European Social Fund Cohort Study

Methodology

18 October 2012
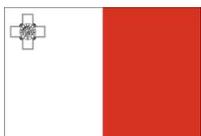
Coverage and Response

- The target population for the survey consisted of all persons who had successfully completed training which was co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) up to one year prior to the survey.

- A total of 6,197 persons were eligible to participate in the survey.

- A gross sample of 702 individuals was drawn from the Structural Funds Database (SFD) 07-13.

Coverage and Response - continued

- The sample was selected using a stratified random strategy to ensure a representative count of the sample by gender, age and district of residence of trainees.

- A total of 692 persons were contacted for this survey.

- 310 persons participated, while another 118 persons where not eligible to participate in the study due to wrong contact telephone numbers.

- A net effective response rate of 54 per cent was yielded.

Coverage and Response - continued

Table 1. Distribution of effective gross sample by type of response

Description	No.	%	No. (Effective)	% (Effective)
i) Good responses	310	44.8	310	54.0
ii) Refusals	30	4.3	30	5.2
iii) Other (No replies etc.)	234	33.8	234	40.8
iv) Ineligibles (Wrong telephone numbers etc.)	118	17.1	-	-
Total	692	100.0	574	100.0

Data Collection

- Data was collected by means of Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) between 21st and 26th June 2012.

- Respondents were contacted by telephone.

- Computers were used to enter the data obtained from respondents during the interview.

- Each sampling unit is randomly assigned among interviews, and hence reduces interviewer bias to a bare minimum.

Data Collection - continued

- Quality checks and in-built validation rules in the data collection program were implemented to limit the occurrence of non-sampling errors.

- Missing data were imputed using statistical imputation techniques.

- Any incorrect or logically misleading data was identified and checked.

Weighting of Results

- Survey data was weighted and calibrated to correct for any biases present in the final sample of participating units.

- Biases arise from different response rates observed in different categories

- This served to align and gross-up sample estimates with the benchmark distribution in terms of sex, age and district of residence of trainees (for weights) as well as their employment status (for calibration).

Errors

- The survey was subject to two main sources of errors, technically referred to as *Sampling* and *Non-Sampling errors.*

- The margin of error quantifies uncertainty about a survey result and expresses the amount of random sampling error in a survey's results.

- It is possible to calculate confidence intervals of the form *estimate ± margin of error.*

Errors - continued
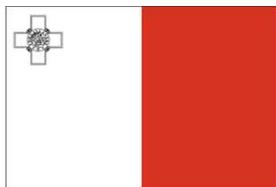
Table 2. Estimates of precision

Percentage rate (p)	number of persons (N)						
	373	599	1165	1703	2675	2910	6197
1	3.6%	3.1%	2.2%	2.3%	1.7%	1.6%	1.1%
3	6.2%	5.3%	3.8%	3.9%	2.9%	2.8%	1.9%
6	8.6%	7.3%	5.3%	5.5%	4.0%	3.8%	2.6%
10	10.9%	9.2%	6.7%	6.9%	5.1%	4.8%	3.3%
20	14.6%	12.3%	9.0%	9.2%	6.7%	6.5%	4.3%
40	17.8%	15.1%	11.0%	11.3%	8.2%	7.9%	5.3%
50	18.2%	15.4%	11.2%	11.6%	8.4%	8.1%	5.4%
60	17.8%	15.1%	11.0%	11.3%	8.2%	7.9%	5.3%
70	16.7%	14.1%	10.3%	10.6%	7.7%	7.4%	5.0%
80	14.6%	12.3%	9.0%	9.2%	6.7%	6.5%	4.3%*
90	10.9%	9.2%	6.7%	6.9%	5.1%	4.8%	3.3%

Errors - continued

- For example, the proportion of participants who felt that the ESF training will contribute in the future stands at 83.7%.

- If a precise calculation is carried out the margin of error equals 4.8%.

- From the previous table, this may be estimated using data for p=80. In this case the margin of error equals 4.3%*.

- If the estimated value is considered, the 95% confidence interval is the range 79.4% to 88.0%, i.e. 83.7% ± 4.3%.

Thank you!