Article 5 of Regulation (EC) 1828/2006, TA funded publicity related to the announcement of two (2) calls for project proposals, in order to disseminate information amongst potential project applicants. In addition TA supported costs linked to the organisation of the information sessions linked to the calls which were held in Malta<sup>200</sup>.

TA also supported the holding of the third Local Informal Information and Publicity Network (LIIP)<sup>201</sup> which was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2013. The purpose of such network is to ensure coordination between the different players of publicity actions to ensure coherence. In order to ensure that good quality material is available, TA contributed towards the procurement of the services of a professional photographer (mainly used within the project website) and the procurement of items as means of promoting Cohesion Policy activity success and results.

Finally, in line with the preparation of the new programming period 2014-2020 a request to finance the drafting of the Communication plan was received and approved in 2013. The tender for the latter will be published in 2014.

## 5.4 Evaluation

In line with Articles 47-48 of Regulation (EC) 1083/2006, the MA is responsible to undertake evaluation activities. The overall objective for the Thematic Evaluation for Operational Programme II is to have one thematic assessment with two aspects, namely to analyse the achievement of interventions undertaken through OPII and their contribution to: (i) education and lifelong learning and (ii) enhancement of employability and adaptability of the workforce, as implemented by projects chosen within the context of

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<sup>200</sup> Two information sessions were organised during 2013 but one of the information sessions bared no costs.

<sup>201</sup> The LIIP is a forum to discuss various methods to promote and provide information about Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, foster the exchange of best practices and further reinforce cooperation between the MA, Beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved in communication of Cohesion Policy objectives and achievements.

the relevant objectives and targets of the OP. The Thematic Evaluation for Operational Programme II was awarded in Q2 2013. TA is supporting the cost linked to the Thematic evaluation.

During the year under review evaluation activities linked to the programming period 2014-2020 were also undertaken. The *Ex Ante* Evaluation of the programming period 2014-2020 was awarded in Q1 2013. Due to the fact that the Regulatory Package was only agreed upon in Q4 2013, the contractor carried out the preparatory work in Q4 2013 with no payments being made in 2013. TA committed the necessary funds to finance this contract.

In addition, TA continues to support the Cohort study (tracer study) that is being done by the National Statistics Office (NSO). In fact in 2013, NSO submitted two reports covering Wave 2 in Q1 and Wave 3 in Q3 of the Cohort Study. Wave 1, which had been submitted in 2012, together with Wave 2 were approved by the Managing Authority in Q3 2013, while Wave 3 and Wave 4 will be approved in 2014. In this regard, the first payment relating to wave 1 and wave 2 was carried out through TA funds in 2013.

Finally, TA also financed the holding of the Evaluation Steering Group meeting which was held on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

## 5.5 Capacity Building

Article 46 of Regulation (EC) regulation 1083/2006 emphasises the intention to reinforce the administrative capacity of the public administration. In this regard, TA finances various capacity building initiatives for stakeholders responsible for implementation of the programme, including the Managing Authority, Department of Contracts, Treasury, Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority.

In 2013, TA funded the travel costs of twenty- five (25) participants to enable them to attend different seminars, conferences and training abroad which are linked to the implementation of the Operational Programme. During the year under review, the TA also supported the costs involved in organising local training. In 2013, Training on Verification Templates<sup>202</sup> for the MA employees was held in April and an Induction Training for New Beneficiaries and New Recruits<sup>203</sup> was held in July<sup>204</sup>.

## Conclusion

2013 saw TA gain momentum as more operations were approved and substantial progress was also registered in the processing of payments. Out of the €5,270,589 funds allocated to TA in the OP 51% was disbursed by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013<sup>205</sup>.

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<sup>202</sup> A total of 43 officers (26 participants working on OPI, 15 participants working on OPII and 2 worked on both OPI and OPII) attended the Training on Verification Templates.

<sup>203</sup> A total of 85 participants (31 participants working on OPI, 33 participants working on OPII, 15 participants working on both OPI and OPII and 6 working on other projects) attended the Induction Training for New Beneficiaries and New Recruits.

<sup>204</sup> One must also take into consideration that training activities also took place in the framework of monitoring and evaluation meetings as well as seminars.

<sup>205</sup> As at end 2013 € 2,700,051 has been paid under TA.

The TA fragmented nature continued to pose difficulties in its implementation. However, in 2013 a number of simplification procedures, such as the introduction of the adjustment checklist used when reimbursing staff salaries, gave rise in an improvement and an overall smooth and efficient TA implementation.



## 6 – Information and Publicity

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### 6.1 Measures taken to provide information and publicity on the Operational Programmes

In 2013, the MA continued to carry out information measures to disseminate the progress and the results achieved in the implementation of the 2007-2013 Operational Programme. Such information was made available to all interested parties through online web content. The tools used were primarily the PPCD website at [www.ppcd.gov.mt](http://www.ppcd.gov.mt), the 'Investing In Your Future' website at [www.investinginyourfuture.gov.mt](http://www.investinginyourfuture.gov.mt), and the 'Investing In Your Future' Facebook page which feeds the 'Investing In Your Future' Twitter page. The content focused on how Cohesion Policy funds are being used in Malta, particularly at this stage of the programme implementation. This chapter describes the activities which have been undertaken to get the message through to potential beneficiaries (when launching calls for project proposals) and the general public (in terms of achievements made so far in the implementation of the Operational Programme) in line with the obligations emanating from Implementing Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1828/2006, following on the lines of the revised Communication Plan as presented to the Monitoring Committee in 2011<sup>206</sup>. The activities defined in the Communication Plan comprise of a number of information and promotional measures using a number of tools, which are either, financed by the Operational Programmes individually (either OPI or OPII) or jointly (OPI and OPII) for common activities such as the annual information activities. What follows is a detailed assessment of the activities undertaken in 2013.

#### 6.1.1 Analysis of Activities carried out in 2012

##### Annual Information Activity



In line with Article 7 (2) (b) of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1828/2006, the MA is responsible for the organisation of one major information activity per year, to present the achievements made within the operational programme.

For 2013, the MA decided to explore the potential of a well-known and well-attended activity in the Maltese cultural calendar to

<sup>206</sup> The Communications Plan, originally approved by the EC on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2007, was revised and presented to the MC on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

promote Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 achievements. The MA chose to participate in *Notte Bianca*, which is a night-long event replete with cultural and varied activities, held in the capital city, Valletta. The event took place on Saturday 5th October 2013.

The objective of the Annual Information Activity for 2013 was to provide information and raise awareness on interventions being carried out under Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 among the general public, through innovative, simple yet effective measures.

The MA set up an information marquee defined through four specific spaces targeted for the public:



- Infographic: visual representations of the achievements made through Cohesion Policy 2007-2013;
- Informative: where the public could ask questions to the MA staff and receive information on EU funded projects being implemented in Malta and Gozo;
- Interactive: visitors were invited to use tools such as tablets and a touch-screen to acquire information in a fun and innovative manner; and
- Involvement: where upon answering a quiz-like question, visitors would be given the opportunity to be one of fifteen individuals that could be given a set of vouchers which were redeemable from three Cohesion Policy beneficiaries, namely the Malta National Aquarium (voucher for entrance to the aquarium worth €50), Heritage Malta (voucher for entrance to heritage sites worth €25) and the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) (voucher for courses from the MCAST prospectus worth €25).

Moreover, a number of items were disseminated during the event with information about the project's website (the web address was encrypted on each of the promotional material given to the general public). These included USB data bands; Planting kit with herb seeds; Foldable nylon Frisbee in pouch; Phone stand; Pocket memo set; Phone stand bobble; Triangular shaped highlighter; Rubik's cube key-chain; A6 magnetic sheet; Customised latex balloons; and A4 ring-bound notepads.



The tools used during the event included: roll-up banners to be displayed within the marquee; tablets to enable the public to visit the Investing in Your Future website while on site; and a touchscreen to run the ESF application 'Making a Difference in Life' designed and provided by the Commission's DG Empl. The tools, together with MA staff, provided the visiting public information on various projects being implemented through Cohesion Policy funds in Malta. The presence of the MA to the event was promoted on all local newspapers.

The event was opened at 17:00 with a visit from the Parliamentary Secretary for the EU Presidency 2017 and EU Funds. Throughout the night over 550 members of the public visited the stand with over 400 participating in the prize draw. The event came to a close at 01:00 on Sunday morning.

As a follow-up to the event, a series of 11 thematic full-page, full-colour advertorials were published on local print newspapers for 11 weeks. Each week represented a different theme found on the Investing in Your Future website. The same design used on the roll-up banners displayed during *Notte Bianca* was used to retain consistency and be more memorable, especially among the members of the public who would have visited the stand in October. The advertorials were published on Saturdays and on Sundays in order to ensure maximum exposure.



Figure 1- Example of roll-up banner design



Figure 2 - Example of advertorial design in Maltese

## 6.2 Other Publicity Measures Undertaken in 2013

### 6.2.1 Updates to the Investing in Your Future Website and Promotion

During the reporting year, the Investing in Your Future website, launched in 2012 kept being updated with new projects being added and audio-visual material included to complement projects which were uploaded upon launch. In addition to this, a modification to the website was also made whereby the introductory slide transition was amended to have a welcome and explanatory message by the newly formed Ministry responsible for European Affairs, as well as an editable slide whereby news items and information notes on upcoming events linked to Cohesion Policy and ESI funds could be included. By the end of the reporting period, 179 projects were featured on the website<sup>207</sup>.

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013, the Investing in Your Future website registered a total of 20,810 visits, 15,448 of which being unique visitors<sup>208</sup>. Figure 1 hereunder provides the complete audience overview for the reporting year:

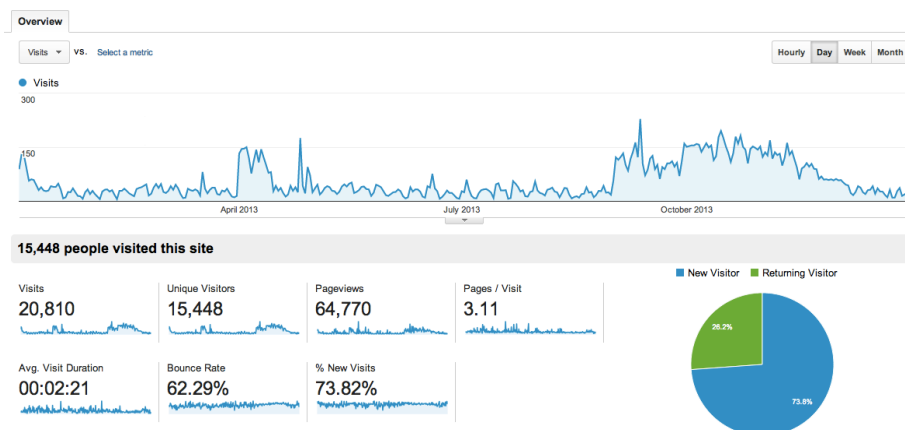


Figure 3 - Complete audience overview for [www.investinginyourfuture.gov.mt](http://www.investinginyourfuture.gov.mt) for the year 2013

The peaks in the graphical representation above match the promotional efforts made by the MA to familiarise the public with this website. Besides the short-term campaign of electronic leader board adverts on news websites, carried out following launch and lasting from 30<sup>th</sup> December 2012 to 6<sup>th</sup> January 2013, the same approach was applied for two weeks in April (from 1<sup>st</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> April) and for 12 weeks in autumn (from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 23<sup>rd</sup> November), flanking the Annual Information Activity as described above. In addition to this, half page adverts on a number of local lifestyle magazines, including the in-flight magazine found onboard all journeys carried by the national airline, were also carried out between May and June.

<sup>207</sup> By the end of the reporting period, 179 projects were featured on the website. 110 were OPI projects while 69 were OPII projects.

<sup>208</sup> The number of visits denotes the number of people who visited the website. Pages / Visit is the average number of pages viewed during a visit to the website (repeated views of a single page are counted). On the other hand, Average Visit Duration denotes the average time duration of a session. The % New Visits is an estimate of the percentage of first time visits whereas the Bounce Rate represents the percentage of single-page visits (i.e. visits in which the person left the site from the entry page). (Source: Google Analytics)

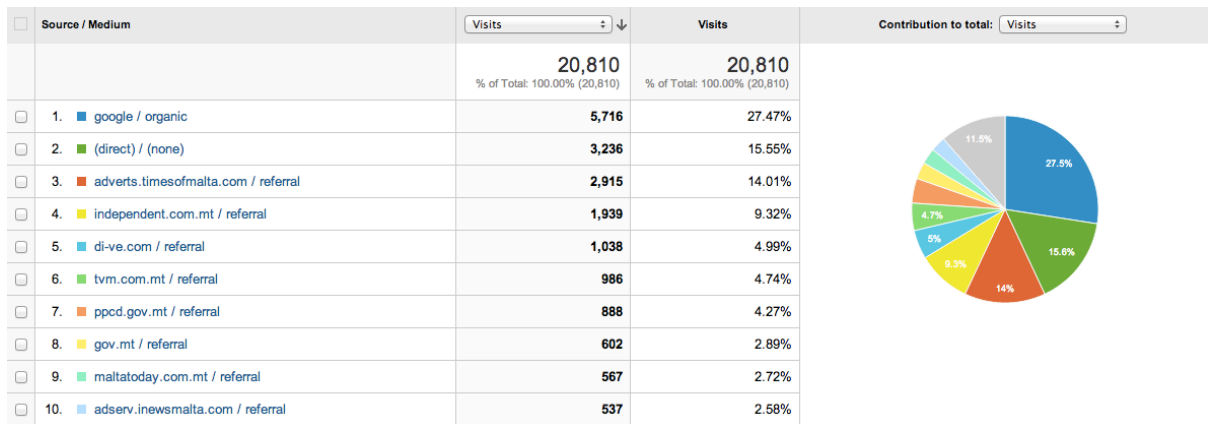


Figure 4 - Traffic Sources to www.investinginyourfuture.gov.mt during 2013

As indicated in Figure 4 above (Source: Google Analytics), the majority of traffic to the website derives from searches made on the Google search engine or directly through typing the website address in the browser's address bar. As per figure 3 below and as expected, the majority of users were from Malta.

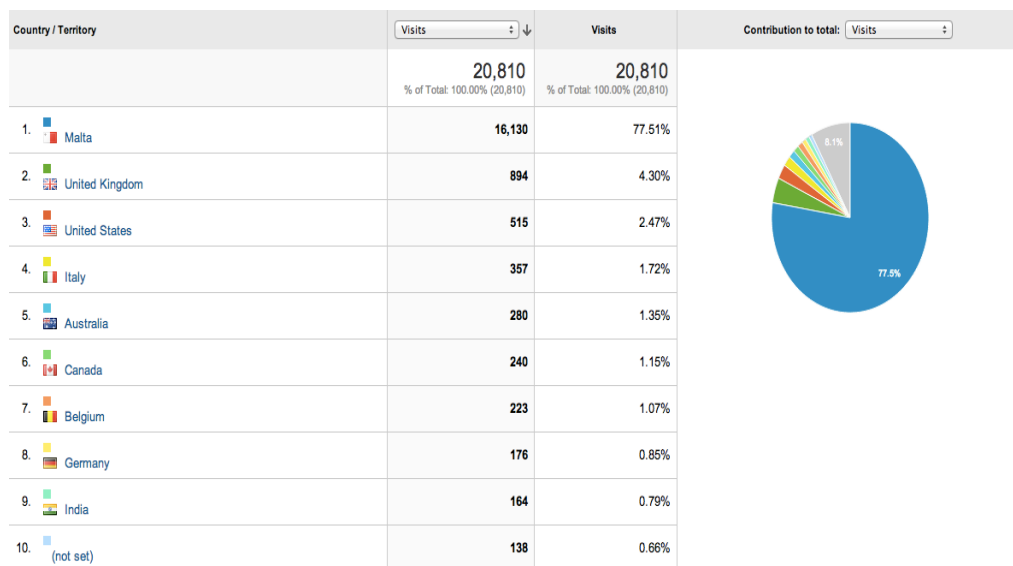


Figure 5 - Location of users on www.investinginyourfuture.gov.mt during 2013

The website was designed in a way which could easily and equally be accessed from new mobile technology as well as desktop computers. Figure 6 below indicates that preference in accessing the website is via desktop, still visits from tablet and mobiles are still considerable, and the MA has made this option easier by including the website's QR code which can be read by QR-code reader enabled mobile devices, on a number of promotional items which are disseminated at events and among stakeholders.

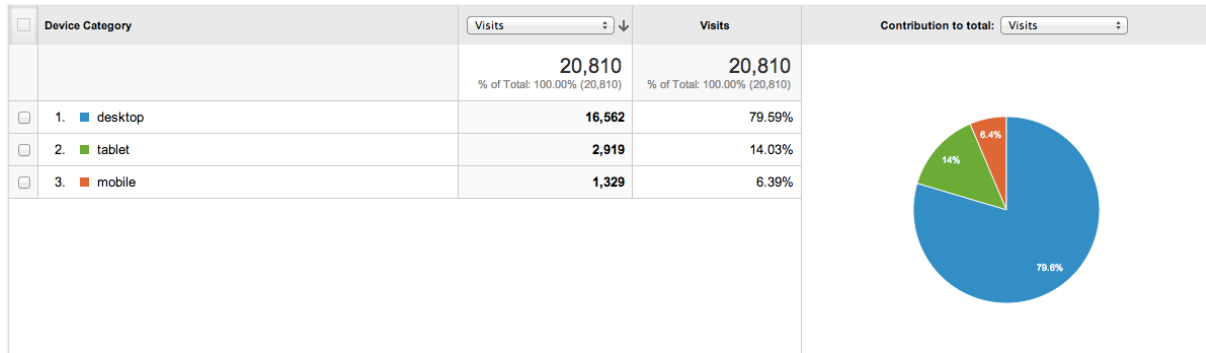


Figure 6 - Devices used for accessing www.investinginyourfuture.gov.mt during 2013

Complementary to the website are the Investing in Your Future Facebook account where news items by the MA as well as the Beneficiaries are uploaded on a regular basis. Project launches or closures are publicised on these channels through Press Releases issued by the Government's Department of Information.<sup>209</sup> Other ways of generating traffic on the Facebook page were explored including giving added highlight on particular projects, uploading photos from one of the projects being supported; asking people to search the website to identify which project is being featured in the style of a treasure hunt (the first correct comment receives a goodie bag with promotional material<sup>210</sup>); and uploading 'bite-sized' information in a graphical form on projects co-financed under Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, as well as the programmes in general and other EU related matters for easy capture and recollection by the following public.

### 6.2.2 Calls for Projects and Information Sessions for Project Promoters

Two (2) calls for Project Proposals were issued during 2013 and two (2) information sessions were held to guide potential project beneficiaries in preparing their submissions. Summarily, the calls issued are presented in the table below:

Table 34 - Calls for Project Proposals Information Sessions

| Call no. | Priority Axis  | Issued on                                      | Information Session held on |
|----------|--|--|-----------------------------|
| 12       | Priority Axis 3 - Promoting an Equal and Inclusive Labour Market             | PR: 31 May 2013<br>Ad: 02 June 2013            | 10 June 2013                |
| 13       | Priority Axis 4 - Strengthening of Institutional and Administrative Capacity | PR: 06 September 2013<br>Ad: 08 September 2013 | 16 September 2013           |

<sup>209</sup> In total, two Press Releases related to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> call for project proposals under OPII were published. Another Press Release published by the MA was related to the Notte Bianca.

<sup>210</sup> The goodie bag includes, among others, all the promotional material procured through the Annual Information Activity contract, as indicated in an earlier footnote, as well as any other promotional material which would have remained in stock from previous years.

Both calls were published through a Press Releases as well as adverts on all newspapers on dates indicated above. Additionally, these were also advertised on the PPCD official website, social media, as well as through the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC)'s various communication channels. A total of 21 persons attended the information sessions held throughout the year for the two calls for applications.

### **6.2.3 Information and Publicity Networks**

Article 10 of EC128/2006 states that Managing Authorities shall designate contact persons to participate in community networks to ensure exchange of good practice and experience, as well as engage in a discussion on results of the various communication activities across Member States. In view of conflicting commitments, it was not possible for the MA to participate in the INIO network meetings held during 2013 on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2013 in Vilnius, Lithuania, and 18<sup>th</sup> September 2013 in London, UK.

A member of the communications unit however participated in the Telling the Story conference: Communicating European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020, held in Brussels on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013. This conference focused on the different stories that can be used to communicate EU Funds and their benefits among citizens, particularly in the framework of the 2014-2020 programming period which envisages common provisions for all five (5) European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds<sup>211</sup>. Plenary sessions included speeches by Commissioners Johannes Hahn and Dacian Ciolos, as well as practitioners in the field and an overview of the latest Euro Barometer poll on the citizens' perceptions on the EU. A number of workshops were also included on the programme. The conference was organised by the European Commission.

The MA also participated in the 4th European Conference on Public Communication - EuroPCom: [S]electing Europe held in Brussels (Belgium) on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013. While being primarily focused on the European Parliament elections scheduled for May 2014, the conference discussed a number of approaches one can take when communicating Europe and what 'it' does to its citizens.

On a local level, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Local Informal Information and Publicity (LIIP) network was held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2013. During the meeting, a presentation on Social Media in Public Administrations and Institutions, covering pros and cons, approach to be used and how social media use can be monitored for reporting purposes, all within the context of EU Funds and EU funded projects was delivered<sup>212</sup>. A senior journalist from the national TV station was also involved in this meeting and led a session on the communication of

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<sup>211</sup> ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD and EMFF; collectively known as the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

<sup>212</sup> This presentation was based on training received by one of the Communications Unit officers in Berlin in March 2013. The training covered various aspects of social media in the context of public administrations, with workshops led by experts in the field, including a Communications Officer from DG Empl. The training emphasised the importance of a two-way / conversational flow of information rather than the more static one-way flow of information provided through websites or traditional media. Importance was given to the promptness required in dealing with incoming comments / feedback on social media networks so as to ensure that correct information is provided to the users, and not to give vent to negative influencers who may harm the public organisation's reputation. The monitoring and evaluation aspect of using social media networks was also covered, with examples of various tools which can be used to assess the efficacy or otherwise of the messages being broadcast through such channels.



EU Funds and EU funded projects from a journalist's perspective. A presentation on the Manual of Procedures and Visual Identity Guidelines, and spot-checks / audit checks on publicity were also delivered during the meeting by other members of the MA.



Photo - DOI - Clodagh Farrugia O'Neill

#### **6.2.4 Website and Social Network Page**

During 2013, the PPCD website [www.ppcd.gov.mt](http://www.ppcd.gov.mt)<sup>213</sup> continued being updated with news about the calls for project proposals listed above as well as other information related to the Programme Implementation (AIR, MC presentations, etc)<sup>214</sup>. Furthermore, in line with (EC) 1828/2006 Art. 7 (2) (d), the MA continued to regularly update the list of Beneficiaries with new information as necessary. It needs to be pointed out that the PPCD website will be phased out in 2014. A new website, encompassing all EU funds, and providing a 'one-stop-shop' approach to information for the public has been set up by the Ministry. The new website, [www.eufunds.gov.mt](http://www.eufunds.gov.mt) was launched on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013 by the Parliamentary Secretary for the EU Presidency 2017 and EU Funds and covers Cohesion Policy-related information as well as information related to other EU Funds. All information is now available on [www.eufunds.gov.mt](http://www.eufunds.gov.mt).

The PPCD page on a popular social networking site was also continuously updated by way of complementing the official website. However, since the setting up of the Investing in Your Future page on the same social networking site, it was noted that information was being duplicated however not effectively and followers were being divided between the two pages. For this reason, it was decided that the PPCD Facebook page would be closed down in Q3 of 2013. Existing followers were notified of such closing down and directed to follow the Investing in Your Future page on the same network.

<sup>213</sup> The website has now been superseded by a common website for all EU funded instruments: [www.eufunds.gov.mt](http://www.eufunds.gov.mt).

<sup>214</sup> The website also acts as a depository for documentation related to both open calls, such as application forms and guidance notes required for the submission of project proposals, as well as closed calls which are used primarily as a point of reference. Both open and closed calls are available on the website for transparency purposes.

## 6.2.5 Other Initiatives

### *Europe Day*

In line with (EC) 1828/2006 Art. 7 (2) (c), the EU flag was flown outside the MA's premises during the week of the 9th May 2013 (Europe Day).

### *RegioStars 2014*

In 2013, the MA selected two projects for possible submission for the RegioStars 2014 awards. The objective of the RegioStars Awards is to identify good practices in regional development and to highlight original and innovative projects which could be attractive and inspiring to other regions. The competition is organised by the European Commission. The selected projects were ERDF183 Vertical Connection - Better accessibility through innovative and cleaner transport and ESF3.60 Youth Employment Programme. Neither of the two applications, however, made it to the final.

### *European Year of Citizens*

On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2013, the communications unit hosted an information stand during the Citizens' Fair organised by the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) as the official closing event of the European Year of Citizens. The event, themed, 'Celebrating the European Year of Citizens 2013', was organised in collaboration with the Office of the President, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and EU national contact points. Information on Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 was provided to the visiting public and promotional items were also distributed during this event.



### *Youth on the Move*

On 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> December 2013, the MA participated in the Youth on the Move Campaign organised by the European Commission Representation Office in Malta. During this activity, members of the MA provided information to the visiting public on the achievements made in Malta through Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, with particular focus on operations co-financed through ESF. Promotional items to publicize the projects website were also distributed during this event.



### *Professional Photographic Services*

During 2013, the MA procured the services of a professional photographer to provide the Authority with high-resolution photographs of projects and events to be used on publicity material, including among others promotional items, the Investing in Your Future website as well as the collateral social media.

## **6.3 Expenditure during 2013**

Table 35 below lists the total expenditure during 2013 which amounted to €287,914.14<sup>215</sup> of which €84,100.19 was ESF funded.

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<sup>215</sup> Total expenditure for 2013 in terms of OP I and OP II for communication.

**Table 35 - Total expenditure (%) on information and publicity measures (OPII) for 2013**

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Visibility and Awareness of Cohesion Policy Aims and Results            |             |
| Annual Event including Launch Event                                     | € 33,586.32 |
| Local and other Communication Networks                                  | € 563.26    |
| Complementary measures to support the Information Events                |             |
| Publications and Collateral materials                                   | € -         |
| Media Campaigns   | € 43,475.40 |
| Promotional Items   | € 1,800.00  |
| Measures relating to Transparency, Technical and Procedural Information |             |
| Calls for Project Proposals incl. Information Sessions                  | € 4,577.85  |
| Other ad hoc measures incl. ongoing monitoring and evaluation           | € 97.36     |
| Total ESF expenditure 2013:   | € 84,100.19 |

As can be seen, 53.84% of expenditure during 2013 was taken up by Media Campaigns and Promotional Items under the *Complementary measures to support the Information Events*, with a total expenditure of €45,275.40<sup>216</sup>. Out of the total expenditure for 2013, around 52% were spent, on media campaigns, incorporating the various electronic and print adverts promoting the Investing in Your Future website and the thematic advertorials. The measure as reported above also takes into consideration the professional photographic services procured. It is to be noted that promotional material produced for the Annual Information Activity is captured under the measure related to the Annual Event, and not separately under 'Promotional Items', since these formed part of the same contract.

The *Visibility and Awareness of Cohesion Policy Aims and Results* measure contributed to 40.61% of the expenditure with a total expenditure of €34,149.58<sup>217</sup>.

As expected, the expenditure related to *Measures relating to Transparency, Technical and Procedural Information* has diminished substantially. This is due to the fact that only two calls were issued in 2013, with the cost representing just 5.56% of the total expenditure.

<sup>216</sup> ESF Share.

<sup>217</sup> ESF part, i.e. 30% of the cost incurred.

## 6.4 Expenditure to Date<sup>218</sup>

While Table 35 illustrated the Expenditure per Measure during the year under review, Table 36 below summarises the Expenditure to Date per measure up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013. Taking into consideration the regulatory obligations on the MA and the Communication Plan, the largest share (of the total ESF budget allocated) is assigned to the Annual Information Activities. As indicated in Table Table 35, expenditure to date on Annual Events amount to around 35% of the ESF share allocated towards *Visibility and Awareness of Cohesion Policy Aims and Results*. With the exception of 2008, 2012 and 2013, all Annual Information Activities took place in both Malta and Gozo.

**Table 36 - Expenditure to date on information and publicity measures (OPII)**

|  | % of Budget | Communication Plan Budget ESF (MA Share) | Total Expenditure to date | % Expenditure on Budget |
|--|-------------|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Visibility and Awareness of Cohesion Policy Aims and Results</b>            |             |  |                           |                         |
| Annual Event including Launch Event  | 43%         | € 253,700.00                             | € 89,343.32               | 35%                     |
| Local and other Communication Networks   | 2%          | € 11,800.00                              | € 742.26                  | 6%                      |
| <b>Complementary measures to support the Information Events</b>                |             |  |                           |                         |
| Publications and Collateral material   | 10%         | € 59,000.00                              | € 2,311.00                | 4%                      |
| Media Campaigns  | 15%         | € 88,500.00                              | € 48,844.40               | 55%                     |
| Promotional Items  | 15%         | € 88,500.00                              | € 25,454.00               | 29%                     |
| <b>Measures relating to Transparency, Technical and Procedural Information</b> |             |  |                           |                         |

<sup>218</sup> Information in this section relates to measures implemented from the start of the Programming period to December 2013.

|   |      |                 |                 |     |
|---|------|-----------------|-----------------|-----|
| Calls for Project Proposals incl. Information Sessions        | 12%  | €<br>70,800.00  | €<br>50,048.85  | 71% |
| Other ad hoc measures incl. ongoing monitoring and evaluation | 3%   | €<br>17,700.00  | €<br>3,594.36   | 20% |
| TOTAL   | 100% | €<br>590,000.00 | €<br>220,338.19 | 37% |

Expenditure on Media Campaigns rose from 6% by 2012 to a staggering 55% by 2013 in view of the almost year-long measures implemented by the MA to promote the Investing in Your Future website (through the electronic leader board adverts and other tools such as advertorials on all print newspapers issued on Sundays).

Expenditure linked to Promotional Items, have risen to around 29% from 27% in 2012. This increase does not take into consideration the merchandise procured through the Annual Information Activity contract (this cost is captured under the relevant *Visibility and Awareness of Cohesion Policy Aims and Results* measure). Promotional items are primarily disseminated at annual information activities as well as other information events and among stakeholders, as already explained above. These are considered to be a useful tool in the promotion of the Programmes as owners and users of such items are constantly reminded of the Programmes and their respective achievements. Furthermore, when used, items handed out at the various events would conjure up the memory and the information gained during that event. Promotional items are therefore envisaged to remain a regular item on the MA's budget until the end of the programming period.

Calls for project proposals and information sessions held in order to facilitate the application process constitute 12% (or €70,800) of the ESF Communication budget. Out of this amount, the percentage expenditure on this measure has risen to 71% in the year under review.

## 6.5 Information and Publicity by Intermediate Bodies in 2013

The Intermediate Body of OP II, the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) continues to complement actions carried out by the MA through a series of activities to promote and further disseminate information about its' Aid Schemes<sup>219</sup> which are the Training Aid Framework<sup>220</sup> (TAF) and the Employment Aid Programme<sup>221</sup> (EAP).

<sup>219</sup> Funds for IB publicity are provided by the IB concerned and are not financed through Programme funds.

<sup>220</sup> ESF 2.65

<sup>221</sup> ESF 3.64

### ***Training Aid Framework***

The TAF was closed in June 2012 following the absorption of the available budget. During the year under review the Corporation continued to disburse the funds allocated and the publicity actions were more focused on one-to-one meetings with the beneficiaries for which reimbursement was due. During the checks, ETC has also ensured that all the publicity obligations on the beneficiary were being adhered to. Furthermore, the list of TAF beneficiaries continued to be updated and regularly made available online on both the ETC and MA's websites respectively.

### ***Employment Aid Programme***

During 2013, the IB commenced a publicity campaign on the EAP success stories. From March till June 2013 six (6) billboards with two different communications signalled the successful participation of employers and the number of persons that entered the labour market through this Programme. Subsequently, EAP beneficiaries and participants were involved in three (3) different TV spots during which their positive experience through the EAP was aired on the most popular three (3) stations for forty four (44) times.

An extension of the EAP was launched in October 2013 whereby additional funding was allocated (more than €1.9 million) for the benefit of the island of Gozo due to the specific socio-economic situation in Gozo. The re-opening of the EAP applications for Gozo were highly publicized as the IB needed to obtain a considerable amount of applications from Gozo in a very short time. Adverts were published for six consecutive weeks, in the three most popular Sunday newspapers, to inform the general public about the re-opening of the EAP applications. An advert was also published in October 2013 issue of the 'Economic Update', which is a popular magazine for the business community. Leaflets have been distributed to all undertakings and self-employed persons in Gozo. In addition, a booklet incorporating the guidance notes and a template of the application documentation were distributed in every household in Gozo, two billboards, one in Malta and another one in Gozo were also set-up to ensure that proper visibility was provided to the re-opening of the EAP. Additional publicity actions in relation to the EAP extension consisted also of two information meetings at application stage to Gozitan prospective applicants to promote and explain the Scheme. More than fifty (50) employers attended the second information session during which a presentation on the eligibility criteria of the participants and the undertaking was delivered. During these sessions, the initiatives undertaken by ETC to simplify the application and the reimbursement process were explained and discussed. The IB's web-site was continuously being updated with the latest news including the uploading of photos and the presentation delivered during the information session.

In 2013, the list of EAP beneficiaries continued to be updated and regularly made available online on both the ETC and MA's websites respectively in line with EC Regulations<sup>222</sup>.

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<sup>222</sup> <http://etc.gov.mt/Category/5/72/Forms.aspx?1=1#taf>

## 6.6 Information and Publicity by Beneficiaries in 2013

During 2013 beneficiaries continued to carry out a number of publicity measures to promote their respective projects. The chart below indicates the type of measures implemented during the reporting year, whereby a substantial number of projects made use of various information and publicity measures in accordance with the regulation and respective Grant Agreements.<sup>223</sup> However, it is worth noting that projects are at different stages of implementation; therefore it is difficult to benchmark and compare such activities. Moreover, the figures provided below do not reflect all the activities being carried out under the ESF-funded projects as only 'new' activities carried out in 2013 are reported upon. Hence, it is not taking into account activities which were carried out in a previous year for projects which had already started their activities in the preceding years.

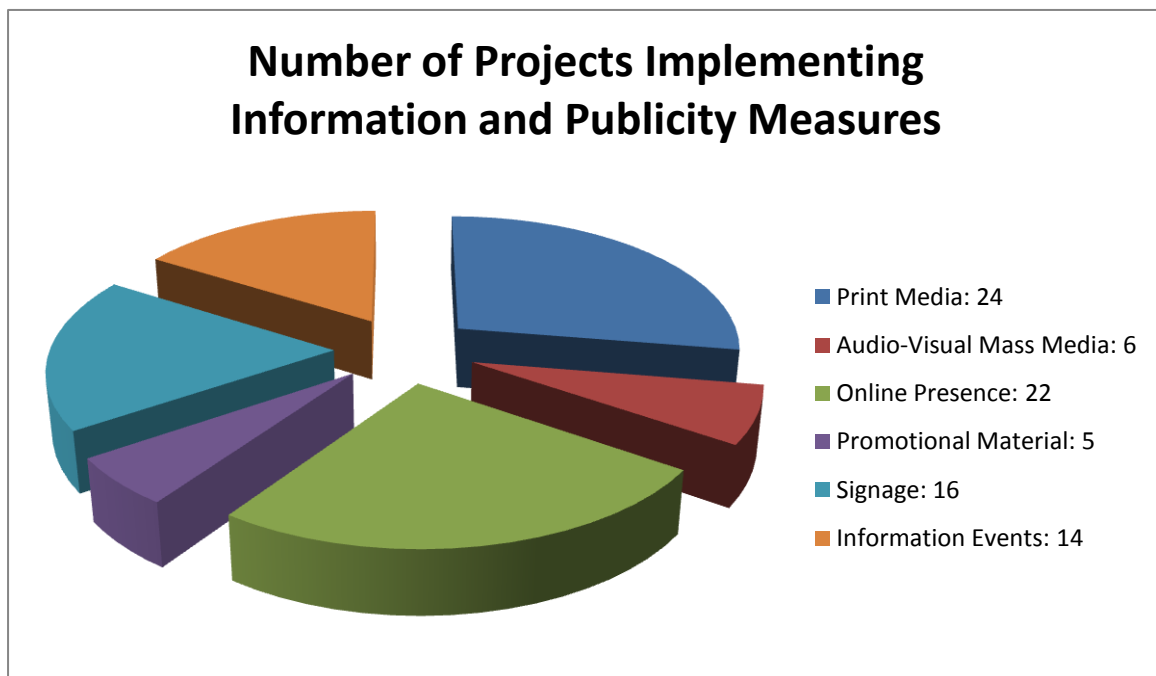


Figure 7 - Number of projects implementing information and publicity measures

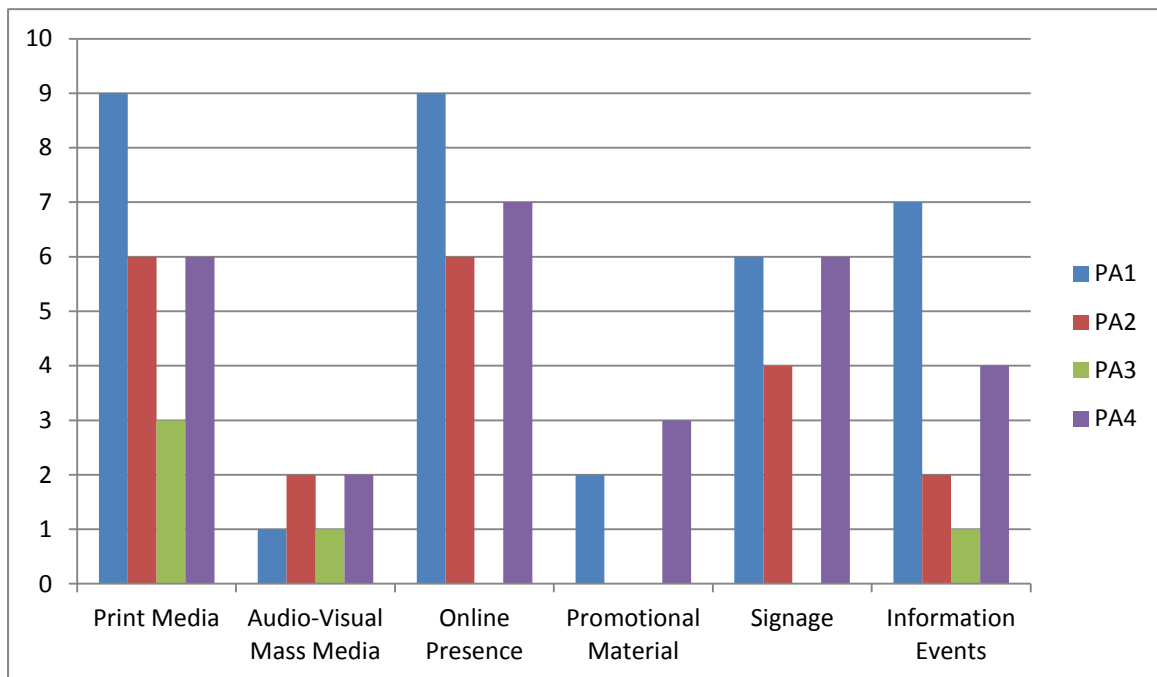
As can be seen from the above chart, beneficiaries used a mix of publicity measures, with some actions being more popular than others. The overall statistics can be further broken down as follows:

- **Print Media:** This seems to be the most widely used publicity tool for ESF-funded projects. Under this category, beneficiaries published adverts and/or articles in local newspapers and magazines, issued press releases on the Government Gazette and/or newspapers, and produced flyers/ leaflets/ brochures/ booklets to promote the project and the project activities.

<sup>223</sup> It is important to note that beneficiaries made use of more than one publicity measure however for the purpose of this exercise only the projects are being counted and not the actions.



- **Audio-visual mass media:** This communication tool is one of the least common publicity measures. Only one project carried out a TV spot and there was little participation by beneficiaries in radio programmes/ interviews broadcasted on the radio and/or TV.
- **Online presence:** With regard to this particular tool, only five projects have a dedicated website, thirteen projects have a webpage in the beneficiaries' website, six projects have a social network presence (which mainly includes a Facebook page or group) and six beneficiaries made use of e-newsletter.
- **Promotional material:** This is not widely used by beneficiaries, with only five beneficiaries making use of promotional items, including folders, pens, file jackets, etc.
- **Signage:** During the year under review, only two projects made use of billboards, three made use of plaques, three made use of stickers, and twelve made use of posters. Other type of publicity mainly consisted of banners and roll-up stands for the graduation ceremonies, seminars, training sessions and conferences.
- **Information Events:** Fourteen beneficiaries have organised information events that ranged from event launches, information sessions, training sessions, participation in fairs. The event organised would reflect the stage of implementation of project approved.



**Figure 8 - Number of projects carrying out publicity and information measures per PA**

As can be noted from the bar-chart above, Priority Axis (PA) 1 registered the highest publicity measures overall. This can be due to the intrinsic nature of the initiatives funded under PA 1 which aim to improve Malta's educational skills and invest in human capital which requires the need to create awareness of activities being supported through ESF and to generate interest to activities financed under PA 1. Thus, there is a strong need to promote awareness about courses and educational opportunities on offer in order to generate interest among the target groups. Moreover, most of the projects were still well underway in their implementation stage. ESF1.125, ESF1.130 and ESF1.225 made most use of publicity

and information measures. The three projects made use of print media and the online media, organized information events, and ESF1.130 also used the TV as a medium. Moreover, it is worth noting that during the period under review, there were two (2) calls for scholarships under ESF 1.225 Master It! for courses at Masters level resulting in a significant amount (i.e. over 300) of approved scholarships in 2013. With regards to ESF 1.125 various publicity tools were used in order to publicize the external seminars that aimed to raise awareness and provide knowledge related to KT and IP within the wider Maltese context amongst University staff, business, students, potential investors and the general public.

PA2<sup>224</sup> ranked fairly well in the use of publicity and other information measures. PA2 focuses mainly on increasing the participation rate in lifelong learning amongst the employed, unemployed, inactive and older workers and on aiding enterprises adapt to the needs of the economy, therefore it is expected that communication tools are continuously used in order to reach to their target groups. A project which used varied communication tools is ESF 2.78 which aims to render the tourism industry more appealing to individuals who might already possess the skills to join the industry and others who have the potential to upgrade their skills to address mismatches. In order to reach its target groups, it made mostly use of print media, online media, audio-visual mass media and also had signage on several occasions.

PA 3<sup>225</sup> projects were the lowest used of publicity measures. However, it is important to note that most of the projects funded under this PA were in their final stages of implementation, with most of them having completed all their activities during the year under review. There were 2 projects selected and approved in 2013, therefore still in their infancy stage and activities are expected to pick up in 2014. At this stage, most of the projects made use of only one media tool, however ESF3.102, which aims to review the curricula of its Pathway and Level 1-3 programmes to facilitate the progression of vulnerable students to higher vocational programme and employment, and used print media, radio and the organisation of a number of events (three).

Considering that the main focus of PA4 is to strengthen institutional capacity and efficiency of public administrations, local government, social partners and civil society, one does not expect much publicity measures to be carried out by the beneficiaries, still in the year under review, PA4 reported an increase in its publicity and information measures from previous years; the main reason being that more projects are now well into their implementation phase and some of the projects approved are actually about information. In the case of the latter, the publicity measures implemented through the awareness campaign under ESF4.163 aim at informing the general public about the rights and responsibilities as consumers and encouraging undertakings to become more aware of the application and enforcement of the national and EU competition rules. The public was reached through TV, radio and newspaper adverts, and dissemination of informative material as well as information seminars.

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<sup>224</sup> This does not include activities undertaken by TAF Aid Scheme.

<sup>225</sup> This does not include activities undertaken by EAP Aid schemes.

## 6.7 Communication Plan Indicators

Table 37 below lists the achievements registered by the various communication measures on an annual basis. It is worth mentioning again that during the previous reporting year (2012), the indicators were aligned to the costs. This has resulted in indicators which are better defined and consequently more measurable for monitoring purposes.

The Information and Publicity activities characterizing the year under review (as reported in the above sections of this Chapter) have been captured into measurable targets and are recorded hereunder. The Communication measures registering substantial increases in target output during 2013 were measures related to (a) Print Media, (b) Promotional Material, (c) Public Displays and (d) Media Relations. Conversely to previous years, a drop was registered in measures relating to Info Sessions and specifically in the promotion of calls for project proposals and respective pre-announcements. Such drop is expected in light of the small number of calls issued during the reporting year as highlighted earlier, as well as in view of the fact that the programme is nearing its end.

The output target of one (1) annual event per year has this year been achieved through the Notte Bianca event. Whilst the total number of participants for this event is known (output indicator), the 'average increased awareness of Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 projects for participants following the annual event' (result indicator) could not be recorded during the reporting year. It is worth noting also that the MA participated in two events organised by other stakeholders – MEUSAC with regard to the Citizens' Fair; and the Office of the European Commission Representation with regard to the Youth on the Move campaign – which continued to increase the outreach and public awareness of Cohesion Policy 2007-2013.

It is important to note also that the outreach of the substantial media campaign carried out in relation to the Annual Information Activity (Notte Bianca) is only measured in terms of print media outreach (result indicator) as the indicator is specific to newspapers. However, an impression of the traffic generated towards the Investing in Your Future website can be found in Figure 2 above. Once again, no increase in indicator output was registered for Media Advertising and Audio Visual since no TV / radio airtime was bought and no documentaries were produced in 2013. However, press coverage of communication activities carried out by the MA or where the MA has actively participated has increased, therefore translating in indirect airtime and coverage during news bulletins.

Operational Programme II – Communication Plan Indicators

(Targets are until 2015 and cover both Ops)

(D.N.A. – Data not available in the case of new indicators and/or where the information was not gathered or available at the time)

Table 37 - Communication Plan Indicator

| Communication Measure | Output   | Target             | 2007    | 2008 | 2009 | 2010    | 2011 | 2012   | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | Total | Result   | Target | 2007   | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012  | 2013   | 2014   | 2015   | Total |  |  |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------|---------|------|------|---------|------|--------|------|------|------|-------|--|--------|--------|------|------|------|------|-------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--|--|
| Events                | Total no. of annual events organised:  | 1 per year         | 1       | 1    | 1    | 1       | 1    | 1      | 1    |      |      | 7     | Average increased awareness of Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 projects for participants following the annual event: | 50%    | D.N.A. |      |      |      |      | 49.66 | 50.00% | D.N.A. | D.N.A. |       |  |  |
|                       | Total no. of objectively verifiable expected participants attending annual events: | 1,000 participants | D.N.A.* |      | 106  | D.N.A.* | 400  | D.N.A. | 553  |      |      | 1059  |  |        |        |      |      |      |      |       |        |        |        |       |  |  |
|                       | MA participation in events organised by others:                                    | 10                 | 2       | 1    | 1    | 0       | 0    | 0      | 2    |      |      | 6     |  |        |        |      |      |      |      |       |        |        |        |       |  |  |
|                       |  |                    |         |      |      |         |      |        |      |      |      |       |  |        |        |      |      |      |      |       |        |        |        |       |  |  |
| Media                 | Total no. of   | 7                  | 0       | 0    | 0    | 0       | 1    | 0      | 0    |      |      | 1     | Average  | 25%    | 0      | 0    | 0    | 0    | 39.2 | 0     | 0      |        |        |       |  |  |

|               |   |     |   |     |   |    |    |   |   |  |  |                                     |  |   |        |         |        |        |         |       |   |  |  |     |
|---------------|---|-----|---|-----|---|----|----|---|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|--------|---------|--------|--------|---------|-------|---|--|--|-----|
| Advertising   | TV spots created:   |     |   |     |   |    |    |   |   |  |  | expected % coverage for TV viewers: | of the population (at the time of airing)  |   |        |         |        | 0%     |         |       |   |  |  |     |
|               | Total no. of spots aired on TV:                           | 150 | 0 | 0   | 0 | 0  | 37 | 0 | 0 |  |  | 37                                  |  |   |        |         |        |        |         |       |   |  |  |     |
|               | Total no. of radio spots created:                         | 10  | 0 | 2   | 0 | 2  | 1  | 0 | 0 |  |  | 5                                   | Average expected % coverage for radio listeners:   | 25% of the population (at the time of airing) | 0.00 % | 28.10 % | 0.00 % | 5.50 % | 38.25 % | 0     | 0 |  |  |     |
|               | Total no. of spots aired on Radio:                        | 400 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 40 | 84 | 0 | 0 |  |  | 224                                 |  |   |        |         |        |        |         |       |   |  |  |     |
|               |   |     |   |     |   |    |    |   |   |  |  |                                     | Average increased awareness of Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 of the total population per media campaign: | 20%   | D.N.A. |         |        |        |         |       |   |  |  |     |
|               |   |     |   |     |   |    |    |   |   |  |  |                                     |  |   |        |         |        |        |         |       |   |  |  |     |
| Audio- Visual | Total no. of documentaries produced:                      | 3   | 2 | 0   | 0 | 0  | 1  | 0 | 0 |  |  | 3**                                 | No. of viewing times (on the web, media and during events):  | 300   | 2      | 0       | 0      | 0      | 72      | 96*** | 0 |  |  | 170 |
|               | Total no. of potential viewing sources for documentaries: | 25  | 2 | 0   | 0 | 0  | 1  | 0 | 0 |  |  | 3                                   |  |   |        |         |        |        |         |       |   |  |  |     |

| Print Media | Total no. of adverts designed for media campaigns:                         | 14  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 22  |  |  | 22   | Average expected % of newspaper readers targeted: | 45% | D.N.A. | 51.50% | 51%    | 49.91% | 56.12% | 52.91% |        |
|-------------|--|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|--|--|------|---|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|             | Total no. of adverts designed for annual events:                           | 16  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2   |  |  | 14   |   |     |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|             | Total no. of adverts published for campaigns:                              | 140 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 230 |  |  | 230  |   |     |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|             | Total no. of adverts published for annual events:                          | 220 | 20 | 14 | 12 | 11 | 21 | 7  | 9   |  |  | 94   |   |     |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|             | Total no. of adverts designed for calls for projects & pre-announcements:  | 60  | 4  | 8  | 2  | 6  | 2  | 12 | 4   |  |  | 38** | Average expected % of newspaper readers targeted: | 45% | 30%    | 46%    | 51.50% | 51%    | 49.91% | 56.12% | 52.91% |
|             | Total no. of adverts published for calls for projects & pre-announcements: | 430 | 10 | 62 | 7  | 21 | 7  | 59 | 15  |  |  | 181* |   |     |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|             |  |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |  |  |      |   |     |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|             |  |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |  |  |      |   |     |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |

|                |  |        |     |       |   |       |       |    |        |  |  |        |   |       |        |        |        |        |        |        |                     |  |  |  |  |     |
|----------------|--|--------|-----|-------|---|-------|-------|----|--------|--|--|--------|---|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------------|--|--|--|--|-----|
|                | Total no. of press releases for promotion of campaigns:                              | 4      | 0   | 0     | 0 | 0     | 0     | 0  | 0      |  |  | 0      | Average coverage of the population for press releases:  | 15%   | 0.63 % | 2.50 % | 0.62 % | 0.55 % | 0.62 % | 0.75 % | 0.09 % <sup>1</sup> |  |  |  |  |     |
|                | Total no. of press releases for promotion of annual events:                          | 10     | 0   | 0     | 2 | 2     | 2     | 2  | 2      |  |  | 10     |   |       |        |        |        |        |        |        |                     |  |  |  |  |     |
|                | Total no. of press releases for promotion of calls for projects & pre-announcements: | 70     | 1   | 4     | 0 | 6     | 2     | 12 | 4      |  |  | 29**   |   |       |        |        |        |        |        |        |                     |  |  |  |  |     |
|                |  |        |     |       |   |       |       |    |        |  |  |        |   |       |        |        |        |        |        |        |                     |  |  |  |  |     |
| Promo Material | Total no. of promotional items created:  | 40     | 1   | 5     | 0 | 8     | 8     | 0  | 14     |  |  | 36     | Average population targeted through the items produced: | 5%    | 0.13 % | 2.13 % | 0%     | 1.88 % | 1.67 % | 0.27 % | 7.63 %              |  |  |  |  |     |
|                | Total no. of targeted items produced:  | 40,000 | 500 | 8,000 | 0 | 6,850 | 6,200 | 0  | 28,541 |  |  | 50,091 |   |       |        |        |        |        |        |        |                     |  |  |  |  |     |
|                |  |        |     |       |   |       |       |    |        |  |  |        |   |       |        |        |        |        |        |        |                     |  |  |  |  |     |
| Info Sessions  | Total no. of information sessions for project promoters organised:                   | 60     | 3   | 5     | 0 | 6     | 1     | 5  | 2      |  |  | 22**   | Total no. of participants in information sessions:      | 1,400 | 119    | 199    | 0      | 178    | 47     | 117    | 21                  |  |  |  |  | 681 |

|                 |  |    |     |     |   |   |     |     |    |  |  |      |  |     |        |    |        |     |        |                     |    |  |    |
|-----------------|--|----|-----|-----|---|---|-----|-----|----|--|--|------|--|-----|--------|----|--------|-----|--------|---------------------|----|--|----|
|                 | Duration of information sessions in days:                                  | 30 | 1.5 | 2.5 | 0 | 3 | 0.5 | 2.5 | 1  |  |  | 11** | Average satisfaction rate of participants in information sessions: | 60% | D.N.A. | 0% | D.N.A. | 88% | 74.64% | 100% <sup>226</sup> |    |  |    |
|                 |  |    |     |     |   |   |     |     |    |  |  |      |  |     |        |    |        |     |        |                     |    |  |    |
| Networks        | Participation at EU level Network meetings (INIO):                         | 1  | 1   | 1   | 1 | 1 | 1   | 1   | 0  |  |  | 6    | Participation at EU level network meetings:                        | 18  | 2      | 2  | 2      | 2   | 2      | 3                   | 0  |  | 13 |
|                 | Total no. of Communication local network meetings                          | 7  | 0   | 0   | 0 | 0 | 1   | 1   | 1  |  |  | 3    | Total no. of participants at local network meetings per year       | 50  | 0      | 0  | 0      | 0   | 31     | 28                  | 26 |  | 85 |
|                 |  |    |     |     |   |   |     |     |    |  |  |      |  |     |        |    |        |     |        |                     |    |  |    |
| Public Displays | Total no. of public displays:  | 85 | 1   | 12  | 0 | 6 | 42  | 1   | 15 |  |  | 77   |  |     |        |    |        |     |        |                     |    |  |    |
|                 | Total no. of items designed including posters + items related to Programme | 10 | 1   | 2   | 0 | 1 | 2   | 3   | 0  |  |  | 9    |  |     |        |    |        |     |        |                     |    |  |    |
|                 |  |    |     |     |   |   |     |     |    |  |  |      |  |     |        |    |        |     |        |                     |    |  |    |

<sup>226</sup> % is based on number of submitted evaluation sheets



|                 |   |               |               |     |    |    |    |    |    |  |  |   |   |        |        |       |        |        |        |     |                   |  |  |     |
|-----------------|---|---------------|---------------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|--|--|---|---|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|-----|-------------------|--|--|-----|
| Publications    | Total no. of informative material / publications created:               | 60            | 2             | 6   | 17 | 26 | 20 | 25 | 15 |  |  | 111*                                    | Total no. of informative material / publications downloaded | 25,000 | D.N.A. | 1,768 | 3,815  | 4,871  | 8,030  |     |                   |  |  |     |
|                 | Total no. of informative material / publications uploaded:              | 60            | N/A           | N/A | 17 | 26 | 20 | 25 | 15 |  |  | 103*                                    |   |        |        |       |        |        |        |     |                   |  |  |     |
| Web             | Total no. of website pages (department website setup in Q3/Q4 of 2008): | 40EN + 40MT / | 40 EN + 40 MT |     |    |    |    |    |    |  |  | Average number of visits per month:     | 12,500  | N/A    | N/A    | 4,393 | 12,501 | 12,235 | 13,395 |     |                   |  |  |     |
|                 | Total no. of web presences  | 1             | 2             |     |    |    |    |    |    |  |  | Total no. of helpdesk queries per year: | 100   | 66     | 135    | 90    | 84     | 92     | 121    | 87  |                   |  |  | 675 |
|                 | Social networking page (setup in Q4 of 2010):                           | 1             | 0             | 0   | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  |  |  | 4                                       | Total no. of social network page subscribers:               | 400    | N/A    | N/A   | N/A    | 114    | 84     | 273 | 273 <sup>tt</sup> |  |  |     |
| Media Relations | Total no. of press participation in events:                             | 20            | 1             | 2   | 0  | 1  | 4  | 2  | 4  |  |  | 14                                      |   |        |        |       |        |        |        |     |                   |  |  |     |

|               |   |           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |            |     |    |  |  |
|---------------|---|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------|-----|----|--|--|
|               | <b>Total no. of media interviews/features, including articles</b> | <b>35</b> | 3 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 11  | 3 | 5 |            |     | 42 |  |  |
|               | <b>Total no. of media queries answered:</b>                       | <b>35</b> | 1 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 5   | 0 | 1 |            |     | 26 |  |  |
|               |   |           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |            |     |    |  |  |
| <b>Launch</b> | <b>No. of newsrooms covering the launch:</b>                      | 10        |   |   |   |   | <b>Total no. of media publicizing event:</b>              |   |   | <b>10</b>  | 10  |    |  |  |
|               | <b>No. of info seminars organised:</b>                            | 6         |   |   |   |   | <b>Total no. of participants at launch:</b>               |   |   | <b>250</b> | 250 |    |  |  |
|               |   |           |   |   |   |   | <b>Total no. of participants at information seminars:</b> |   |   | <b>300</b> | 300 |    |  |  |

\*2007 was the year of the launch; in 2008 the event was an information festival held at City Gate in Valletta; in 2010 the event was an ME&U fest (information festival). The nature of the events did not lend data to be captured.

In 2012 the information activity was the launch of a new website Investing in Your Future - the launch was open to members of the press only.

\*\*Calculated figures are for OPII only

\*\*\* The documentary produced last year is still available online for public viewing

†Press releases are no longer being distributed through The Direct Mailing Service as this system is currently being phased out and the general public is being directed to the Gov.mt section related to Press Releases, where PRs are updated in a timely manner. Hence, the figure is only representative of the PR distribution list held by the Department of Information.

†† Once a page is closed on Facebook, its details no longer remain available; Hence the figure reflects only subscribers to the Investing in Your Future page. The Total Number therefore remains unchanged.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

At this stage of the programming period, the importance of promoting results achieved through the various projects and schemes implemented is acknowledged and given much importance. Moreover, one needs to take into consideration the fact that the new programming period, covering the 2014-2020 financial framework is about to kick in, and therefore best practice examples and success stories from the 2007-2013 period are ripe for use as inspiration for new projects and sustained awareness and endorsement of Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 among the citizens.

For this reason, the MA will proceed with its communication efforts, giving the necessary promotion to actions under the OP, both through the use of traditional means of communication, as well as new and innovative media in order to capture the attention of the public. Support and cooperation by the Intermediate Bodies, Project Beneficiaries as well as other stakeholders will remain crucial in ensuring that the right target audiences are reached and the message put forward is a clear and positive one.

## 7 – Concluding Remarks

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This Annual Implementation Report conveys not only the challenges faced but also the achievements obtained during the year 2013. Due to the N+3/2 commitments, the Managing Authority, together with the stakeholders involved, focused their efforts in warranting enough commitment, disbursement and verification of amounts paid in a timely manner to achieve the financial targets. This should not take away any of the results which are being achieved on the ground by the eighty-four (84) operations<sup>227</sup> that are at different stages of implementation. All eighty-four (84) operations translate themselves into a total of €131,133,092 committed funds of which €93,104,495 have been contracted whilst €69,564,988 paid by year end. Up to December 2013, €62,034,045 had been verified out of which €61,942,286 were certified by CION.

As in previous years, Project Progress Meetings continued to address mitigating measures in relation to delaying factors, in particular, and major issues, in general, with an aim to facilitate the implementation of the programme and not to delay the benefits to ESF participants.

2013 saw a total of 14,428 individuals benefitting from ESF through the different operations implemented under the OP. Given that Malta's sole natural resource is the human capacity, the ESF contribution is crucial for the attainment of a more knowledgeable and competitive workforce, especially in the context of the current economic scenario.

In terms of achievements on the ground it is worth recalling the: awarding of scholarships leading to recognised qualifications in various areas both to students and public administration officials<sup>228</sup>; upgrading of curricula with the aim to reach and retain more disadvantaged and challenging students<sup>229</sup>; allocation further funds with the aim of enhancing the skills of disadvantaged groups<sup>230</sup>; and the enhancement of skills through basic courses<sup>231</sup>.

The year 2014 will present several challenges to the MA and all stakeholders involved. Such challenges include commitments emerging from the N+2 commitments for 2014 and the financial targets that need to materialise in the upcoming year but as well as challenges posed by the start of the activities linked to the implementation of the programming period 2014 – 2020.

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<sup>227</sup> Out of which by end of year thirty-three (33) were at closure stage.

<sup>228</sup> ESF1.225 and ESF4.100.

<sup>229</sup> ESF3.100

<sup>230</sup> ESF3.64

<sup>231</sup> ESF2.201

## Annex 1 – Cumulative Expenditure Table<sup>232</sup>

| Priority axes   | A<br>Total contribution | Financial progress    |                      |                      |            |            |             |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------|------------|-------------|
|   |                         | B<br>Commitments      | C<br>Contracted      | D<br>Payments        | (B/A)<br>% | (C/A)<br>% | (D/A)<br>%  |
| Priority axis 1<br>(ESF)<br><i>Improving education and skills</i>                                   | €41,400,000.00          | €41,731,039           | €30,970,703          | €27,786,151          | 100.8%     | 75%        | 67%         |
| Priority axis 2<br>(ESF)<br><i>Investing in the employability and adaptability of the workforce</i> | €30,995,000             | €31,479,740           | €24,886,656          | €15,619,701          | 102%       | 81%        | 51%         |
| Priority axis 3<br>(ESF)<br><i>Promoting an equal and inclusive labour market</i>                   | €36,900,000.00          | €37,466,955           | €25,402,671          | €17,895,997          | 102%       | 69%        | 48%         |
| Priority axis 4<br>(ESF)<br><i>Strengthening of Institutional and Administrative Capacity</i>       | €17,199,117             | €15,184,769.48        | €7,186,385.71        | €5,563,096.84        | 88%        | 42%        | 32%         |
| Priority axis 5<br>(ESF)<br><i>Technical Assistance</i>   | €5,270,588              | €5,270,588            | €4,133,235           | €2,700,051           | 100%       | 78.42%     | 51.23%      |
| <b>Grand Total</b>  | <b>131,764,705.00</b>   | <b>118,301,302.05</b> | <b>75,431,693.45</b> | <b>46,761,811.09</b> | <b>90%</b> | <b>58%</b> | <b>35 %</b> |

<sup>232</sup> Figures quoted represent progress as at end 2013 and are expressed in total public eligible cost.

## **Annex 2 – List of Projects & Aid Schemes as at end December 2013**

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### **Projects**

- 1) Online e-Learning Management System for Post-graduate Medical Training Activities (ESF 1.19)
- 2) Parents and Teachers Fusion ICT Training Programme (ESF 1.21)
- 3) Research Analysis and Training for Enhancing the University Library (ESF 1.22)
- 4) Higher education courses to address skills mismatches in Gozo (ESF 1.23)
- 5) Career Guidance Capacity Building (ESF 1.24)
- 6) Strategic Educational Pathway Scholarships - STEPS (ESF 1.25)
- 7) Accrediting Quality Vocational Training (VQPACK) (ESF 1.28)
- 8) Valuing all Skills for the Labour Market (SKILLSPLUS) (ESF 1.29)
- 9) Wood CPR: Education & Training in Wood Conservation Restoration (ICMCH) (ESF 1.31)
- 10) Increasing ICT Student Capacity in Malta (ESF 1.33)
- 11) Addressing skills mismatches in the aviation maintenance industry (ESF 1.34)
- 12) Professional development programmes for MCAST staff & student's top-up degrees (ESF 1.36)
- 13) Science Popularisation Campaign (ESF 1.40)
- 14) Training Support for the e-Learning Programme (ESF 1.123)
- 15) Creating a Knowledge Transfer Framework and Technology Entrepreneurship Training Programme (ESF 1.125)
- 16) Making VET Education More Relevant and Attractive (ESF 1.130)
- 17) Training Educators for Diversity (TED) (ESF 1.131)
- 18) Training Courses for the educational sector in Gozo (ESF1.209)

- 19) ePortfolio for Postgraduate Medical Training (ePmt) (ESF1.211)
- 20) Master It! (ESF 1.225)
- 21) Making Quality Visible (MQV) (ESF 1.227)
- 22) Design of Learning Outcomes Framework Associated Learning and Assessment Programmes and related Training (ESF 1.228)
- 23) Skills Acquisitions for Children and Adolescents (ESF 1.229)
- 24) Developing Leaders for Change and Innovation in Tourism (ESF 2.11)
- 25) Second Step (ESF 2.12)
- 26) Employability Programme (ESF 2.4)
- 27) Training Courses to enhance Employability and Adaptability of the Workforce (ESF 2.7)
- 28) EPITOME - Empowerment Programme for IT use: Outreach for Micro Entrepreneurship (ESF 2.72)
- 29) Retaining and Attracting People within Tourism through Diversity Management (ESF 2.78)
- 30) Promoting Life-Long Learning amongst Civil Society Organizations' Voluntary Staff (ESF 2.84)
- 31) Linking Industrial Needs and VET to Optimise Human Capital (ESF 2.85)
- 32) Train to Succeed (ESF 2.137)
- 33) Increasing Accessibility, Flexibility and Innovation to MCAST Life-Longlearning Course Offer (ESF 2.139)
- 34) Skills Upgrading for the Tourism Sector in Gozo (ESF 2.141)
- 35) Re-Skilling of Workers for the Local Film Industry (ESF2.186)
- 36) Enhancing Employability through Training (EET) (ESF2.201)
- 37) NETWORKED: ICT competences for better employability and workforce adaptability (ESF2.204)
- 38) An Independent living training service for disabled people in Malta (ESF 3.42)

- 39) Dignity for Domestic Violence Survivors (ESF 3.43)
- 40) Unlocking the female potential (ESF 3.47)
- 41) Lifelong Learning for enhanced employability for parents (LLEEP) (ESF 3.48)
- 42) Training of Inclusion Coordinators for Secondary Education (ESF 3.49)
- 43) Care creates changes in people's lives (ESF 3.52)
- 44) REACH- Opportunities close to home (ESF 3.54)
- 45) Specialised research on OHS and the development of OHS accreditation (ESF 3.56)
- 46) Nista': The benefits of sharing life's responsibilities campaign (ESF 3.59)
- 47) Youth Employment Programme (ESF3.60)
- 48) E4L: Embark for Life - Labour market integration of socially excluded youth (ESF 3.61)
- 49) ME2 (ESF 3.62)
- 50) Ic-Cavetta - Maltese Literacy Toolkit for employment and education inclusion (ESF 3.66)
- 51) Impact Assessment of Mental Health on Employment for Policy Development (ESF 3.71)
- 52) Inclusion for Employment (ESF 3.102)
- 53) Promoting the Social Inclusion of Disabled persons with Challenging Behaviour (ESF 3.105)
- 54) LWIEN (ESF 3.108)
- 55) Better Future: Promoting an Equal & Inclusive Labour Market (ESF 3.110)
- 56) Employment Support for Persons with Disabilities (ESF 3.113)
- 57) Employment in the Social Economy (ESF 3.114)
- 58) Health Mind for Healthy Business (ESF3.193)
- 59) Gender Balance in Decision-Making (ESF3.196)
- 60) Youth Guarantee (ESF3.231)
- 61) LEAP! Building the future together: promoting social mobility (ESF3.234)
- 62) Capacity Building for Equipping and Representing Micro Businesses Employers (ESF 4.86)
- 63) Developing the Maltese Public Sector's Capacity to Implement Better Regulation (ESF 4.87)



- 64) Closer to Europe (ESF 4.94)
- 65) Employee Support Programme (ESP) for Public Employees (ESF 4.97)
- 66) Strengthening IMU's and other related functions through Specialist Training Programmes (ESF 4.98)
- 67) Developing Core Skills in the Public Service (ESF 4.100)
- 68) Capacity Building for MCST (ESF 4.152)
- 69) Development Quality Management in the Public Administration through CAF (ESF 4.159)
- 70) Training of Consumer and Competition Officials and Awareness Campaign (ESF 4.163)
- 71) Time to Consolidate (ESF4.164)
- 72) Training Health Care Professionals for Integrating Acute and Community Care (ESF4.174)
- 73) Capacity Building for Medical Physics Services in Malta (ESF4.175)
- 74) Enhancing Data Protection Compliance in the Public Service (ESF4.180)
- 75) Improving Public Governance and Management at Local Level (ESF4.181)
- 76) Continuous Training and Development for the Public Sector in Gozo (ESF4.189)
- 77) SUCCESS-Capacity Building Programme for Public Service Sports Administrator (ESF4.216)
- 78) Capacity Building for Transport Malta Employees (ESF4.218)
- 79) Developing a Culture of Rights through Capacity Building (ESF4.220)
- 80) Voice of Workers (ESF4.221)
- 81) Strengthening the Administrative Capacity to reap the full benefits of EU Membership (ESF 4.236)

### **Aid Schemes**

- 82) Training Aid Framework (TAF) (ESF 2.65)
- 83) Employment Aid Programme (EAP) (ESF 3.64)