



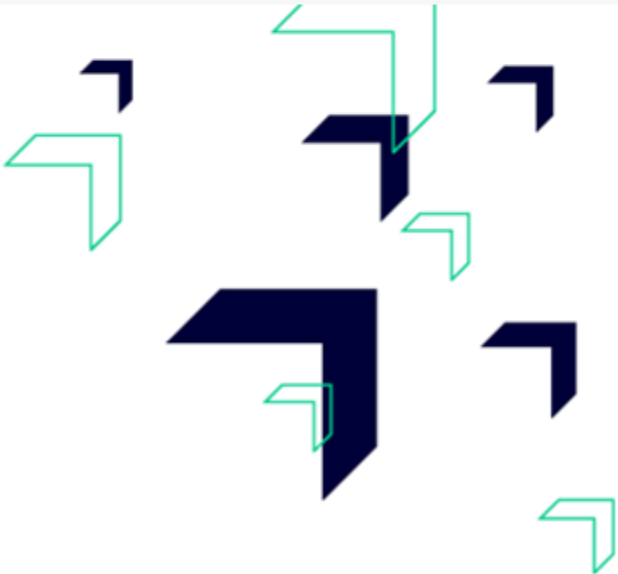
GOVERNMENT  
OF MALTA



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# Annual Implementation Report (2022) OPI, SMEi and OPII

27<sup>th</sup> April 2023



Co-funded by  
the European Union

# Overview

## Overview of Annual implementation reports

- Progress in the Implementation of Operational Programmes I and II as at end 2022 (including physical and financial progress)
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Communication Activities
- Capacity Building Activities
- Audits

## Update for 2023 and the main Challenges looking forward

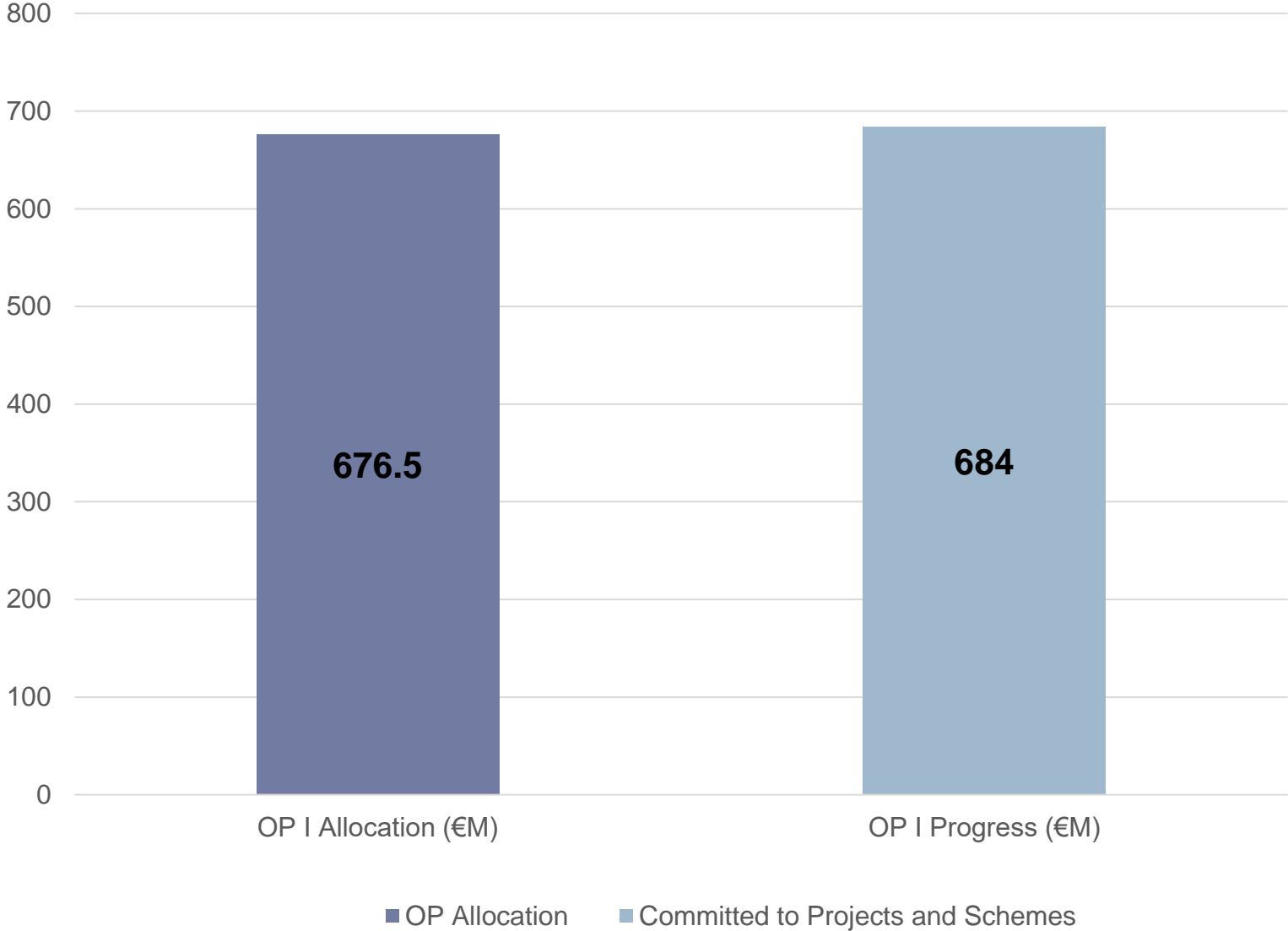
- Operational Programmes I and II
- Evaluation and Communication

## Concluding Remarks

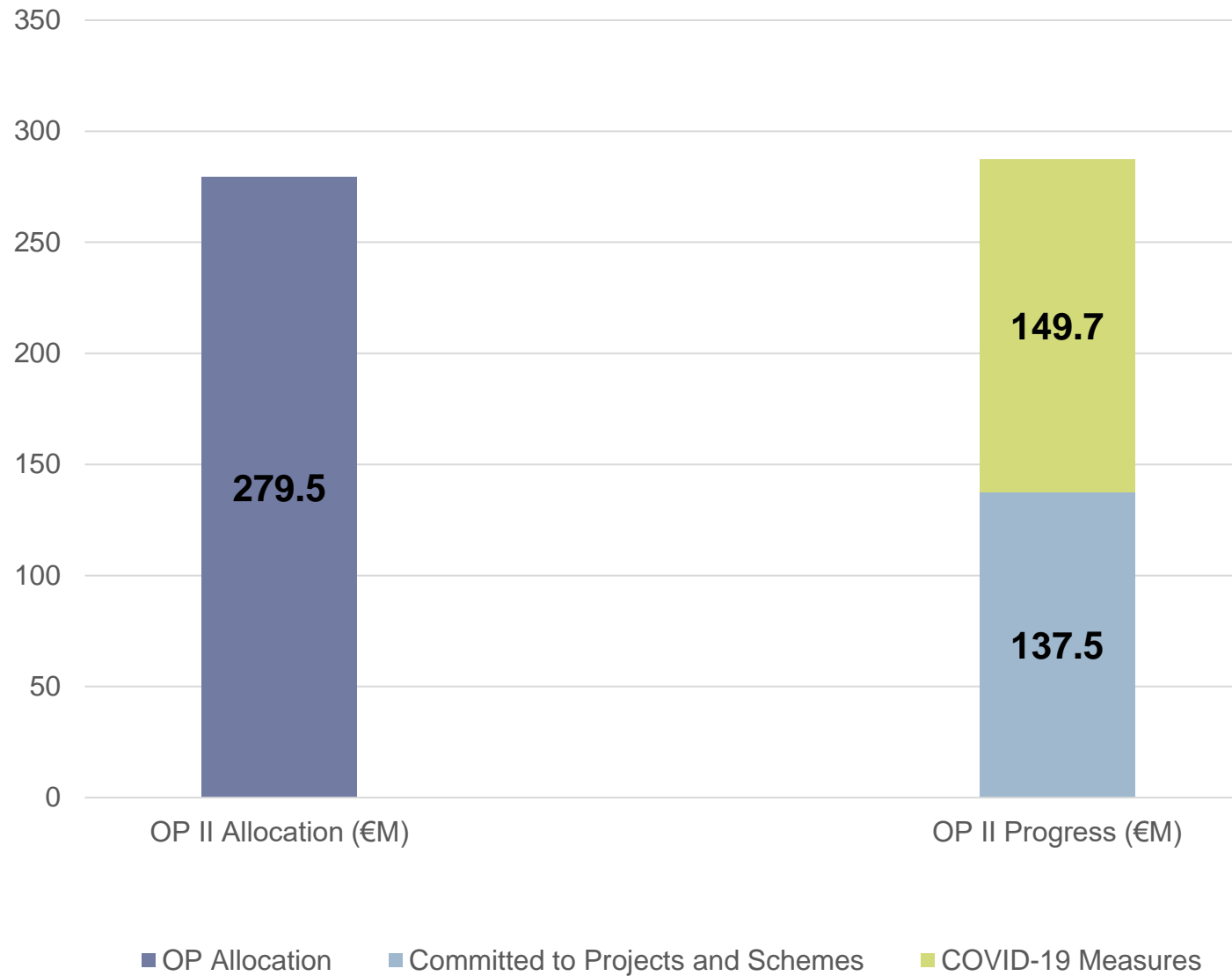
## Programme Commitment Table

# OPI Commitment Table

## December 2022



# OPII Commitment Table December 2022



# Progress in the Implementation of Operational Programme I

# PA 1

## Investing in Research, Technological Development and Innovation

# Implementation Progress – PA1

## PA Allocation: €62M

Two mainstream projects with a public eligible value of €62M. **By end 2022**, disbursements reached €51.9M, of which €46.2M were certified under PA 1.

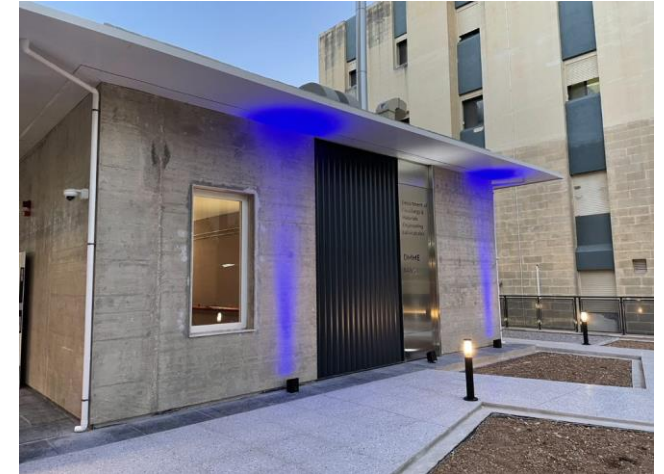
Major achievements:

**TRAKE** (30 research labs at the UoM & equipment in other locations focusing on research outputs, knowledge exchange and collaboration with industry)

- Metallurgy & Materials Engineering Labs (MMEL) officially opened in Sept 2022;
- 78% of the equipment already procured & being used for research purposes;
- More than 67.3 FTE researchers & 38 post-grads currently using new facilities & conducting research;
- Over 120 research studies undertaken in the fields of health; mechanical engineering; metallurgy and materials engineering; industrial and manufacturing engineering.

**SLC** (resource efficient buildings with research facilities creating the best environment for inter-disciplinary research)

- Construction works on the 5 blocks ongoing with 3 nearing completion by Dec 2022;
- 68% of the research equipment procured & being used in other labs;
- 11 doctoral/master research candidates carrying out research through this EU-funded equipment.



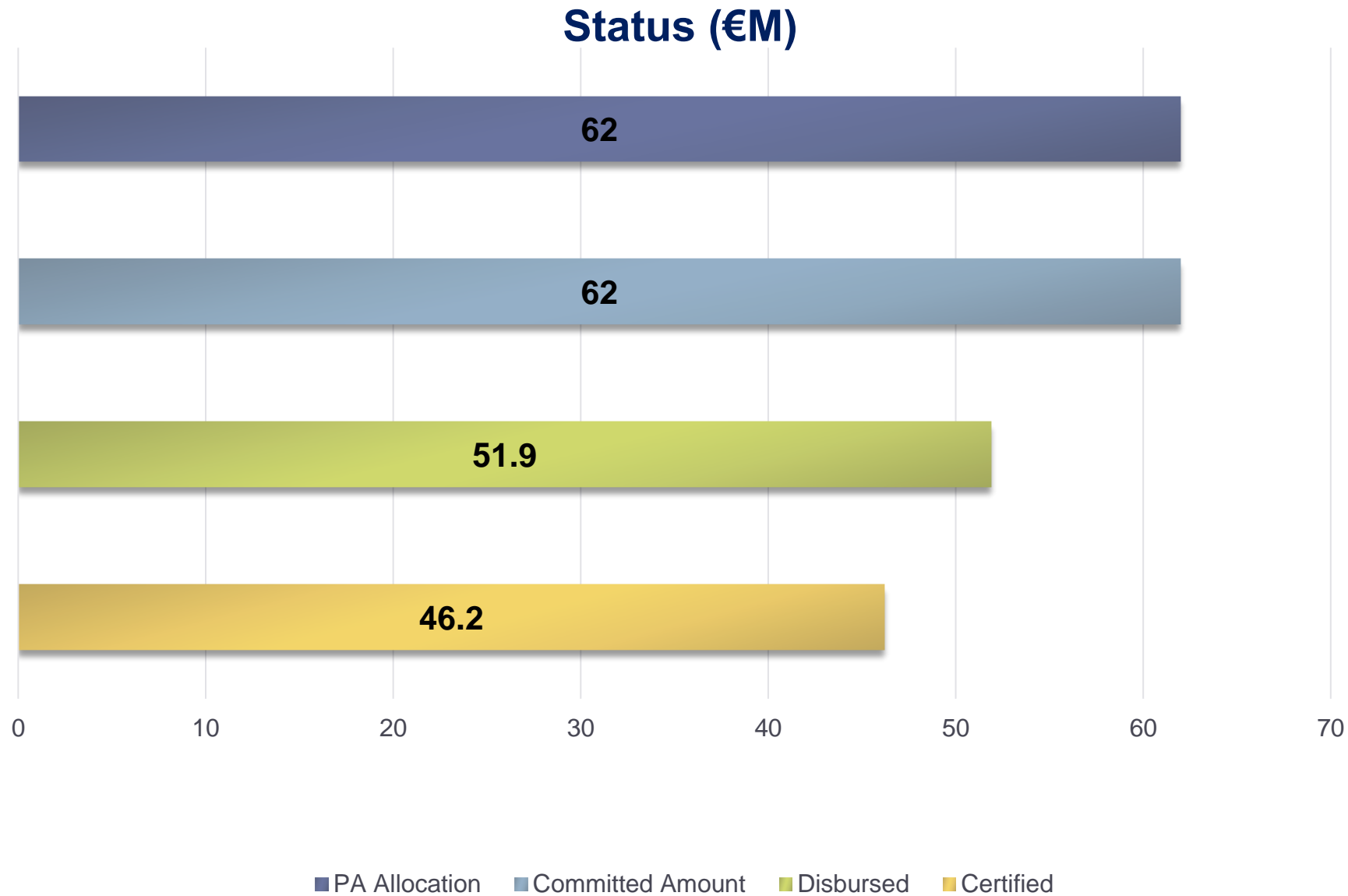
Entrance to the MMEL Building (TRAKE)



SLC – progress on the various construction zones



# Financial Status December 2022



## PA 2

# Consolidating Investment within the ICT Sector

# Implementation Progress – PA 2

## PA Allocation: €47M

Two mainstream projects and one Aid Scheme. By end 2022, disbursements reached €41.3M, of which €39.6M were certified under PA 2.

- **CONVERGE** A total of 25 new e-services applications are now available, increasing citizens' use of online services, strengthening digital systems for a more efficient public service and putting into practice the Once-Only Principle, whereby a citizen using a government service submits personal information only once.
- The **SIntegraM project** - now nearing completion - has provided Malta with a common spatial dataset which is already being used for various tasks such as water resources enforcement, planning subterrain analysis, crime scene analysis, digitisation of heritage sites and flora and fauna protection.



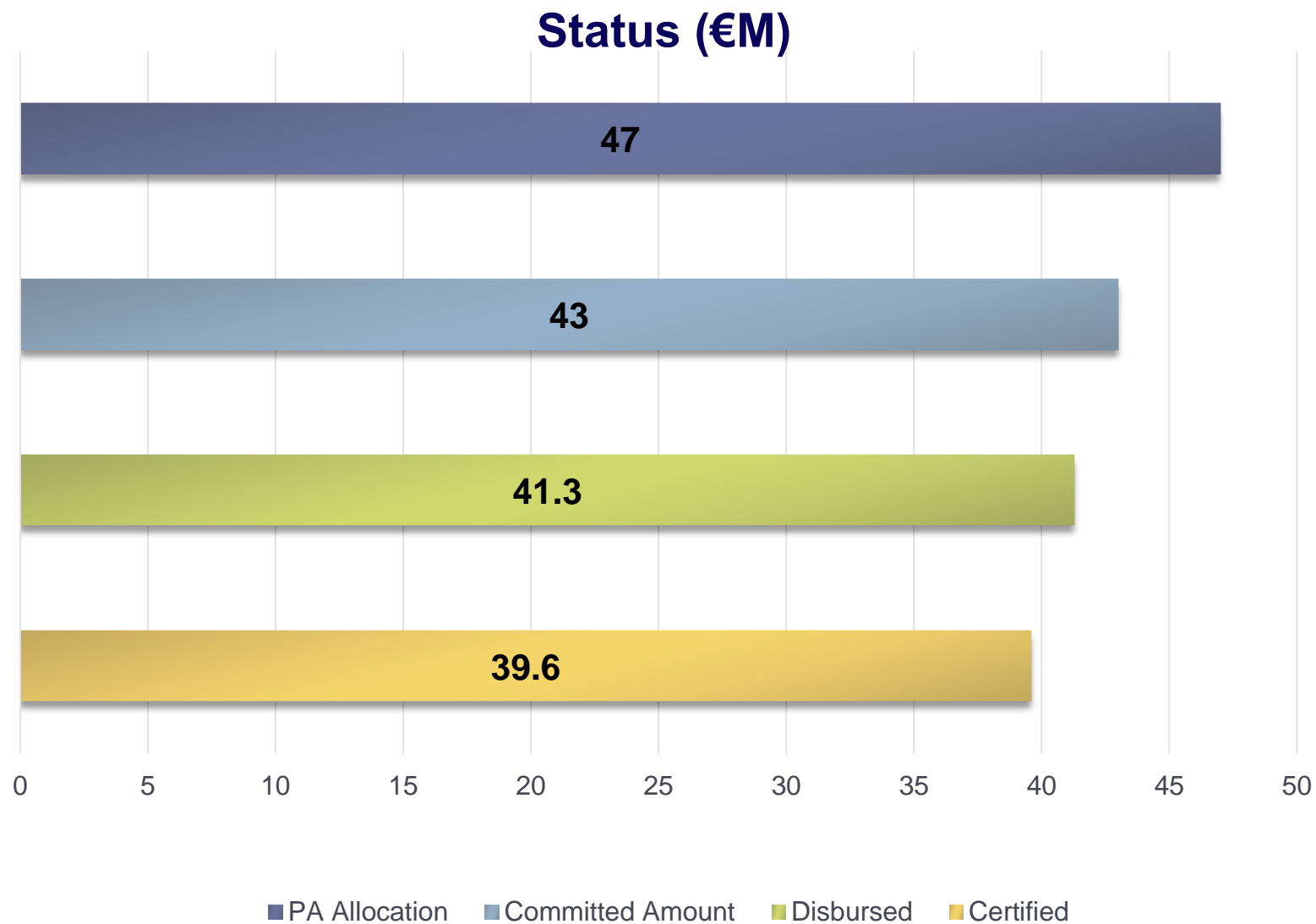
Workflow Automation Solution provides all the tools necessary for the creation of public and internal facing e-Services. E-Forms which are also accessible through myportal.gov.mt have been formulated using the WAS.



Credit: MaltaToday

Through SIntegraM C.A.V.E. researchers at the Immersion Lab can walk through historical places, crime scenes, without taking a single step, in order to establish facts and reach conclusions.

# Financial Status December 2022



## PA 3

# Enhancing Malta's Competitiveness through Investments in SMEs

# Implementation Progress – PA 3

Three mainstream projects and five Aid Schemes with a public eligible value of €44.6M are being implemented under this PA.

**By end 2022**, disbursements reached €29.4M, of which €26.3M were certified under PA 3.

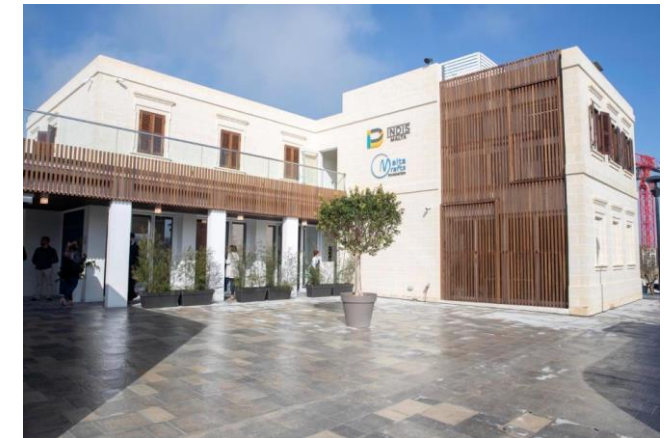
- The embellishment and upgrading of the infrastructure of the common areas of the **Ta' Qali Crafts Village** acted as an incentive for 33 traditional artisans who have invested in new workshops. This investment increased its attractiveness, enabling operators to showcase their artisanship and increase the number of visitors.

Patterns used in the design and finishes reflect a traditional Maltese village, providing an element of authenticity to the experience for both tourists and locals who visit this crafts village to view the production of local artefacts.

- Complementing the ERDF investment, the Incubation Centre has been inaugurated. Construction works at the Start-Up Centre are currently in progress while the Centre for Vanishing Crafts is at design stage.



A workshop at Ta' Qali Crafts Village



The Incubation Centre at Ta' Qali

## Implementation Progress – PA 3

- The extension of the Xewkija Industrial Park has given rise to 20 lease agreements currently in place.

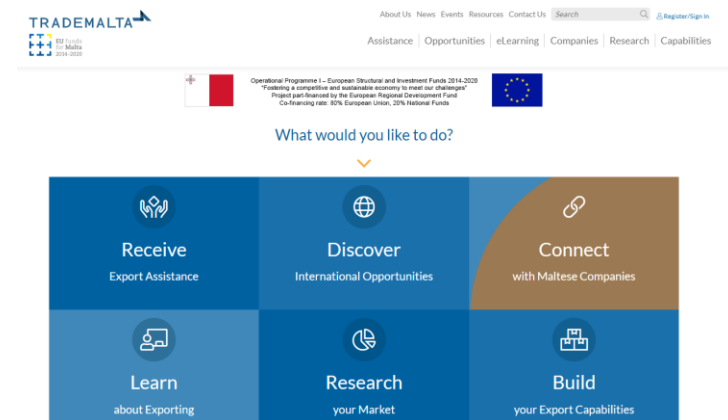
Through the **Gozo Innovation Hub**, facilities are made available to enterprises primarily investing in the knowledge-based economy. This hub offers different services which assist new companies to set up in Gozo and operate successfully there from.

The **Industrial Workshop Complex** hosts 15 tenants operating from their business workshops on site.

- Through the assistance offered by the **International Knowledge Platform** private enterprises are in a better position to look beyond the shores of the local economy and invest further to export their products to the international market. The Platform gives SMEs access to various types of trade information services such as market insight, international market intelligence database and e-learning training courses.

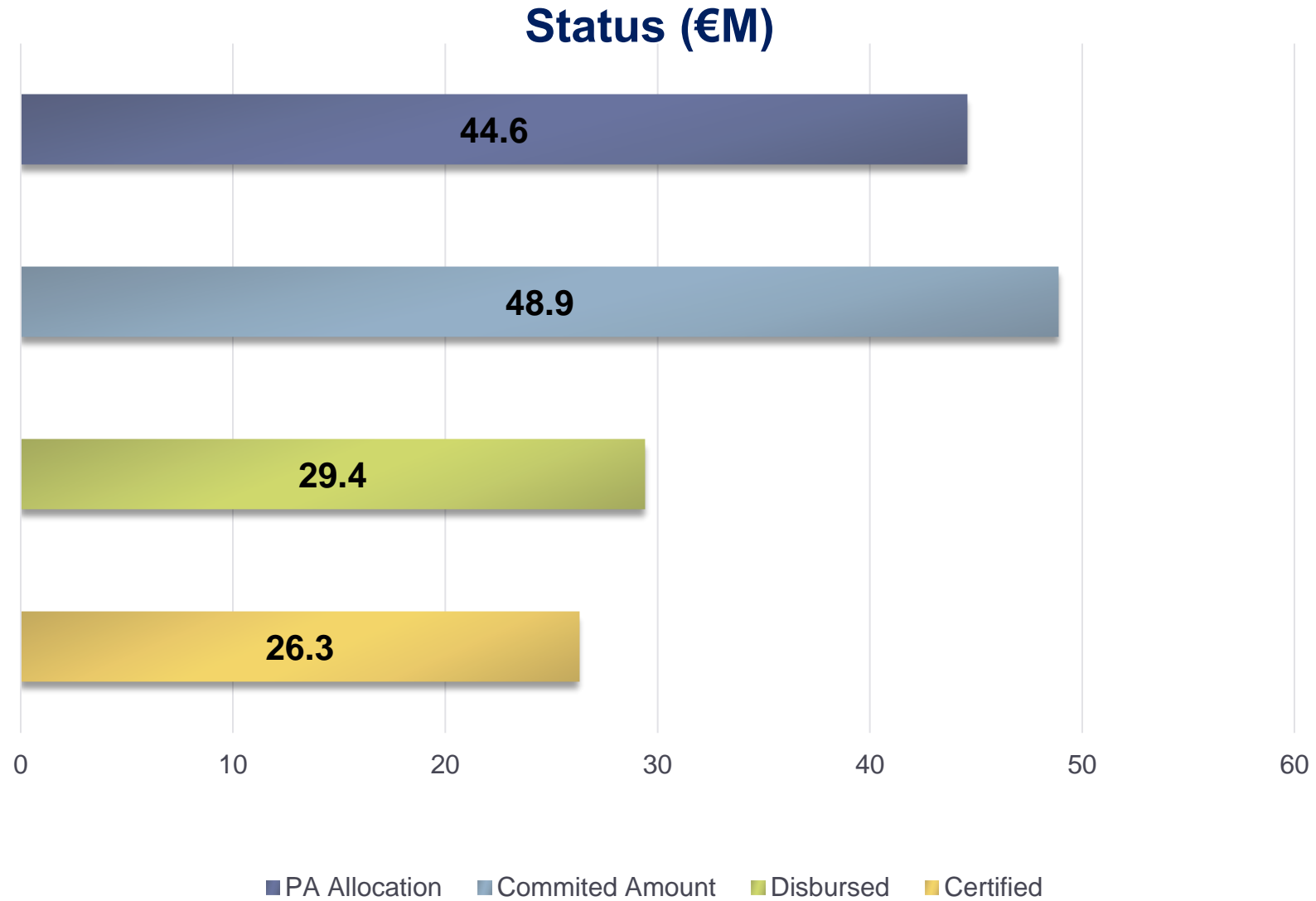


The Gozo Innovation Hub



Internationalisation Knowledge Platform

# Financial Status December 2022





# PA 4

## Shifting Towards a Low-Carbon Economy

# Implementation Progress – PA 4

## PA Allocation: €32.7M

Apart from an FI covering EE and RES, this PA includes 5 projects covering RES and 6 covering EE measures. A total of €35.2M was paid under this PA, of which €21.9M were certified by **end 2022**.

- Works at the Elderly People’s Home involving retrofitting actions have been completed in 22 wards.
- The Gozo Administration Centre has seen the implementation of EE measures, aiming for a carbon-neutral building, with the introduction of Energy efficient mechanical and ventilation systems, and double-glazed apertures, amongst others, within a building with a footprint of c. 6,500sq.m.
- Installation of Energy efficiency measures in public buildings (Armed Forces Malta, People and Standards Division within the Office of the Prime Minister, SVDP), as well as installation of PVs in buildings owned by NGOs (Malta Red Cross and Church School Association) are ongoing.



Gozo Administration Centre - energy efficiency measures in a building footprint of c. 6,500 sq. m.



Installation of new EE heating, ventilation, air-conditioning & lighting systems at SVDP

# Financial Instrument – PA 4

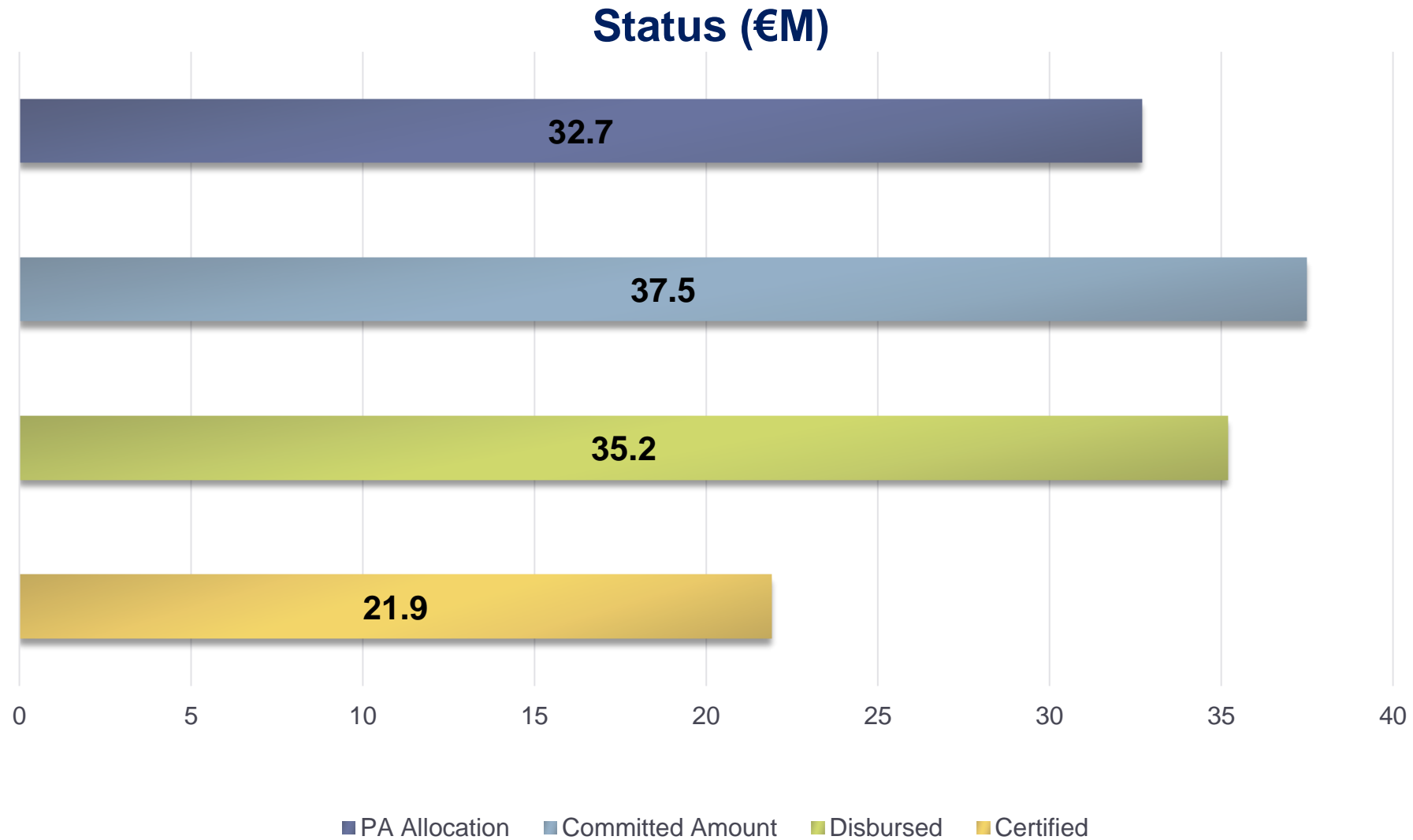
- The FI with an allocation of **€15M**, will generate a portfolio of c. €45M providing guarantees and an interest rate subsidy giving the opportunity to both **private individuals and companies** to carry out **RES** and **EE** measures in buildings.
- By Dec 2022, 106 loans were granted by the 2 Financial Intermediaries implementing this FI, for a total amount of c. €2.7M.
- Due to low uptake, discussions on the possibility to widen the eligibility criteria to include green modes of transport for the commercial sector were finalised.
- This amendment is also in line with government policy to support the decarbonisation of the economy.



Potential EE and RES measures eligible under the FI



# Financial Status December 2022



**PA 5**  
**Protecting our Environment –**  
**Invest in Natural and Cultural Assets**

# Implementation Progress – PA 5

## PA Allocation: €63.3M

**Twenty-five cultural and natural heritage projects** with a public eligible value of **€63.3M** are being implemented under this PA. **By end 2022**, disbursements reached €47.7M, of which €42M were certified under PA 5.

Major achievements by end of 2022 include:

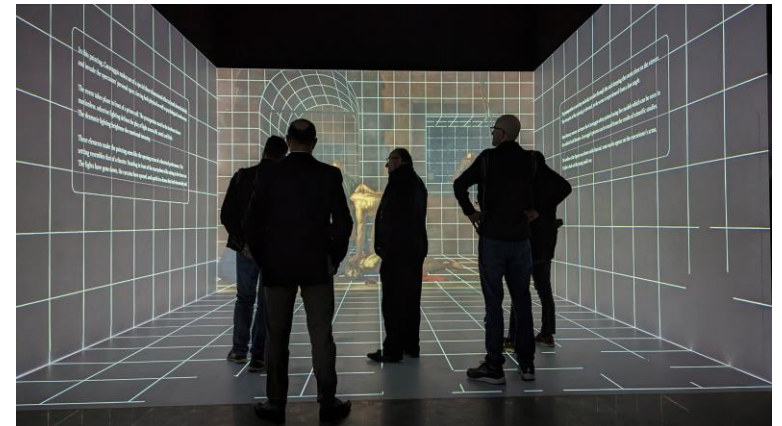
- Meticulous restoration on the walls, lunettes, soffit & polychromed marble floors within the Piano Nobile corridors are now completed and were open to the public in the open days held in June and December 2022. The Ucceleria within the **Grandmaster's Palace** is also complete and works to relocate the Knights' Armoury are in the final stages.
- In early 2022, works began on the Silver Vaults in the '**Caravaggio Centre**' at the St John's Co-Cathedral, including architectural, structural, restoration, and MEP works. These works focused on the crypt and basements, serving as additional exhibition spaces. The works and installation of projections in the Caravaggio Face-to-Face area were concluded in 2022.
- Construction works on the **MICAS** Galleries for contemporary art are now at a pivotal point with the roofing of the exhibits space with an iconic, lightweight steel & glass roofing structure. The roof should be in place before the beginning of summer.



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Piano Nobile Corridor completed at the Grandmaster's Palace



Caravaggio related to Face-to-Face



# Implementation Progress – PA 5

- The cultural and religious experience within **St Dominic's Priory** in Rabat, narrating the history of the Dominican order, was inaugurated in 2022.
- The **Tunnara Musuem** in Mellieħa, inaugurated in May 2022, has been transformed into an interactive interpretation centre from where visitors can witness how tuna used to be fished in the past.
- Restoration works on the tower of **St Paul's Anglican Cathedral** is nearing completion and by June 2023 the scaffolding should be dismantled. The restoration of the timber contract, awarded in Sept 2022, is currently ongoing. The tender for webcams was also awarded, however these will be installed once works are completed.
- Works on the three railway stations is ongoing. Together these three stations will give locals and tourist the experience of the railway network which used to operate between Valletta and Rabat.
- Works on various historical, religious and natural sites are ongoing by different NGOs and Local Councils around Malta and Gozo.

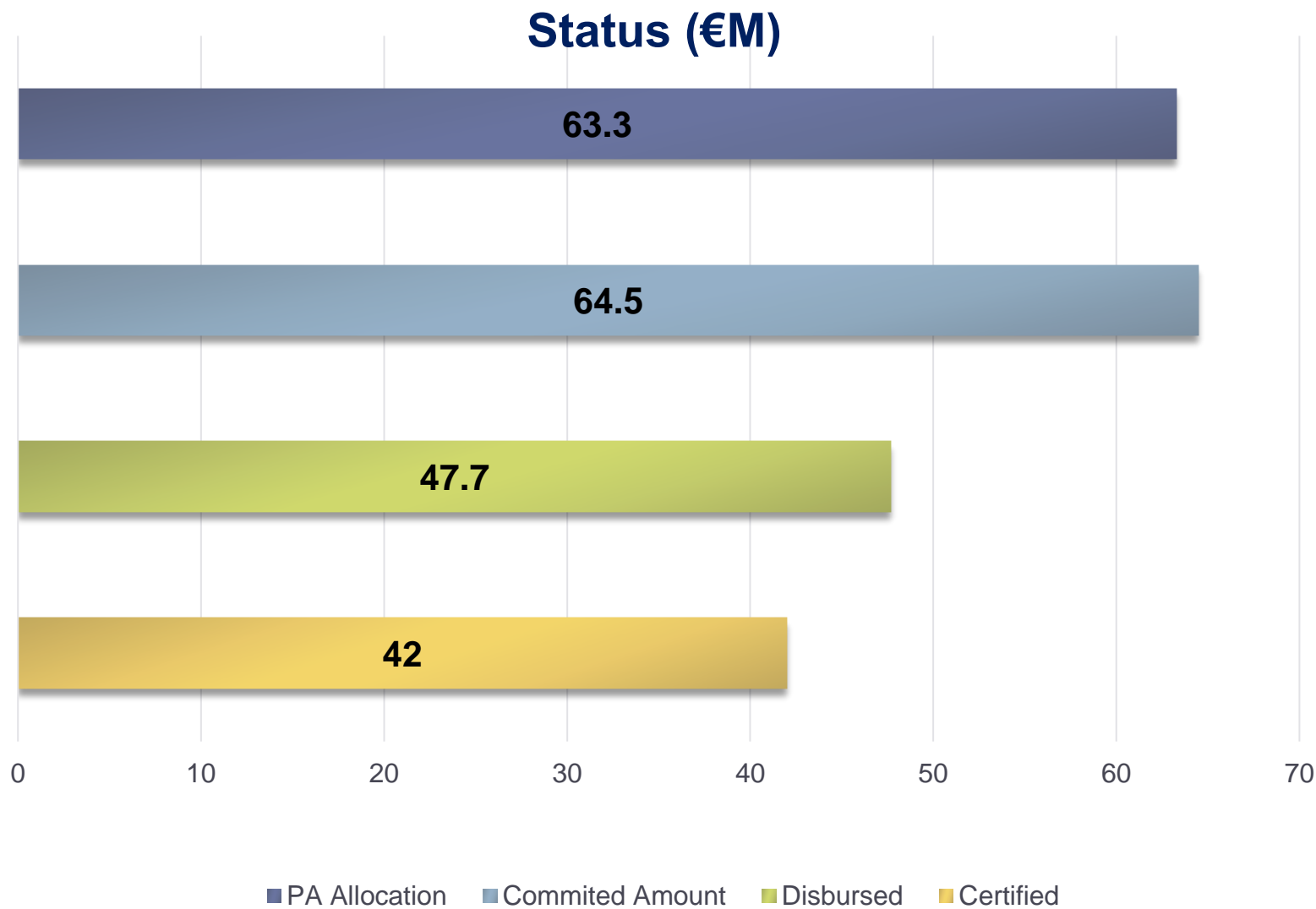


Part of the Tunnara Museum located in Mellieħa



Hamrun Railway Station

# Financial Status December 2022





# **PA 6**

## **Sustainable Urban Development**

# Implementation Progress – PA 6

## PA Allocation: €24M

- **By end 2022**, disbursements reached €17.4M, of which €11.1M were certified under PA 6.
- Major achievements by end of 2022 include:
- The upgrading of the external **façades and common areas** of **4 social housing blocks** adjacent to the Mattia Preti square are progressing well.
- Household owners were able to benefit from funding to restore or replace their typical Maltese balconies and apertures. In total **60 beneficiaries** have made use of this funding.
- The excavation works of the **Vertical Access lift**, connecting Peacock Gardens to Marsamxett, are at an early stage of implementation and are expected to be completed by November 2023. The works are being monitored by archaeologists and competent authorities due to the historical nature of the surroundings. The actual lift will be implemented and commissioned once this component is completed.
- A **Heritage Trail mobile app** was developed to focus on the cultural and historical assets which are found within Lower Valletta. This app is created to provide visitors with an interactive version of a real-world environment through digital visual elements.



Heritage Trail mobile app.



Before

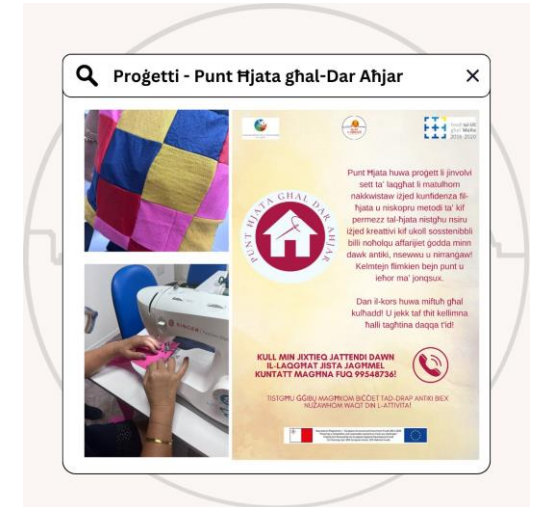


After

Upgrading of the external façades and common areas.

# Implementation Progress – PA 6

- The social component - **Hiliet il-Komunità** - is aimed to support the community to sustainably benefit from the prosperity of the Urban generation.
- A fully fledged engagement exercise with the community was undertaken in order to assess and highlight the community members' potential whilst engaging them in the community's diverse market of talent. Initiatives held in 2022 were:
- **Social Mentoring:** mentoring on the management of money, life at home, work and education;
- **Sewing for a better home:** learning skills on how to sew various items. This started in October 2022 and aims to address sustainability, both environmentally as well as skills, homemaking, creativity and dialogue;
- **Painting with Paul:** developing art skills with Paul Caruana. Each session focuses on the use of a different medium and takes place every Wednesday;
- **Mental Health First Aid:** Building a mentally healthier communities is important to sustain a competitive and sustainable economy. During the period under review a procurement exercise two cohorts of mental health first aid for community leaders took place;
- **Community Theatre:** aimed at promoting sensitisation and mobilisation of this community.



'Sewing for a better home' initiative



'Painting with Paul' initiative

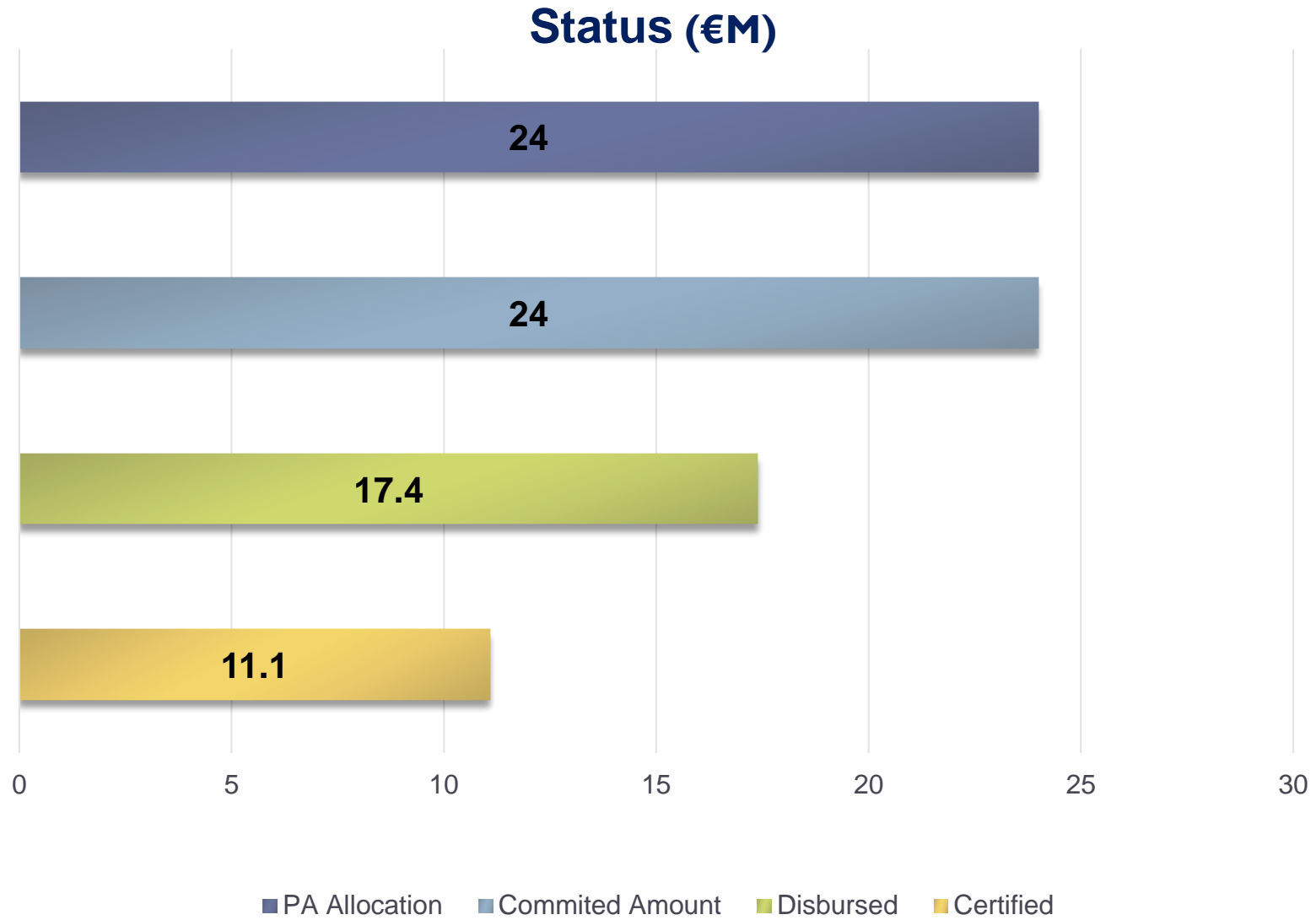
## Implementation Progress – PA 6

- Following its inauguration in 2021, and the COVID pandemic, the **Valletta Design Cluster**, has now seen an increased interest in memberships and requests for viewings and meetings. With this increase of events, one can perceive the Valletta Design Cluster as a haven for projects focusing on addressing social wellbeing through a cultural and creative environment within the community.
- An outreach programme for individuals and organisations working in the creative sectors was launched in October 2022 to increase the awareness of the resources available: the facilities are offered to artists, creatives, entrepreneurs and organisations who are willing to generate positive social value for the community through both innovation and creativity.



Various events being held at the Valletta Design Cluster

# Financial Status December 2022



# PA 7

## Shifting Towards a More Low-Carbon Transport Sector



# Implementation Progress – PA 7

## PA Allocation: €35.5M

One mainstream project with an allocation of €35.5M aiming to encourage modal shift through sustainable & alternative low-carbon transport modes. **By end 2022**, disbursements reached €14.5M, of which €12.4M were certified under PA 7.

By end 2022, progress was achieved with respect to:

- **130 charging pillars** were installed and commissioned.
- **6 electric buses** operating a free shuttle bus service from the Gozo heliport parking to the Mgarr Port with an average of 1,855 passengers monthly recorded between May and Oct.
- Procurement for the **Intelligent Traffic Management platform** (software, hardware) was launched in Nov and Dec 2022 respectively; evaluation expected to be concluded in Q2 2023.



130 Charging Pillars installed.

# Implementation Progress – PA 7

## PA Allocation: €35.5M

- **Four ferry landing spaces** are being financed in **Bormla, Sliema, Buġibba & Marsamxett**.
  - Bormla is the most advanced, with construction completed in 2022; superstructures & gangways at an advanced stage.
  - Works on the Sliema ferry landing have advanced significantly.
  - Award of the Buġibba tender in Aug 2022; 1st payments for mobilisation & materials on site carried out.
  - Tender for works on the Marsamxett ferry landing site re-published in Q4 2022 and award expected in Q2 2023.

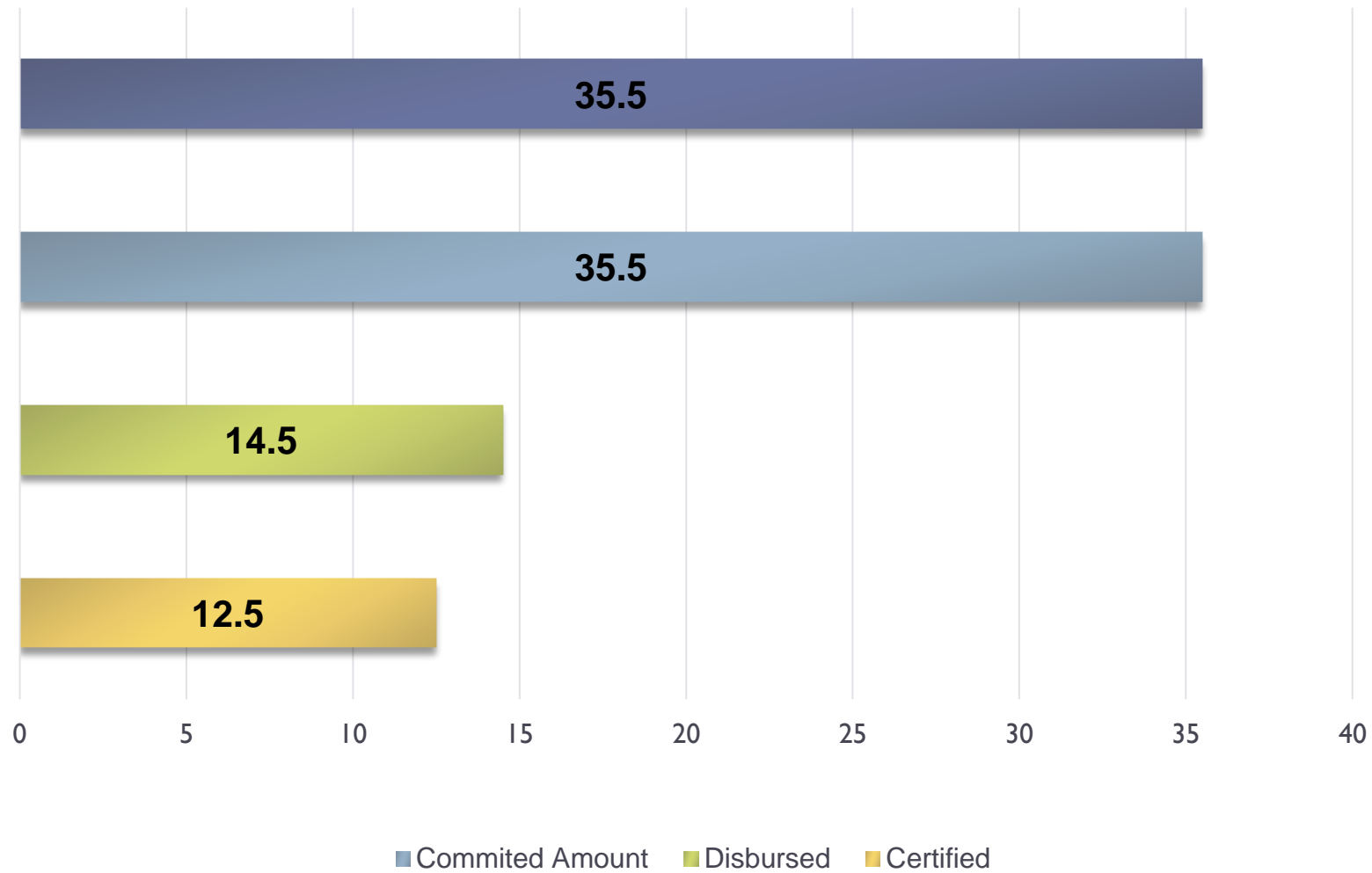


Bormla Ferry Landing



# Financial Status December 2022

## Status (€M)



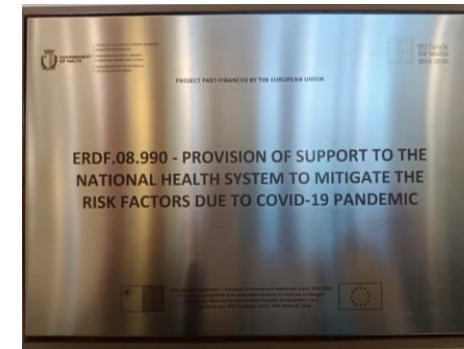
## PA 8

# Investing Towards a More Socially-Inclusive Society

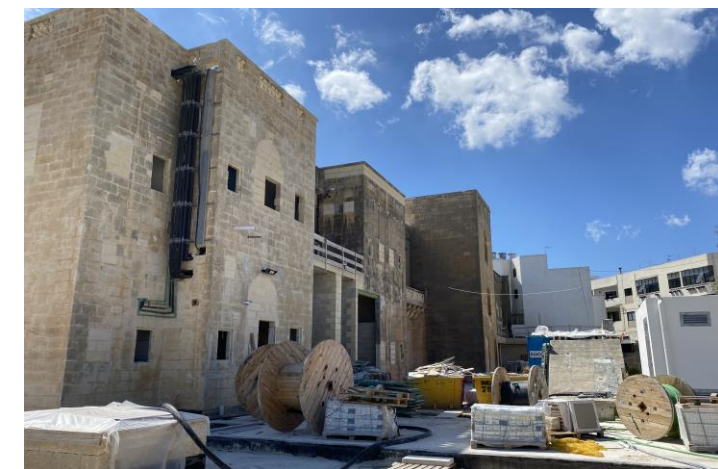
## Implementation Progress – PA 8

By the end of 2022, disbursements under this PA, focusing on health and social infrastructure, reached €47M, of which €42.2M were certified.

- Under the COVID-related project, the expenditure of €17.6M covering the procurement of vaccines, rapid tests and PPEs has been certified.
- The project managed by the NGO Caritas Malta, supporting the integration of vulnerable people in society, has to date welcomed over 3000 clients at its new premises.
- Another project managed by an NGO, Hospice Malta, setting up a new Palliative Care complex, is nearing completion. The newly refurbished building will become the main premises for Hospice Malta and is expected to help further enhance the already established palliative community services provided by Hospice. The Complex is expected to start welcoming its first patients by end of 2023.



Publicity material related to the COVID-19 Measures Project at Mater Dei Hospital



M&E works at the St. Michael Hospice - the first Hospice Complex for palliative care services

# Implementation Progress – PA 8

## PA Allocation: €65M

- The flagship health infrastructure project - **Paola Primary Health Care Centre** - saw construction reaching completion up to level 17; works related to M&Es & Finishes still ongoing.
- Once completed, this primary health care centre is expected to off-load demand & alleviate pressures from the main hospital by providing the necessary facilities to undertake minor surgery and offering medical imaging and dental clinic services, amongst others.  
A total of 25 medical services are expected to be provided from this Centre.
- In the area of **social housing**, investment continued in 332 units in a total of 65 blocks, with c. 1,200 residents benefitting from improved accessibility through the refurbishment of common areas including the installation of energy efficient lifts.

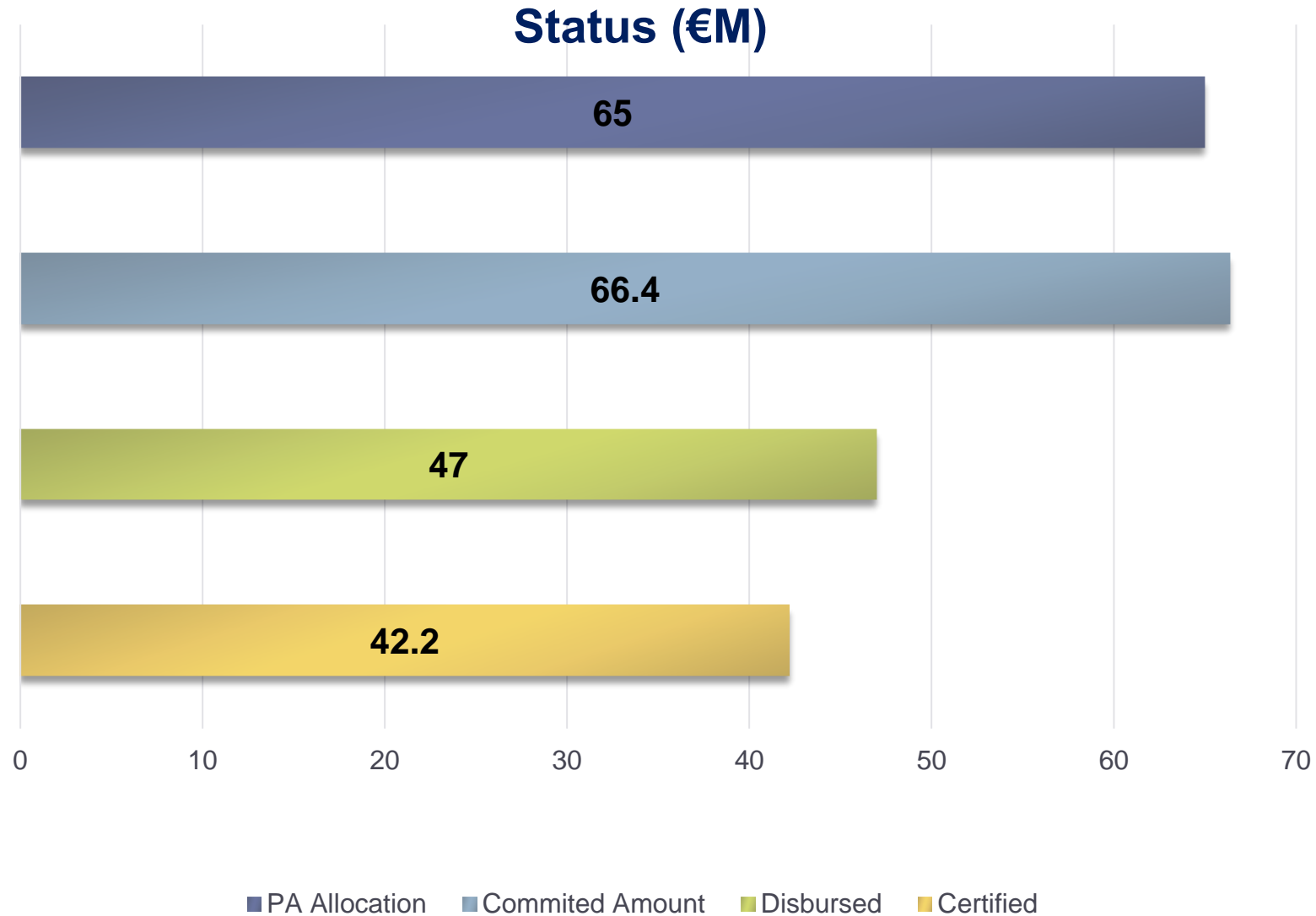


Construction works at Paola Regional Hub Primary Health Care Centre



Installation of new lifts at San Gwann Social Housing Estate

# Financial Status December 2022



**PA 9**  
**Developing our Future through Education, Training and  
Lifelong Learning**

# Implementation Progress – PA 9

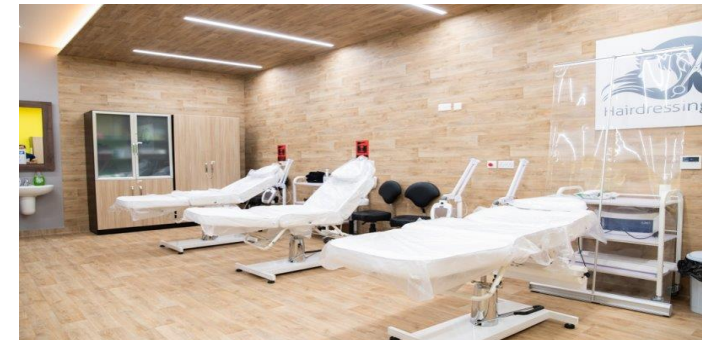
## PA Allocation: €33.6M

2 mainstream projects are being implemented under this PA in the education sector. By Dec 2022, €29.4M were disbursed, of which €28M were certified.

- A milestone for the **MCAST project** was achieved in Jan 2022 when the new Resource Centre (MRC) started welcoming students. M&E and Finishing works are ongoing at the Institute for Information, Communication and Technology (IICT). The student population at the MCAST campus making use of the facilities financed by ERDF is c. 8791 (FT and PT).
- The **INVEST** project is completed. More than 8,000 students from 14 different secondary schools in Malta and Gozo are using the 78 VET labs equipped under this project, covering areas such as hospitality, engineering, IT, health and social care, fashion and textiles, agribusiness, media, retail, hairdressing & beauty. The VET/applied subjects offer broader opportunities to students and aims to increase students' retention in the Maltese educational system.

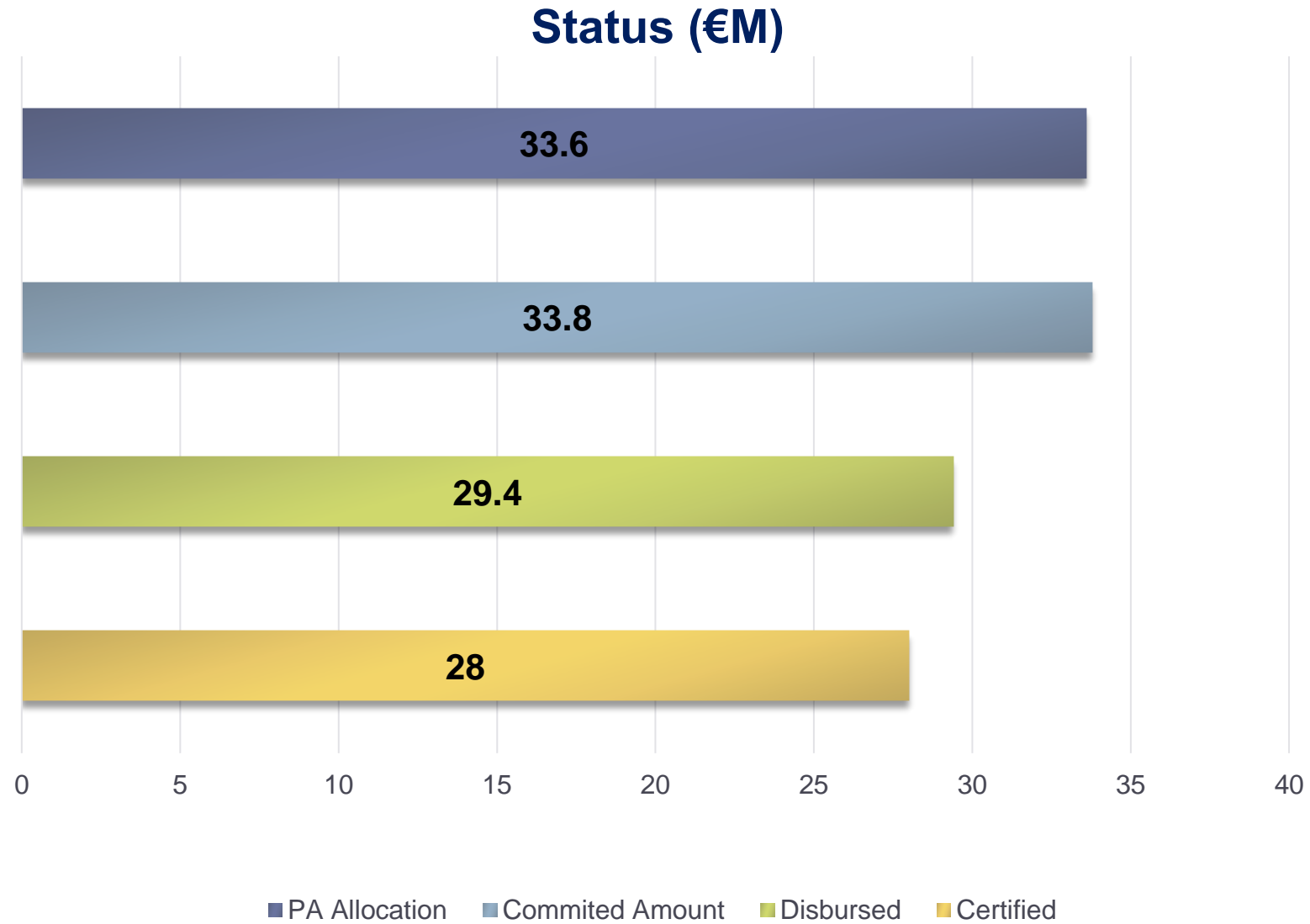


Works ongoing at the MCAST IICT



The Hairdressing and Beauty Lab at St. Ignatius Handaq Secondary School

# Financial Status December 2022





# PA 10

## Investing in a More Environmentally-Friendly Society

# Implementation Progress – PA 10

## PA Allocation: €141.5M

Seven mainstream projects including a Major Project with a **total public eligible value of €141.5M** are being implemented under this PA.

By Dec 2022, €122M were disbursed, of which €116.9M were certified

In the **waste sector**, progress registered in 2022:

- Works on the **Multi-Material Recovery Facility at Hal Far** nearing completion, with site expected to be operational in Q2 2023.  
A tender for Glass Recovery equipment to complement this facility is currently on the market.
- Under the **waste campaign** project, 2022 saw the inauguration of 4 Reuse Centres aimed to further promote the concepts of 'reuse' and 'recycling'.
- Works on the Rudimentary Line aimed to improve recyclable rate at the ECOHIVE Complex were concluded in 2022 with operations envisaged to commence during Q1 2023.



Materials reception area and canopy structure at the MMRF



Tyre baler equipment at the MMRF

# Implementation Progress – PA 10

- Under the **Water information campaign**, the distribution of water saving packs to households continued, with more than 68,000 kits distributed. Progress was also registered in the demonstration sites, as well as public and stakeholder engagement activities.
- This project also includes other components related to the **development of an innovative monitoring framework** on water resources in Malta. Progress registered includes the drilling of deep boreholes with core recovery, deployment of specialized probes, and analysis of hydro chemical data of water resources.
- As for the **supporting studies** complementing this component, the Freshwater-Saltwater interface monitoring network equipment arrived in Malta in May 2022. The Vadose Zone Monitoring Network is fully operational with the commissioning of the whole network expected to be completed by Q1 2023.



Activity 7 - Soil moisture sensor and mobile app integrated for efficient irrigation.



Barrani Monitoring Station (Għaxaq L/O) - Freshwater-Saltwater interface monitoring network



## Implementation Progress – PA 10

By end of 2022, progress registered on different actions under the **Water Major** project:

- Circa 7km of 1200mm pipe and 6km of 800mm were laid and tested in the Pembroke Ta' Qali tunnel.
- For the new water network in the North of Malta the work is ongoing with expected completion in Q2 2023. This will result in an additional 18km of HPTTW infrastructure in the areas of Mellieħa.
- Extension of wastewater network at the Rabat areas in Malta and Gozo were also completed this year, resulting to a total achievement of 91 Km of network.
- The Gozo RO plant has commissioned the 3 trains in 2022 and the capacity of 9000 cubic metre per day was achieved. Currently, according to the demand, 2 trains are sufficient to supply the whole island.
- Train 4 in Pembroke RO was commissioned in July 2022 with a capacity of 4000 cubic metre of water everyday.



Trenching and pipelaying works in Marsa



Wellfield piping at the Ffondoq RO Plant

## Implementation Progress – PA 10

By end of 2022, progress was registered on different actions in the **water** sector:

- Works at the **Sant'Antnin Wastewater Treatment Plant** have been completed. The project is in final phase of testing prior to commissioning and the plant is expected to start sewage treatment soon after.
- Works on the 8th Basin to increase volumetric capacity of rainwater, as part of the **Rainwiin project**, have been completed in September 2022.
- Progress was also registered in relation to the monitoring framework through the successful procurement and installation of a weather station.

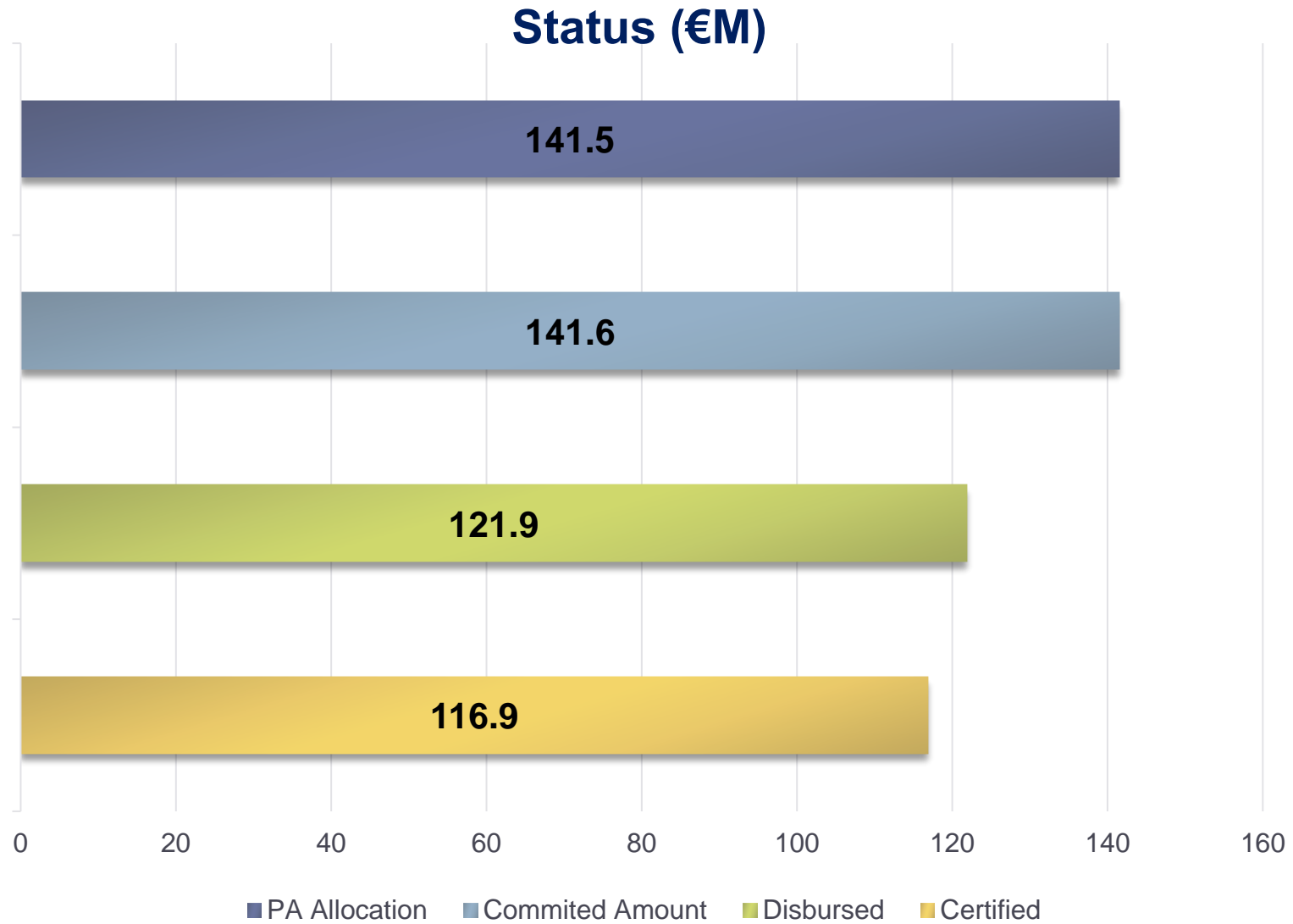


Sant'Antnin Wastewater Treatment Plant



Rainwiin project: Basin 8 – contributing to the increase in overall volumetric capacity

# Financial Status December 2022



# **PA 11**

## **Investing in TEN-T Infrastructure**

# Implementation Progress – PA 11

## PA Allocation: €99.7M

3 projects with a total public eligible value of €99.7M are being funded under this PA. By Dec 2022, €63.8M were disbursed, of which €58.2M were certified.

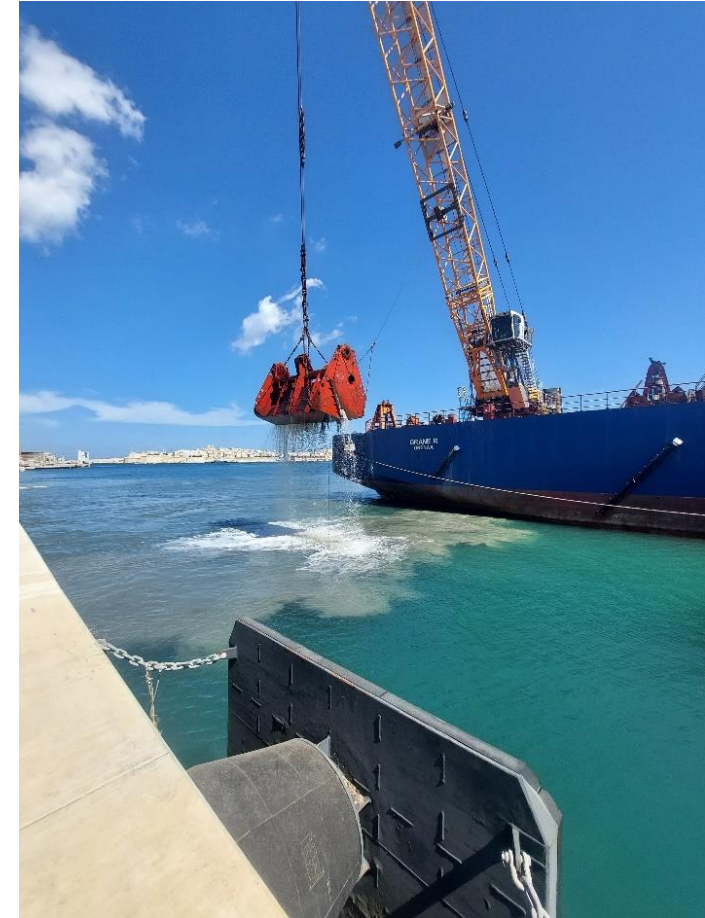
Major achievements in 2022:

➤ Under the **Ten-T Roads** project, works on the Mrieħel – Ta' Srina Junction Bypass was completed in 2022. This will be contributing to circa 3.7km of reconstructed and upgraded roads, over and above the 8.33km of upgraded roads already registered.

➤ The **Ten-T Ports** project is aimed to increase the operational capacity of the Grand Harbour port in Valletta through the construction of a new general-purpose quay.

Dredging works within the Grand Harbour, which will complement the operational capacity of the port, were completed in 2022.

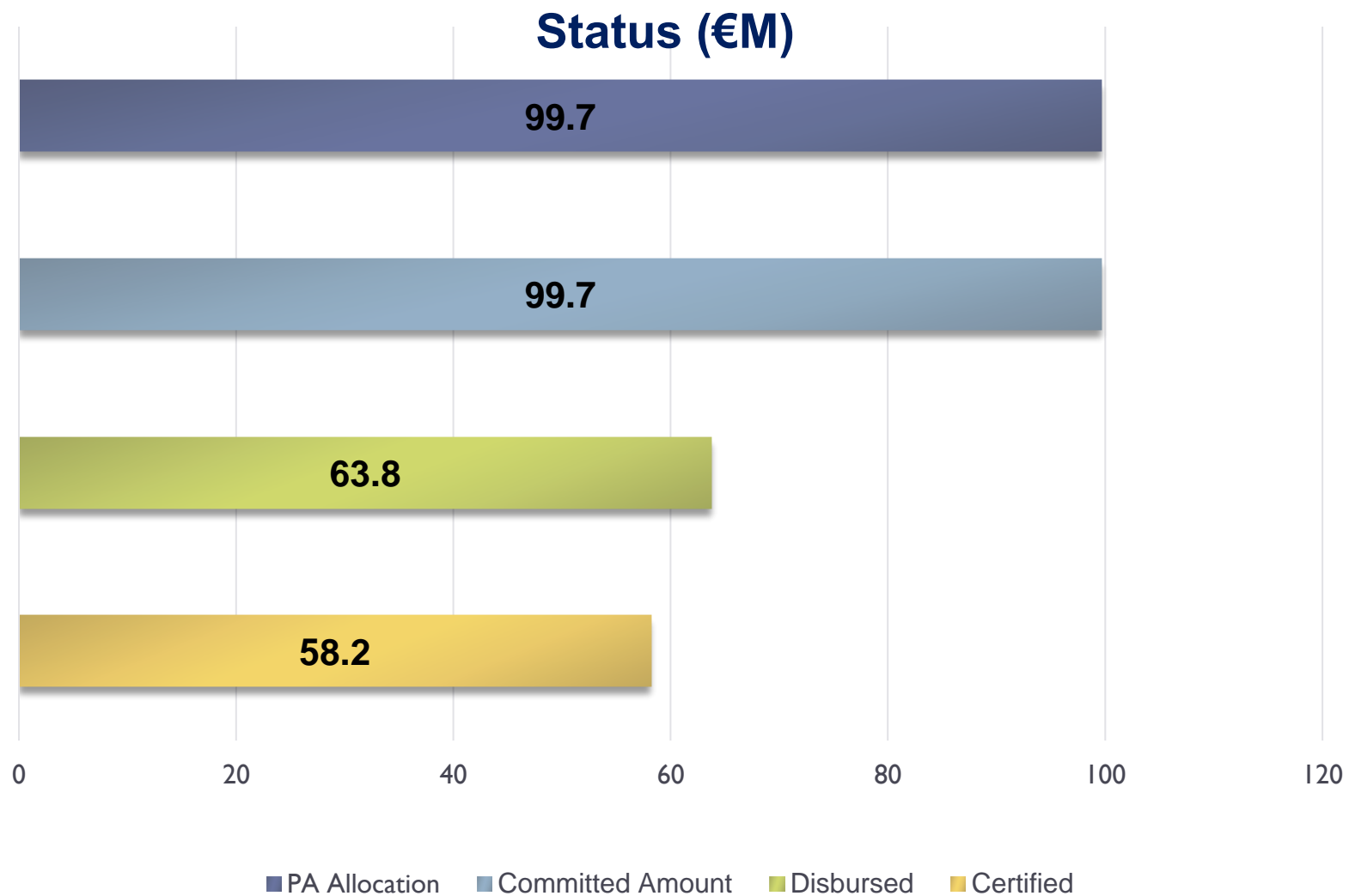
➤ The contract to set up the new cargo facility at Ras Ħanżir was awarded during Q4 2022.



Dredging works in the Grand Harbour



# Financial Status December 2022



# **PA 13**

## **Fostering resilience in the healthcare system**

# Implementation Progress – PA 13

## PA Allocation: €11.2M

A single project is being funded under PA 13 through the REACT-EU funds, focusing on making the health sector more resilient. The aim is to have improved patient treatment, more targeted patient care and a better quality of life.

The project includes, amongst others:

- the procurement of X-Ray Machine technology for an improved and more efficient diagnosis,
- portable echocardiography equipment for better scanning of the heart and nearby blood vessels,
- a number of electric vehicles were purchased to provide a more resilient, greener and comfortable service to patients in their home,
- a number of Rapid Response Vehicles for faster access to patients.

By the end of 2022, disbursements under this PA reached €3.9M, of which €3.2M were certified.

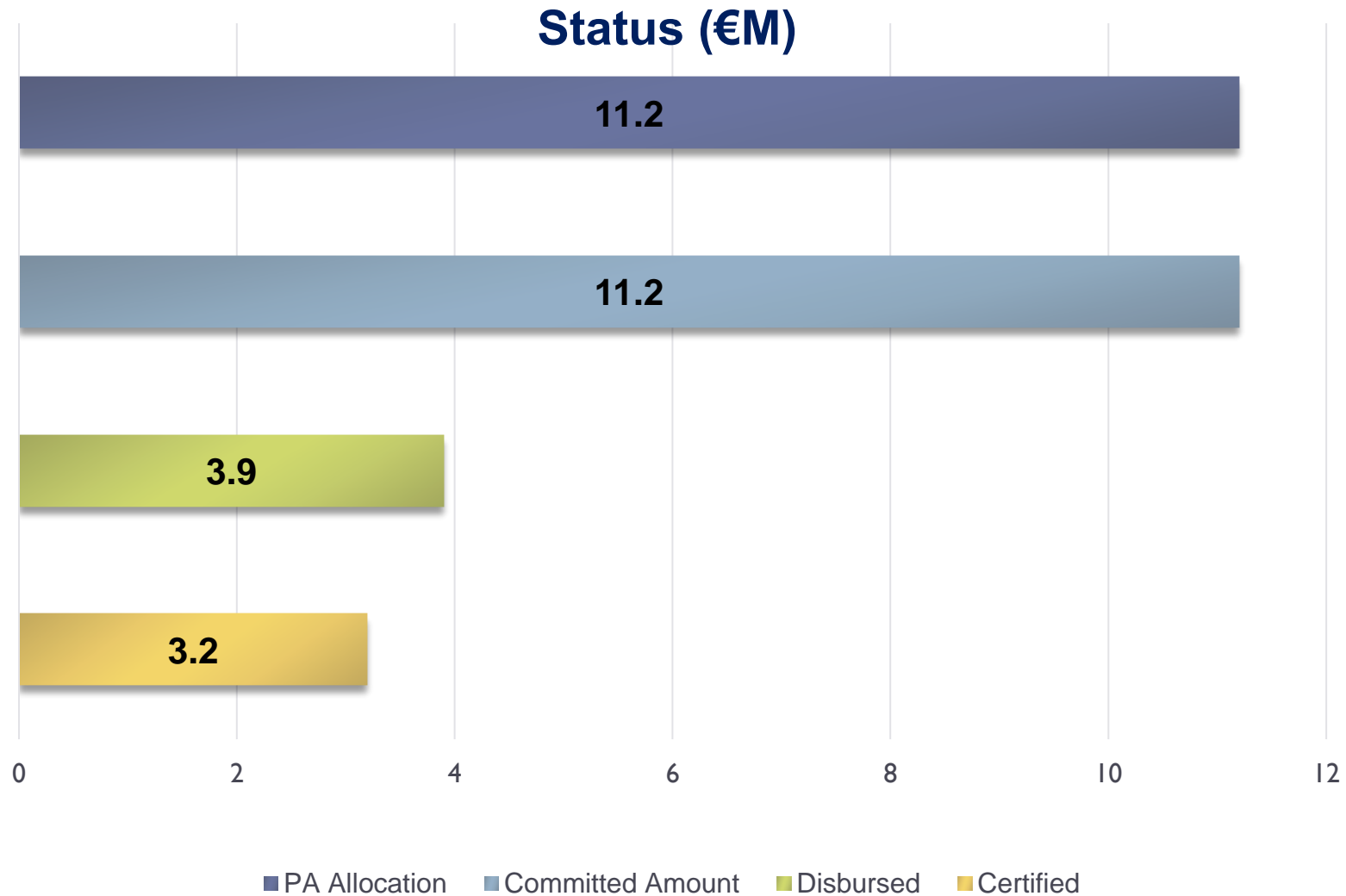
- Several procurement processes were still ongoing in 2022, with awards expected in Operating Theatres, improving IVF treatments.



X-Ray Machine  
Technology



# Financial Status December 2022



# Progress in the Implementation of Operational Programme II

**PA 1**  
**Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital**

# Implementation Progress – PA 1

## PA Allocation: €26M

**Two** projects and **one** Aid Scheme are being implemented under this PA with a **total public eligible value commitment of €32.2M (increase of circa €5M)**. Major achievements by end 2022:

### Youth Guarantee

- By end 2022 the project reached 5,797 participants (48% were women) with a 75% success rate (50% women).
- Increase in budget committed from €5.8M to €6.8M.
- In 2023 the SEC prevention classes will be carried out. To date this project supported 4216 students through this activity (52% women) with 3734 students obtaining a SEC certificate (53% women).
- A research and census on youth (NEETs) for the reinforced youth guarantee will be carried out by Q4 2023.

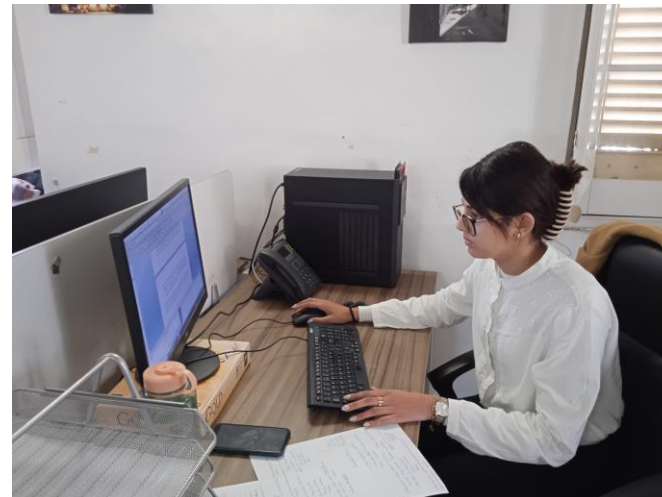


Photo: DOI - Omar Camilleri

# Implementation Progress – PA 1

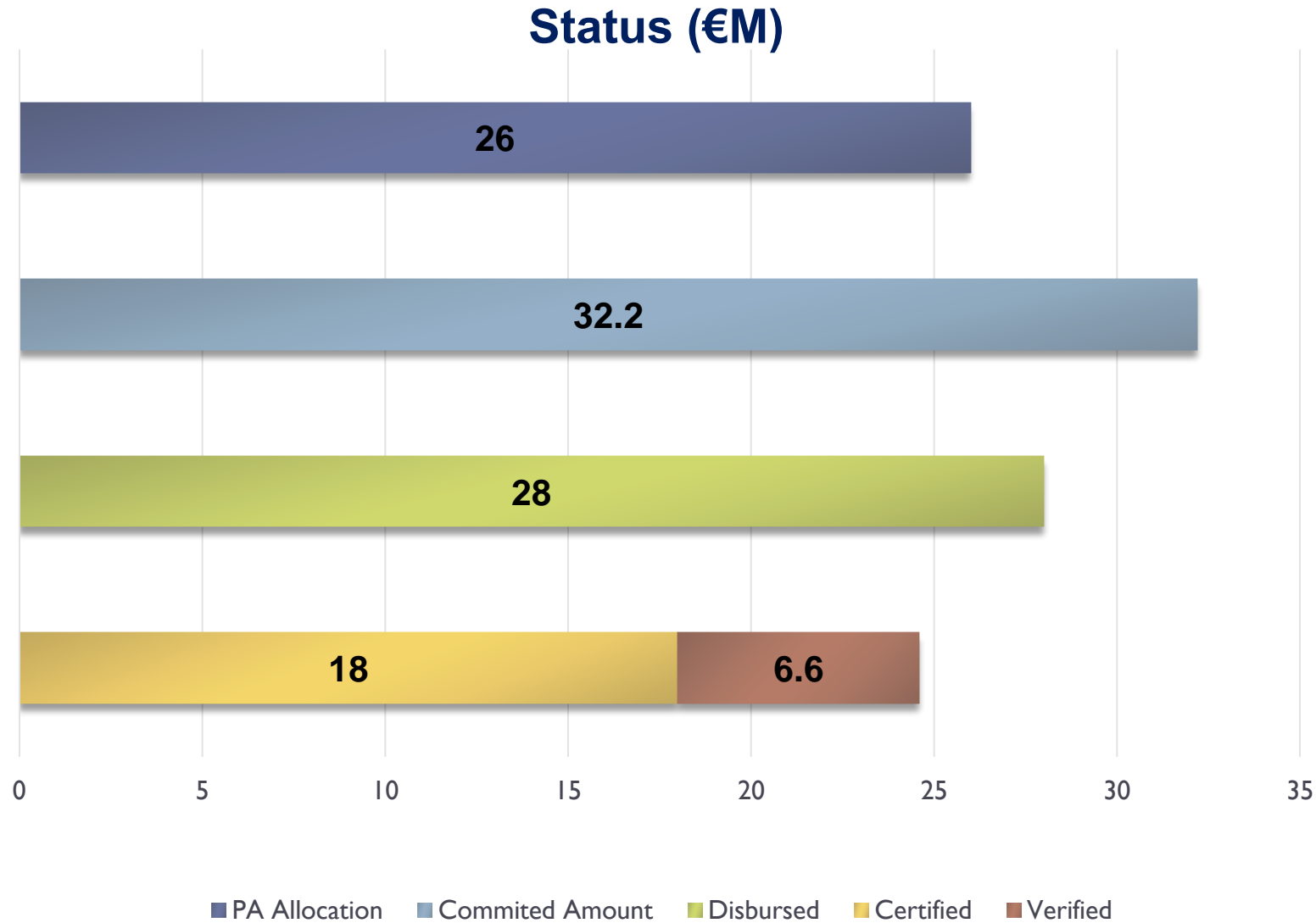
## Training for Employment

- Increase in budget committed from €9.5M to €10.7M.
- The TFE supported 7,185 participants (52% women). In 2022 alone, the TFE invested in 861 persons receiving support, of which 858 completed.
- Out of the 4,378 participants (53% women) who were unemployed/ inactive, 28% (16% women) were in employment within 4 weeks after receiving training, while 49% (26% women) were in employment within 6 months.





# Financial Status December 2022



## **PA 2**

# **Towards a more inclusive society**

# Implementation Progress – PA 2

## PA Allocation: €40M

**Twenty-three** mainstream projects with a total public eligible value of €41.3M. Of which 12 are small – scale projects run by NGOs and Social Partners with an investment of €1.1M.

Major achievements by end 2022: Total number of participants 14,788 (55% women).

Small Projects: By end 2022 small projects reached 1,104 participants (41% women)

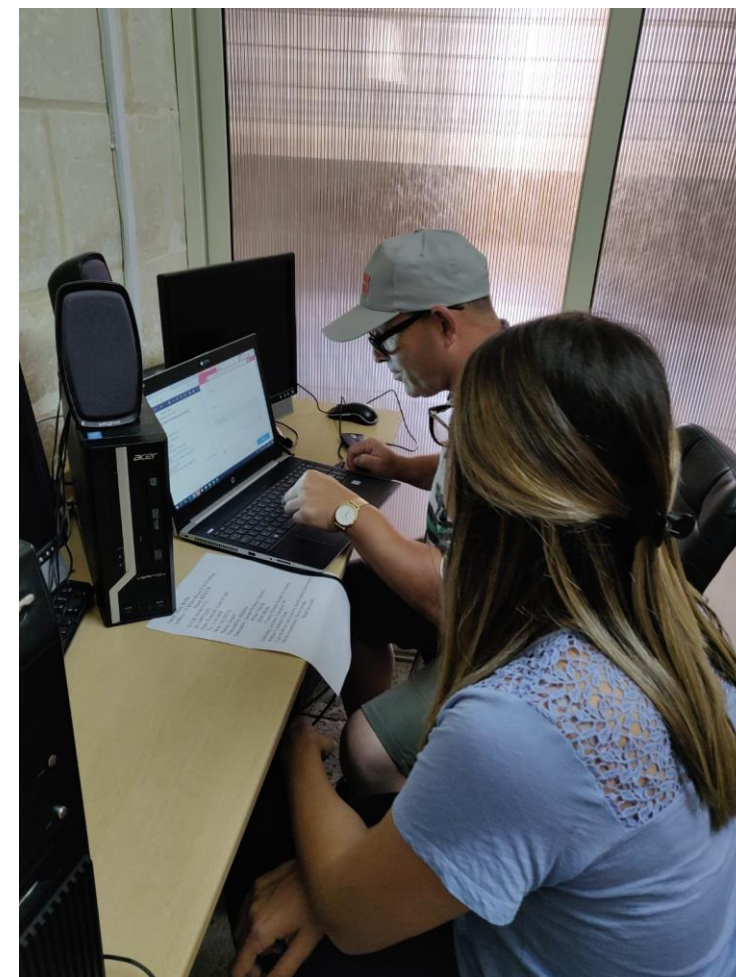
- 592 participants (21% women) are migrants/ foreign background,
- 75 (26 women) are PwDs and
- 208 children (44% girls).



## Implementation Progress – PA 2

### Social Inclusion

- By the end of 2022, through the **VASTE** and **INK** initiatives, over 2,418 vulnerable persons and persons with disabilities (31% women) received training.
- Capacity building was provided to over 1,000 job coaches, employers and parents providing the required skills to help PwD become more independent.
- Through the VASTE programme 1,781 (28% women) participants exited the programme with 56% being in employment or further studies 6 months after leaving;
  - 539 PwD (36% women) found employment and 15 (47% women) continued furthering their studies.
  - 430 (19% women) vulnerable persons found employment and 19 (32% women) continued furthering their studies.



# Implementation Progress – PA 2

## Health

### **ESF.02.053 Developing Allied Health Capacity to sustain health care needs:**

By end 2022, 14 students (93% women) successfully completed their studies and graduated in the following sectors: 6 in Orthoptics; 3 in Optometry and 5 in Genetic Counselling.

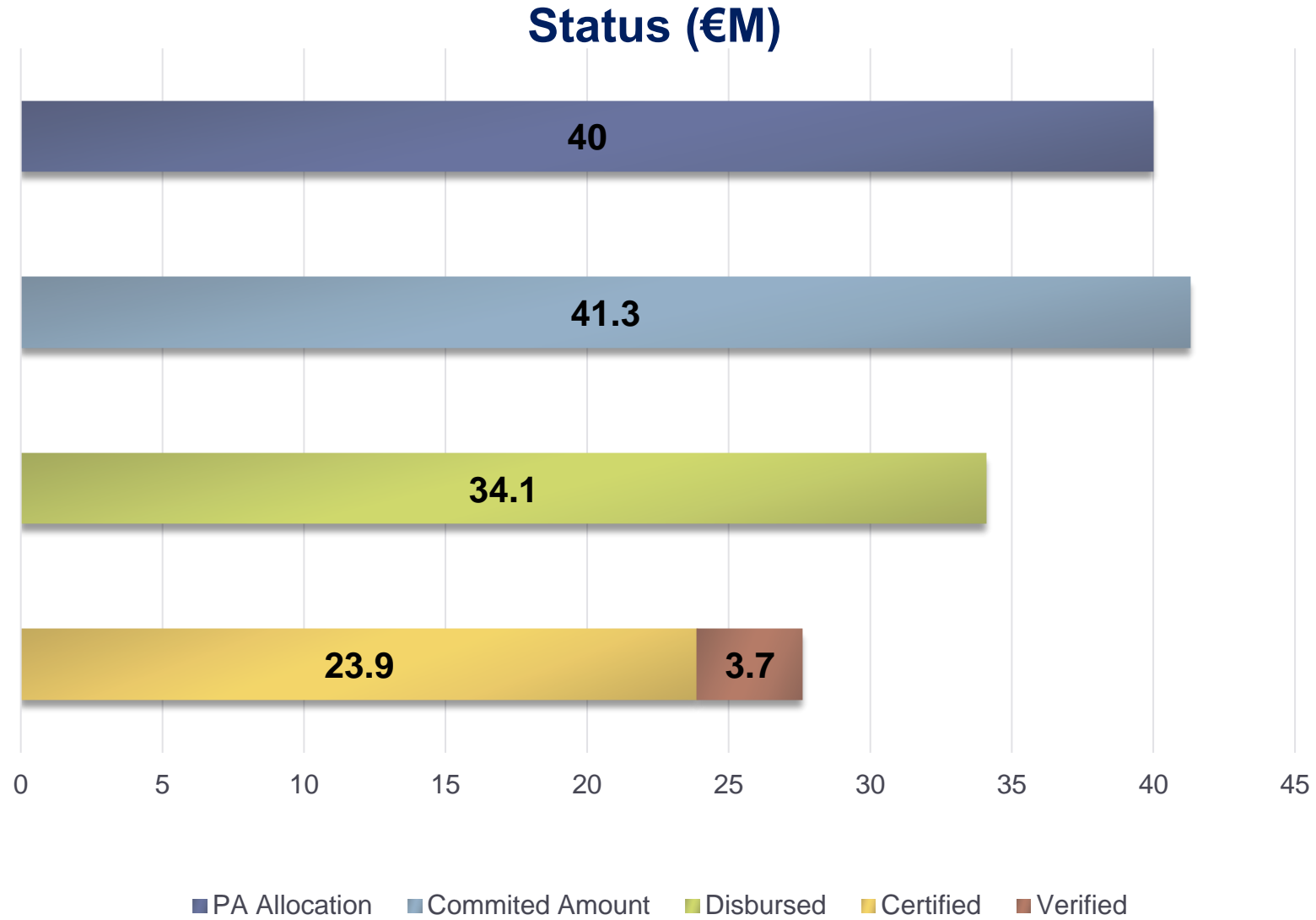
In 2022, 3 Orthoptists received their registration with the Council for Professions Complementary to Medicine (CPCM) and since commencing their employment at Mater Dei Hospital, 3,100 Orthoptics cases have been seen.

Malta has now 5 Genomic Care Coordinators. They are seeing general genetic cases as well as thalassemia clinic cases. In January 2023, the thalassemia referrals backlog stood at 27 weeks. All 250 patients were seen, and the backlog cleared. New referrals are now seen within 4 weeks.

### **ESF.02.052 Non-Technical Skills Training for Healthcare Personnel**

By end 2022 this project provided training in non-technical skills dealing with both the social dimension and the cognitive element in the healthcare sector to 3,524 personnel (69% women).

# Financial Status December 2022



**PA 3**  
**Investing in people through education, training  
and lifelong learning**



# Implementation Progress – PA 3

## PA Allocation: €40.9M

**Five projects, one financial instrument and one Aid Scheme** are being implemented under this PA with a total public eligible value commitment of €39.5M.

Major achievements by end 2022:

- Following the success of the summer **catch-up learning classes** (2021), this activity continued throughout academic years 21/22 and 22/23 and summer (2022). 1,800 unique students benefitted as at end 2022.
- A **Pilot Cloud-Based Ecosystem** was launched in 2022. This involves over 32,000 licenses for an online educational system aiming to enhance digital skills for primary school students. Related training for Educators started in October 2022 and is still ongoing.
- 9 educators have successfully completed their first year of studies in **Masters in Education (Poverty and Social Exclusion)** to target ELET within Colleges.
- 1 more project has concluded its activities (ESF.03.003) – MCAST Masters Courses





# Implementation Progress – PA 3

- **Endeavour scholarships Scheme :**
  - 1,133 students (51% women) received grants through the 7 calls. 81% concluded their studies by end 2022.
- **Success story:**
  - One of the students has carried out studies on new material used in implants for knee and hip replacements, so that these implants can last longer, and create less complications for the patient.
  - He read for a Masters in Mechanical Engineering, analyzing how new material made out of ceramics can be used in implants which will serve for much longer than they are doing now.



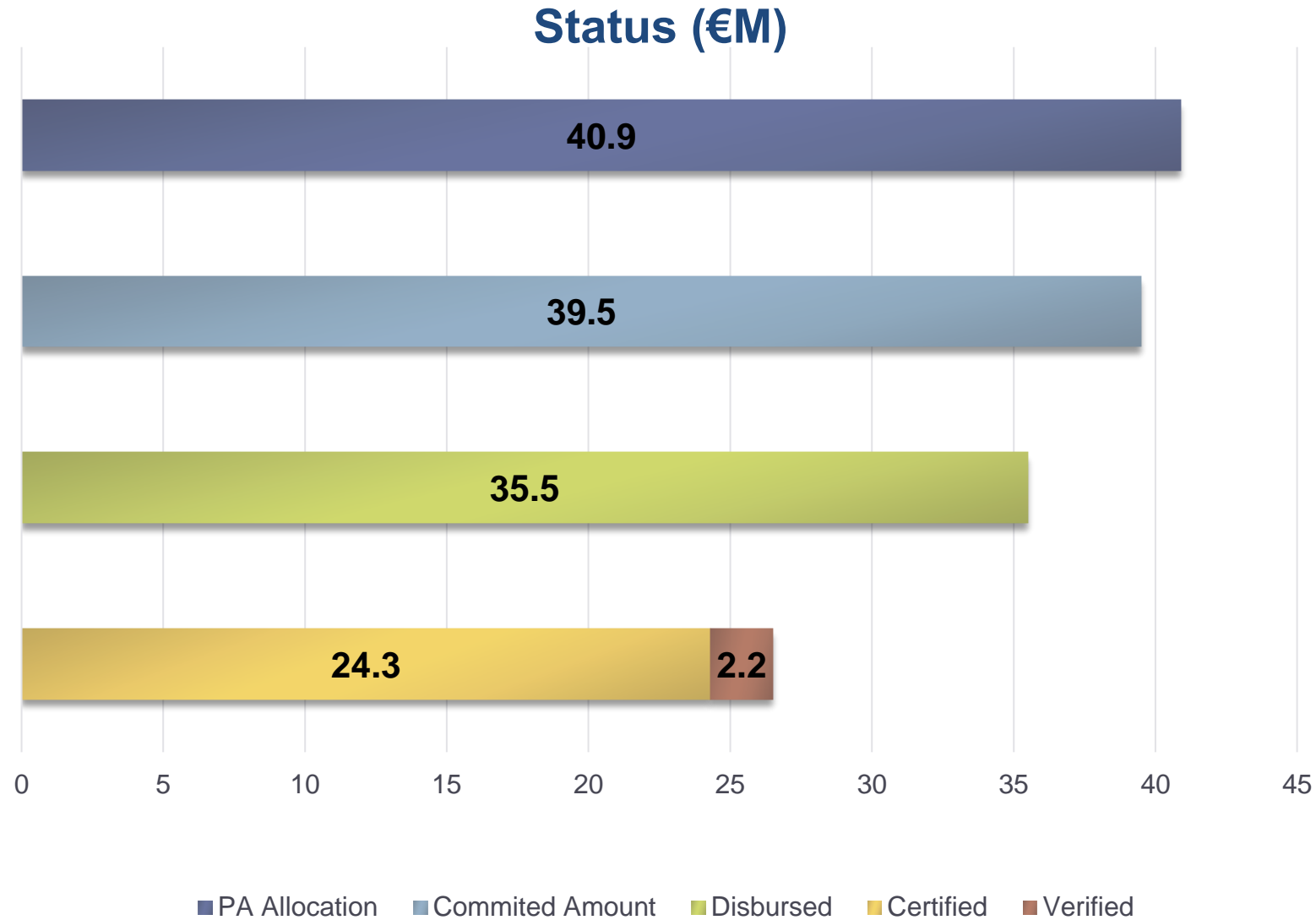
## Implementation Progress – PA 3

- The Financial Instrument is supporting individuals in their studies at MQF level 5 – 8 as well as other internationally recognized courses.

As at end 2022:	FSMA	FSMA +
Portfolio	€9.45M	€15M
Committed in loans	€9.18M	€5.99M
Number of loans/students supported	276	153
% of which women	37%	39%
Interest generated covered by the subsidy	€268k	€14k
Disbursed amount by the bank	€6.4M	€1.8M
% of loans disbursed over committed	69%	30%

- The Level 7 are the most popular of the loans provided in both instruments.

# Financial Status December 2022



# PA 4

## Building the institutional administrative capacity

# Implementation Progress – PA 4

## PA Allocation: €13.5M

**Nineteen mainstream** projects with a total public eligible value of €15.2M

- 3,930 participants benefitted from training under this PA (51% women).
- 3,733 individuals (52% women) were from the public sector/service (IP11i) whilst 197 (35% women) benefitted from projects targeting social dialogue (IP11ii).

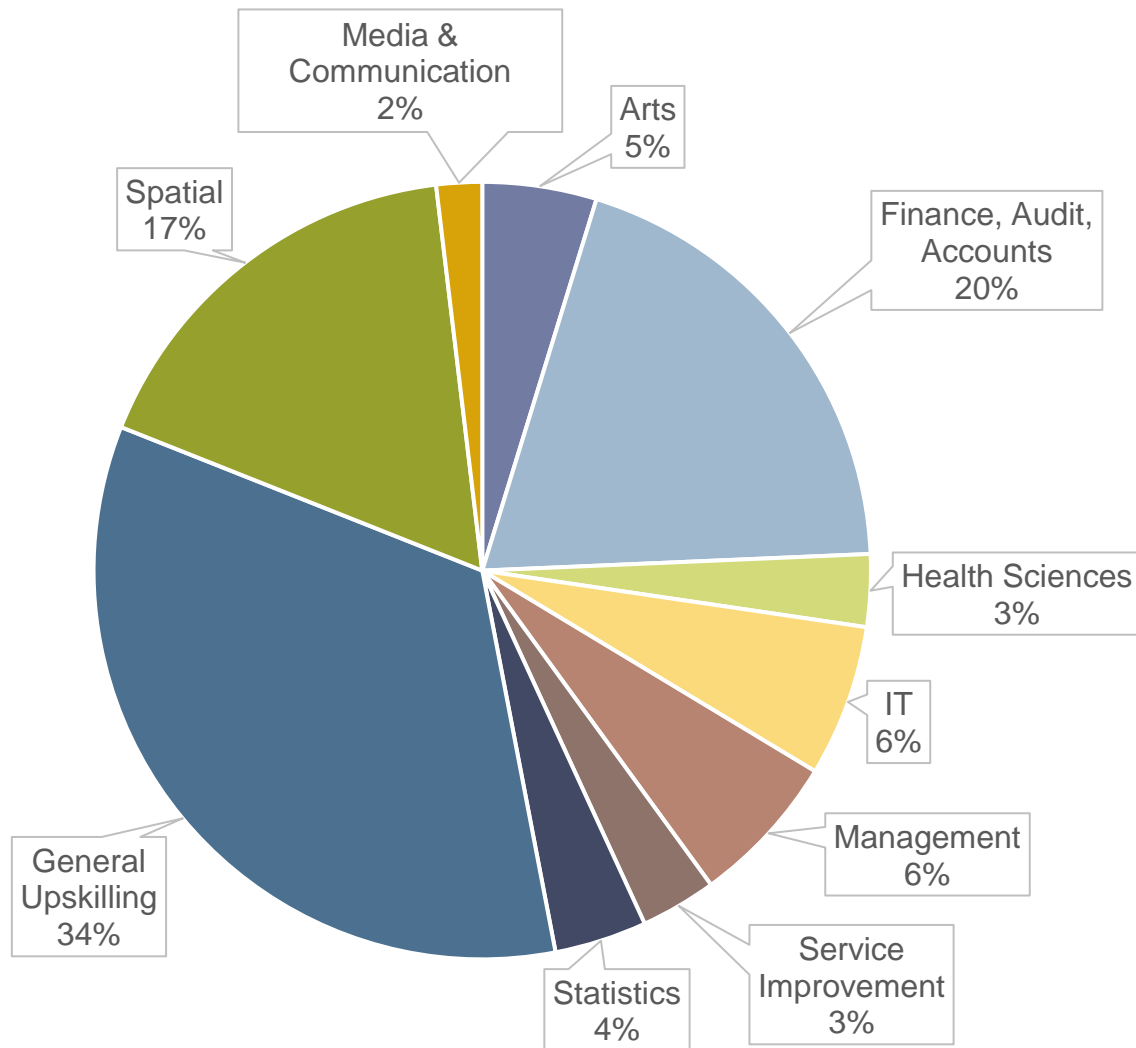
Major achievements by end 2022:

- In 2022 a call for **Specialised training for medical doctors** was issued under ESF.04.085, assisting Medical Doctors to Specialise Abroad. Seven (7) sponsorships were awarded in Public Health, Infectious Diseases, Psychiatry, Neuropsychology, Diagnostic Paediatric Neuroradiology, and Gastroenterology. Two (2) sponsorships were awarded in 2022 following the call for **Allied Health Professionals** issued in 2021. Both awardees specialised in Mental Health Rehabilitation.
- A MoU between University of Malta and MCAST under the ESF.04.083 saw the completion of training of 17 training courses in **Technical Skills, Laboratory skills, and Health & Safety related training**, with a total of 325 participation instances resulting in 180 unique persons trained, of which 60 are women.
- The ESF.04.071 **Spatial Train Project** launched two (2) books; one (1) featuring results from the final projects of the MQF levels 4-5 and another featuring research articles from students who completed their MQF levels 6 and 7 courses.



# Analysis of PA4 (11i) training by focus areas

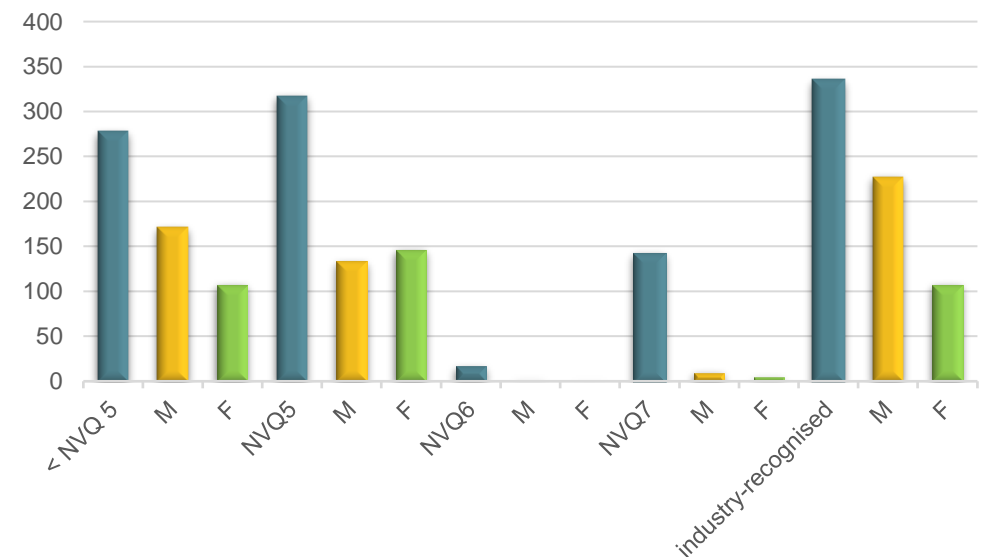
Training areas supported



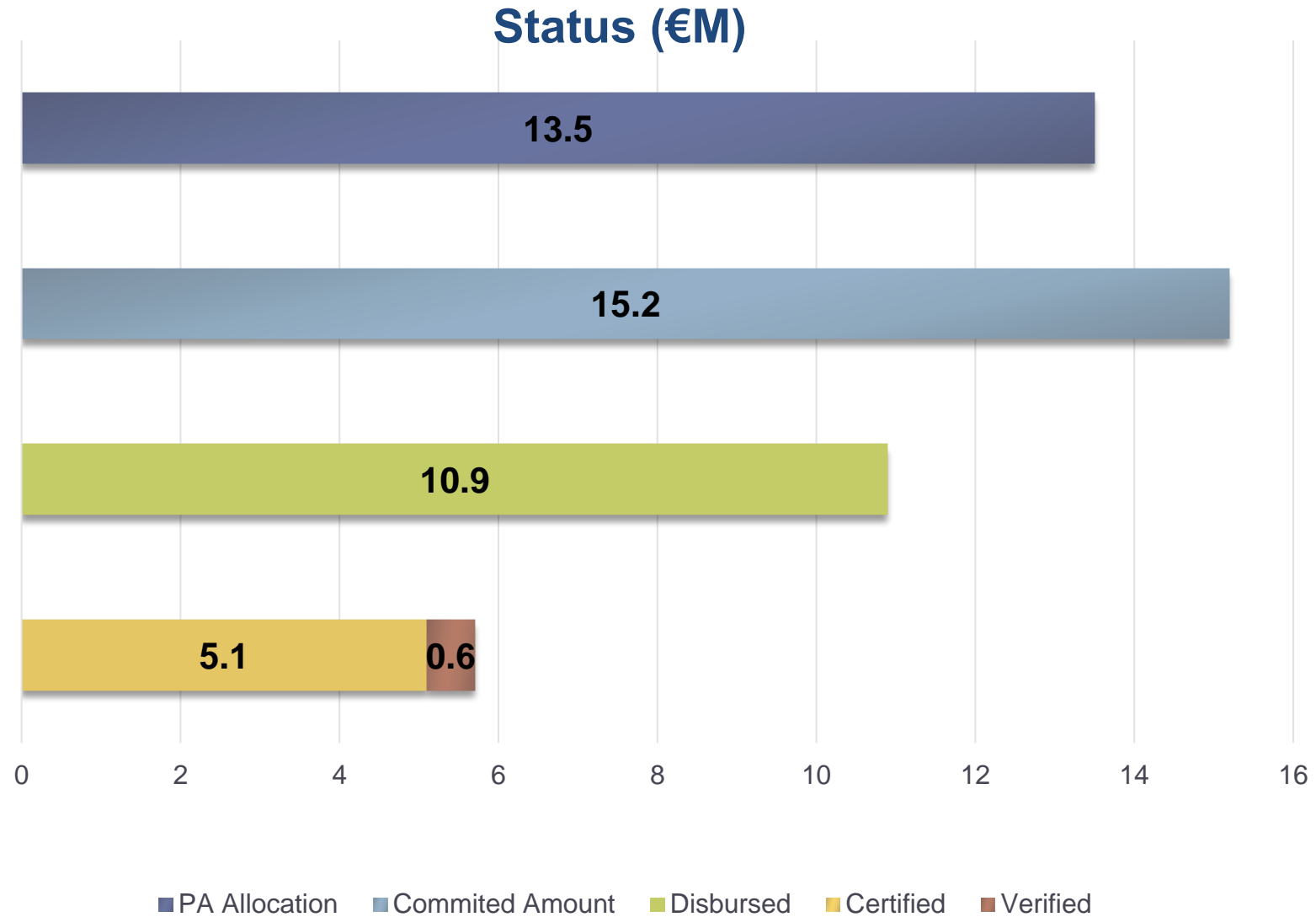
Over 3,700 public sector/service employees (unique values) received training.

The charts indicate areas and level of training invested in through PA 4 IP11i.

## NVQ levels



# Financial Status December 2022



**PA 6 Enabling job maintenance in the context of the COVID pandemic crisis**

**PA 7 REACT- EU Additional support for job maintenance in the context of the COVID pandemic crisis**

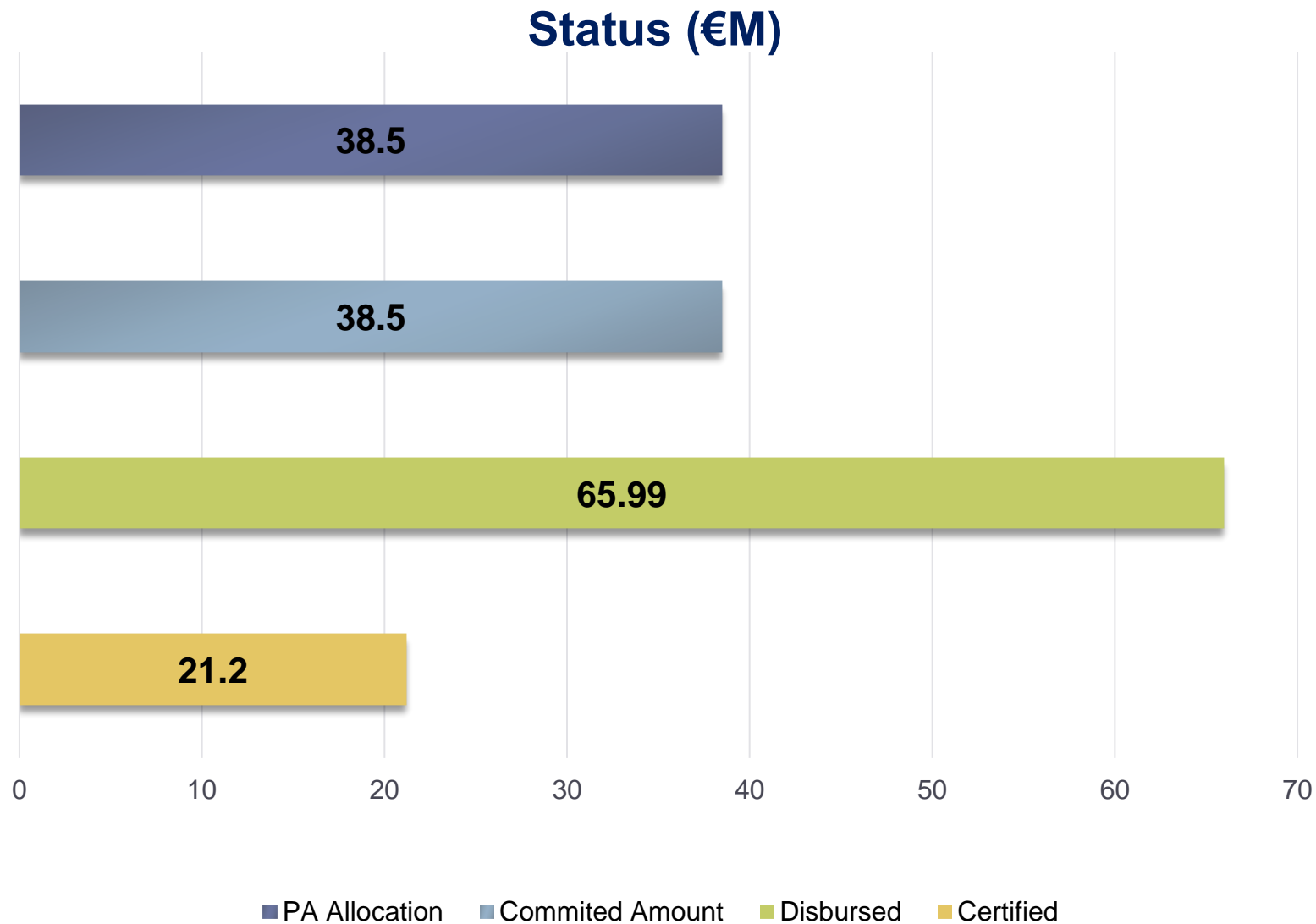


## Implementation Progress – PA 6 and PA 7

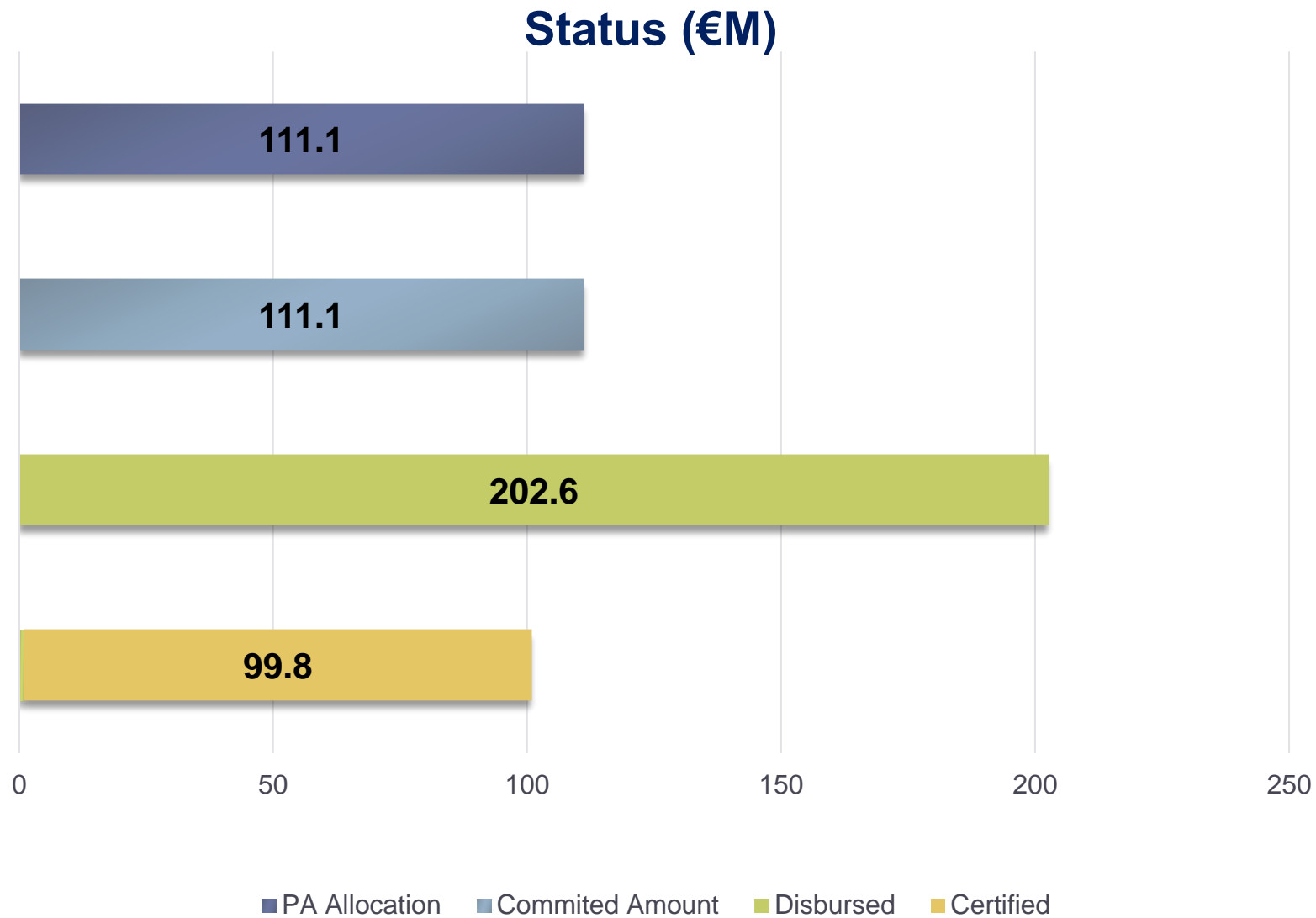
- The Wage Supplement Scheme as launched through government notice 389 of 2020 and subsequent amendments is being supported through ESF and REACTeu for periods October 2020 to March 2021 and January to May 2022.
- On the ground, Malta Enterprise has processed and paid all related claims to employers, including the self-employed. The linked reimbursement claims are being processed through the Structural Funds Database, with reimbursements up to end December amounting to €268M.
- Verifications are at an advanced stage by the Managing Authority, with the assistance of key stakeholders including Jobsplus and Commissioner for Revenue.
- A total amount of €121M has been certified up to December 2022, with over 72,500 persons supported (40% women).



# Financial Status PA 6 December 2022



# Financial Status PA 7 December 2022



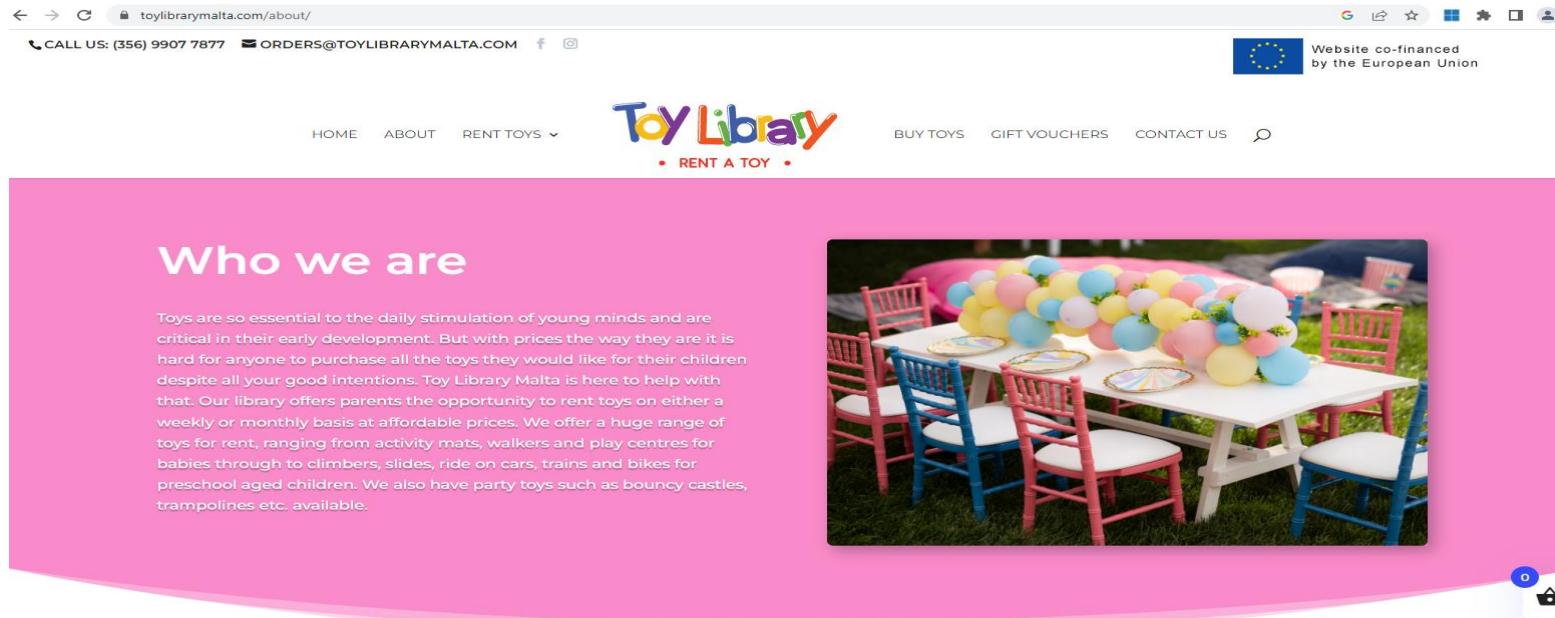
## **Support to Enterprises**

**Operational Programme I: Business Enhance ERDF Grant Schemes**

**Operational Programme II: A2E and Investing in skills**

# OPI Aid Schemes Progress in 2022

- The **Business Enhance ERDF Grant Schemes** are being implemented through open rolling calls with different cut-off dates to give the opportunity to the private sector to submit proposals regularly.
- In 2022, there were 90 cut-off dates issued under the schemes being implemented, resulting in 182 applications received out of which 96 applications were approved, whilst 26 were still under evaluation.
- The total amount of grants approved in 2022 was €2.7M, 67% of which were awarded to micro enterprises.



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## Who we are

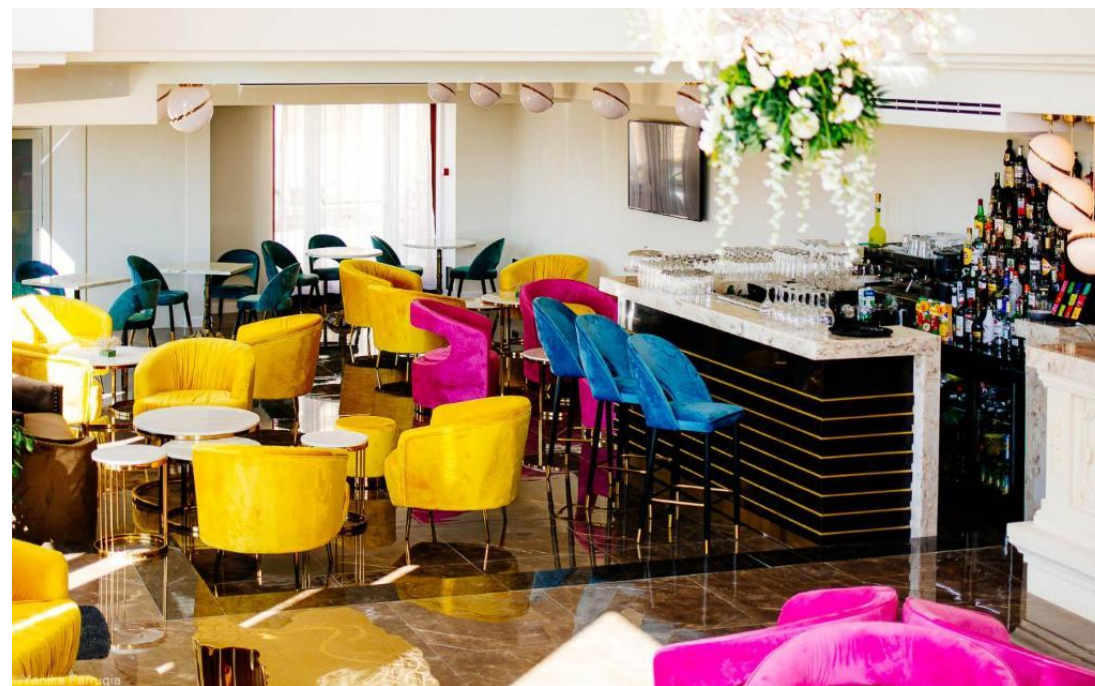
Toys are so essential to the daily stimulation of young minds and are critical in their early development. But with prices the way they are it is hard for anyone to purchase all the toys they would like for their children despite all your good intentions. Toy Library Malta is here to help with that. Our library offers parents the opportunity to rent toys on either a weekly or monthly basis at affordable prices. We offer a huge range of toys for rent, ranging from activity mats, walkers and play centres for babies through to climbers, slides, ride on cars, trains and bikes for preschool aged children. We also have party toys such as bouncy castles, trampolines etc. available.

ERDF.02.S1.Call 2.0195 – Chiara George (e-Commerce Grant Scheme)

- Toy Library (Rent a toy)

## OPI Aid Schemes Progress

- Through this project IM Grech Co Ltd has developed an 18-room quaint and distinct boutique hotel in the peaceful hamlet of Santa Lucija, Kerċem in Gozo. The hotel has enhanced the touristic offering in Gozo by offering various services and facilities aimed at maximizing guests' experience.
- ERDF.03.S5.Call 3.0015 – **IM Grech Co. Ltd** (Start up Investment Grant scheme).





# OPI Aid Schemes

## Progress in 2022 only



To date, 569 SMEs are benefitting from the schemes, of which 376 are micro, 147 small and 46 medium.

Aid Schemes	Applications Received in 2022	Applications under evaluation in 2022	Grants Contracted in 2022	Grants Contracted in 2022 (€)
Business Enhance RD&I (PA 1)	0	0	0	€0
E-Commerce Grant Scheme (PA 2)	62	12	28	€0.13
Start-up Investment (PA 3)	10	0	7	€1.27M
SME Diversification & Innovation (PA 3)	16	8	11	€1M
SME Internationalisation (PA 3)	0	0	0	€0
SME Consultancy (PA 3)	90	5	49	€0.19M
SME Growth (PA 3)	4	1	1	€0.07M
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>€2.66M</b>



# ESF Aid Schemes

## A2E Scheme–Implementation Progress

**Access to Employment (A2E)** - provides employment aid to enterprises in Malta and Gozo to promote the recruitment of the more challenged amongst jobseekers and inactive persons.

- €14.6M were committed, of which €14.3M were paid resulting in 3,231 employed persons of which 52% women, 16% were participants with disabilities (33% women) and 15% were above 54 years (44% women).
- 705 women returned to work with the assistance of the scheme; 79% of which were unemployed/inactive for at least two years and 21% were unemployed/inactive for one year.



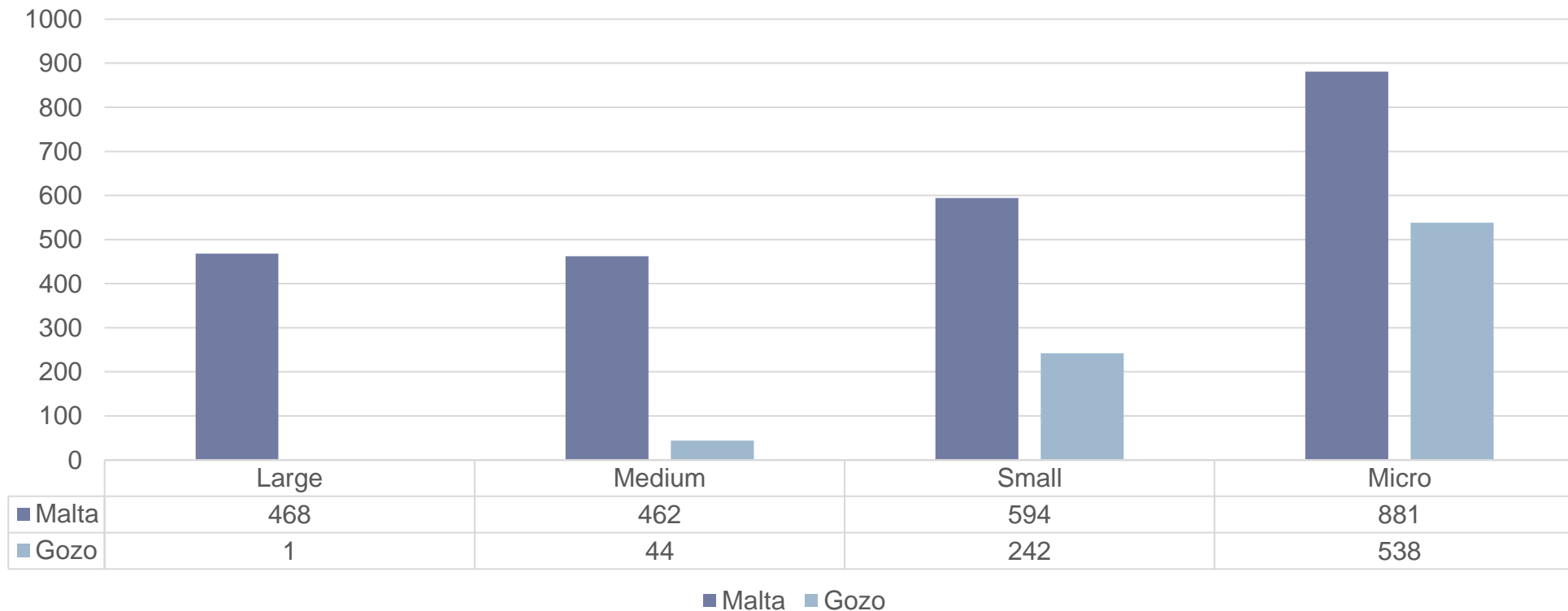
# Implementation Progress

## Beneficiaries

As at end December 2022, 2,405 grants were signed in Malta and another 825 grants in Gozo.

In 2022 alone there were 454 signed grants in Malta for the value of €2.4M and 74 in Gozo for the value of €332K.

Size of Entity



# Implementation Progress

## Investing in Skills

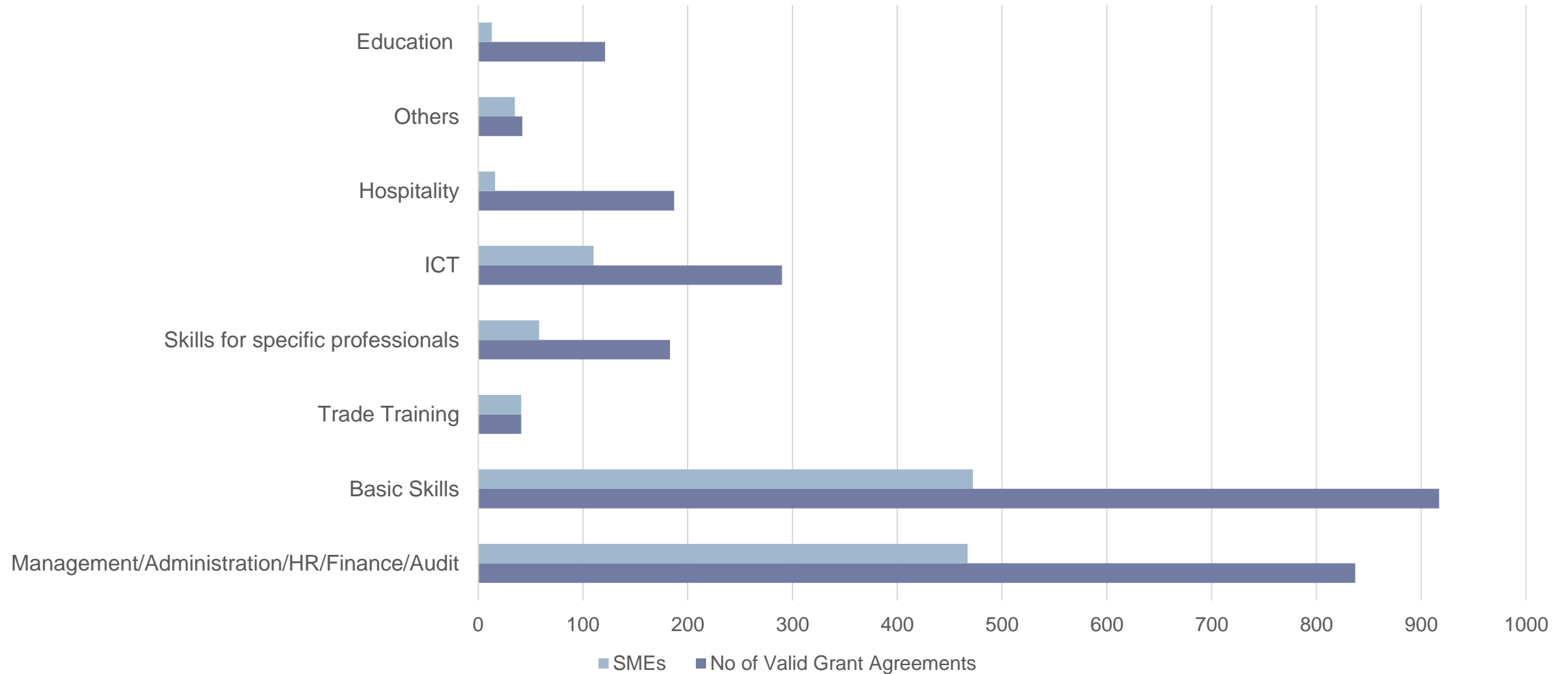
Investing in Skills (IIS) - intended to promote access to the training of persons actively participating in the Maltese labour market, with a view to increasing productivity and enhancing adaptability by improving the knowledge and skills of employed persons.

- Eligible training can be either classroom style, one-to-one training or on-the job training, online live training sessions, accredited distance learning or accredited online self-led training.
- In 2022, most of the training was classroom style. Out of the 1,242 applications that were received in 2022, 933 resulted in valid grants. 394 (62%) were for training held classroom style, 214 (34%) were online, and 23 (4%) were blended. 440 were either rejected or withdrawn.
- Over €5.9M have been committed, of which more than €4.67M were paid through 3,331 grants. These resulted in over 29,600 participants trained, over 49% of which were women, nearly 1% were participants with disabilities (48% of which were women) and 5% were above 54 years (38% women).



The poster features logos for the Government of Malta, Ministry for Finance and Employment, Ministry for the Economy, European Funds and Lands, Parliamentary Secretariat for European Funds, and the Malta Skills logo. It also includes the EU Funds for Malta 2014-2020 logo. The main text reads '2<sup>ND</sup> CALL INVESTING IN SKILLS' with 'ESF.03.51' below it. A green banner below the title says 'FUNDS ARE RUNNING OUT APPLY NOW!'. The central image shows a group of diverse people in a classroom setting. At the bottom, there are logos for the Maltese flag and the European Union flag, along with text: 'Operational Programme 0 - European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020', 'Investing in human capital to create more opportunities and promote the well-being of society', 'Project implemented by the European Social Fund', and 'Co-financing with 85% European Union, 15% National Funds'.

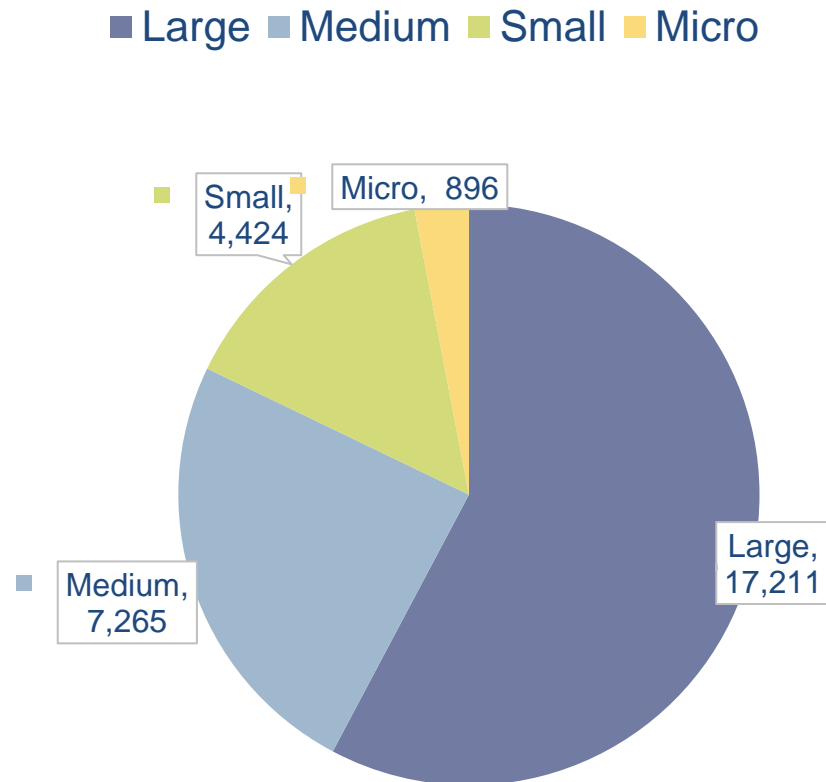
# Implementation Progress Areas of Training in 2022



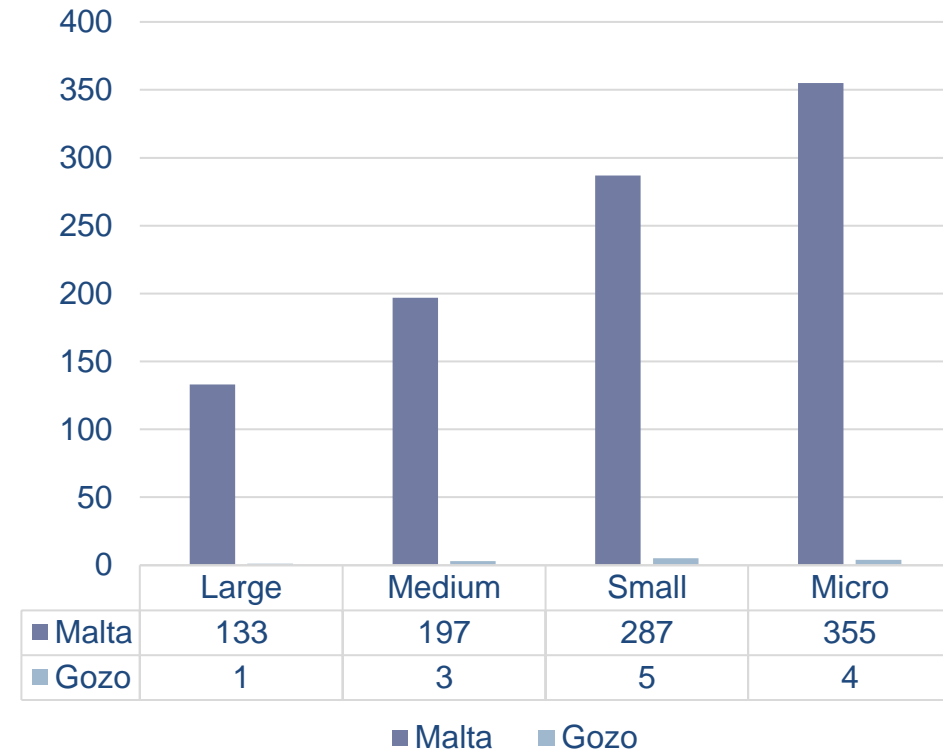
# Implementation Progress Beneficiaries

From the start of the scheme, a total of 5,953 applications were received till the end of 2022. These resulted in 972 unique beneficiaries who benefitted from the scheme, out of which 839 are SMEs.

Trainees supported



Grants by Size of Entity



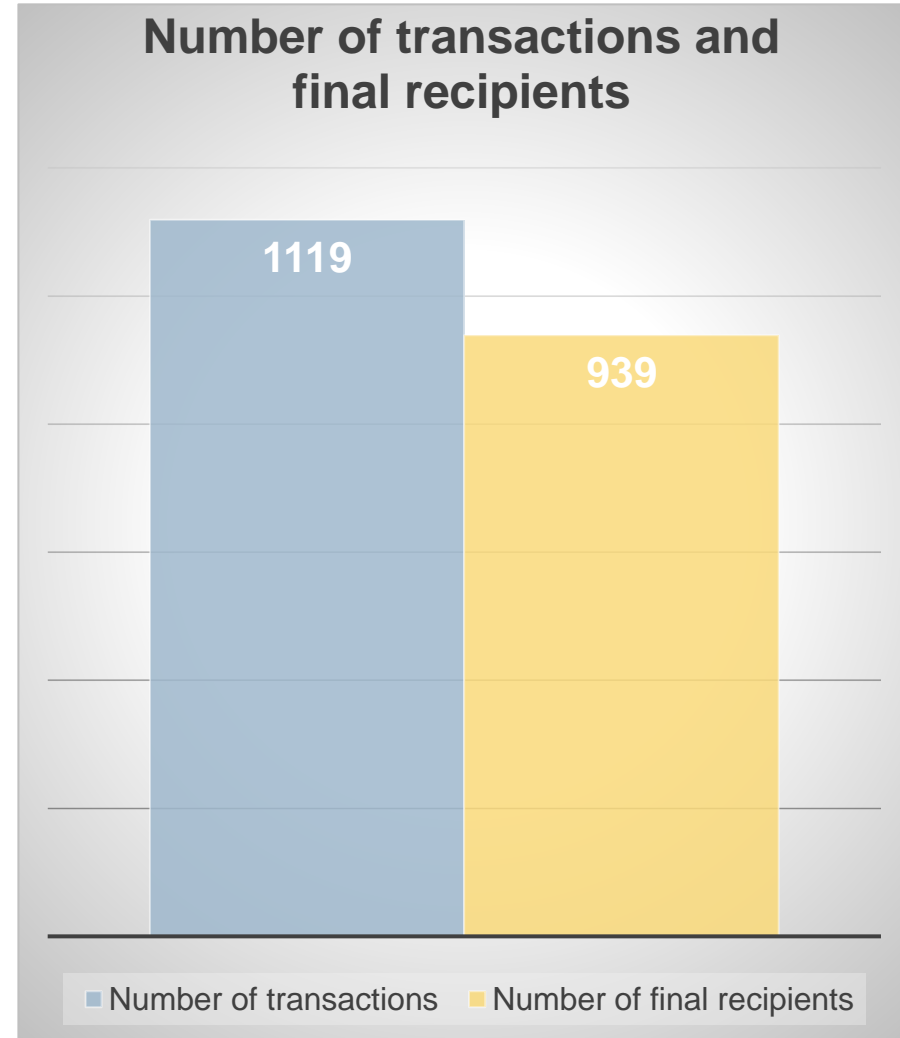
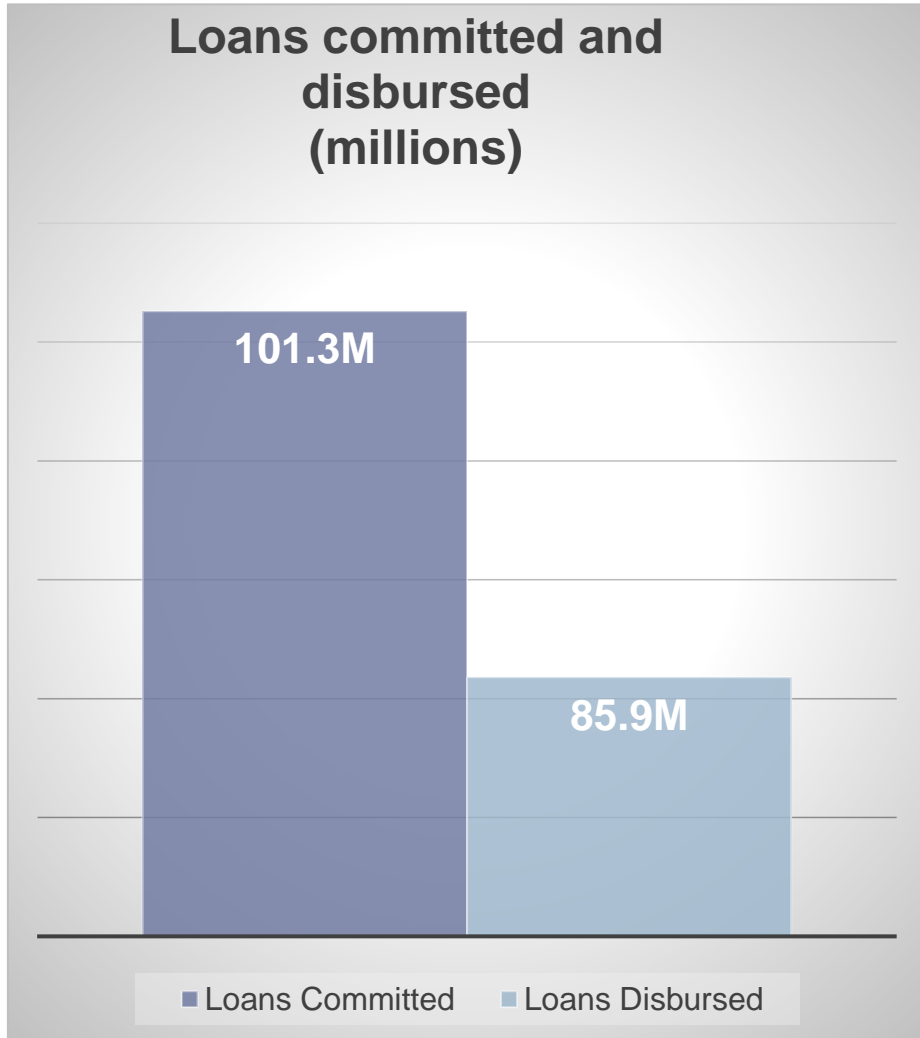
# **SME Initiative Malta Update on Implementation**

## Overview - SMEi

- The implementation of the SME Initiative continued in 2022, showcasing the ongoing success of this instrument, and its ability to adapt to the economic realities of the Maltese islands, even when facing unprecedented scenarios such as a global pandemic.
- The SMEi Malta has reached **€101M** (December 2021: €81M) of portfolio volume which represents 86% (December 2021: 68%) of the absorption rate with respect to budget post-increase (€118M). This represents a strong increase in activity since end of 2021.
- By the end of 2022, **1119 guaranteed loans** had been disbursed by the two selected Fis to a total of **939 SMEs**.
- C. 81.5% of the SMEs which benefitted from this instrument employed less than 10 employees, 98.6% less than 50 employees. 50% of the SMEs assisted under the SME Initiatives were start-ups.
- Based on projections, the first return of funds could occur as from 2025.



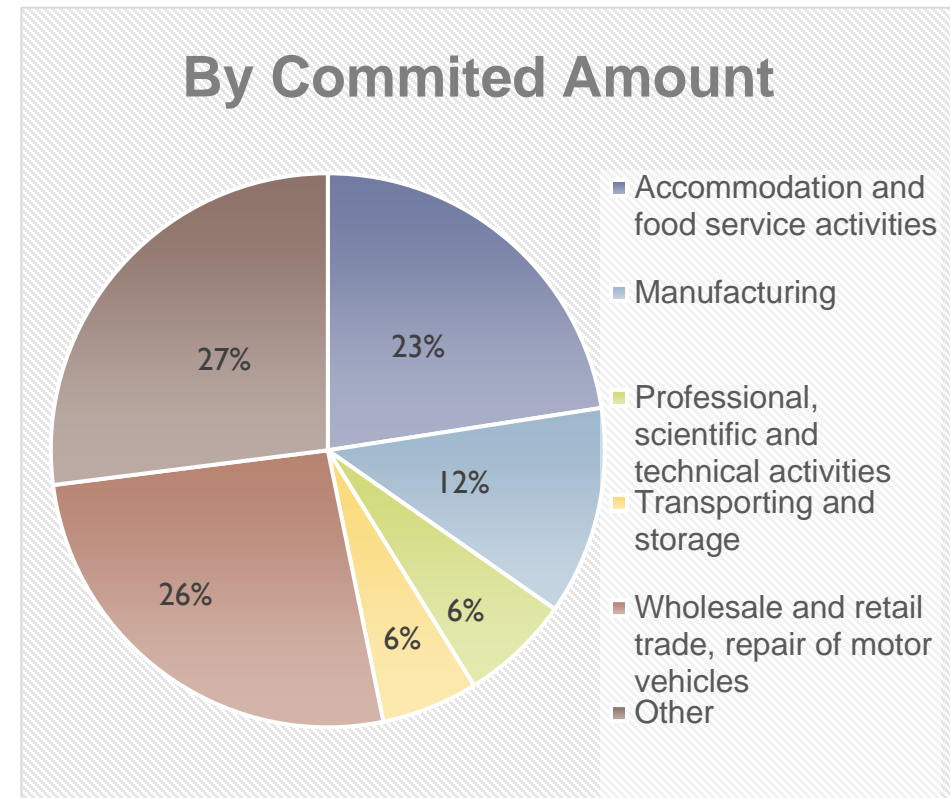
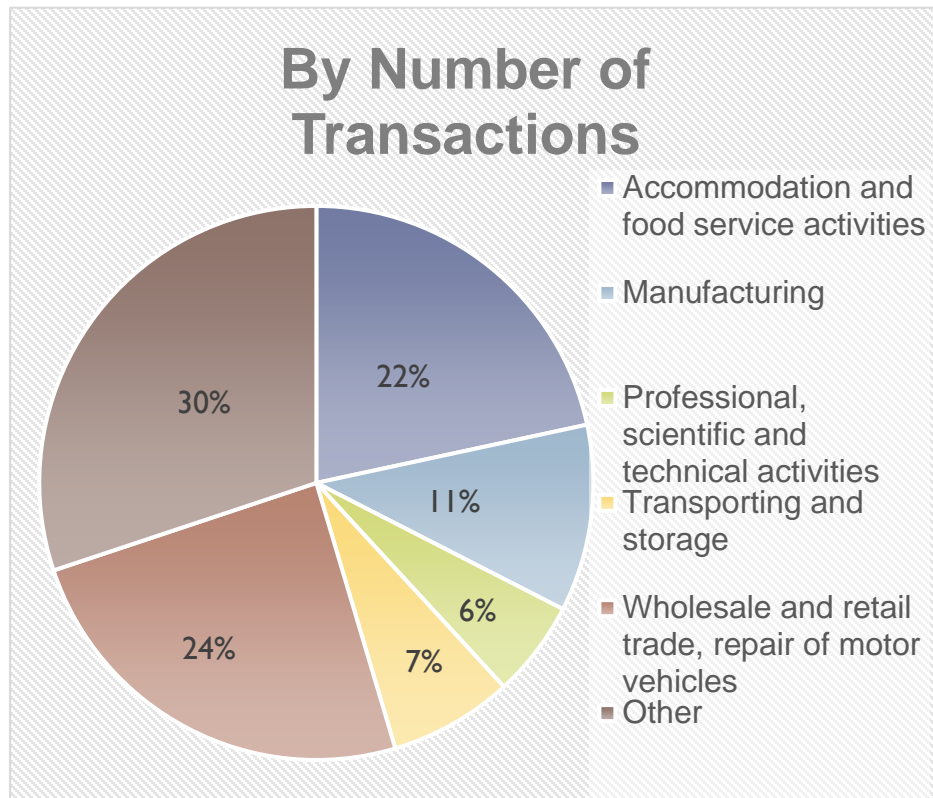
## Progress as at Dec 2022



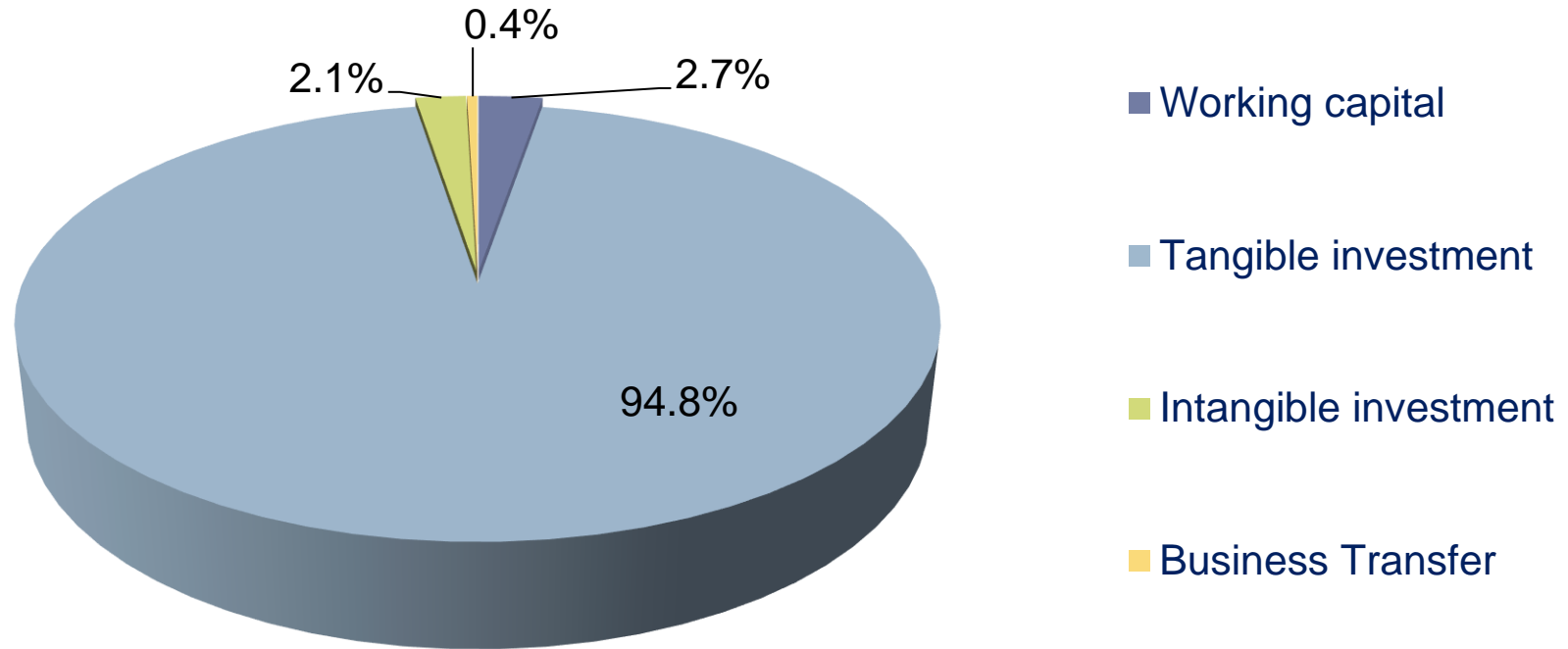
# Profile of final recipients

## Diversification by Sector

- ▶ **66 sectors** received financing (NACE code level 2)
- ▶ **5 sectors account for approx. 70%** of SMEs receiving financing



# Loan Purpose



# **Programme Territorial Earmarking**

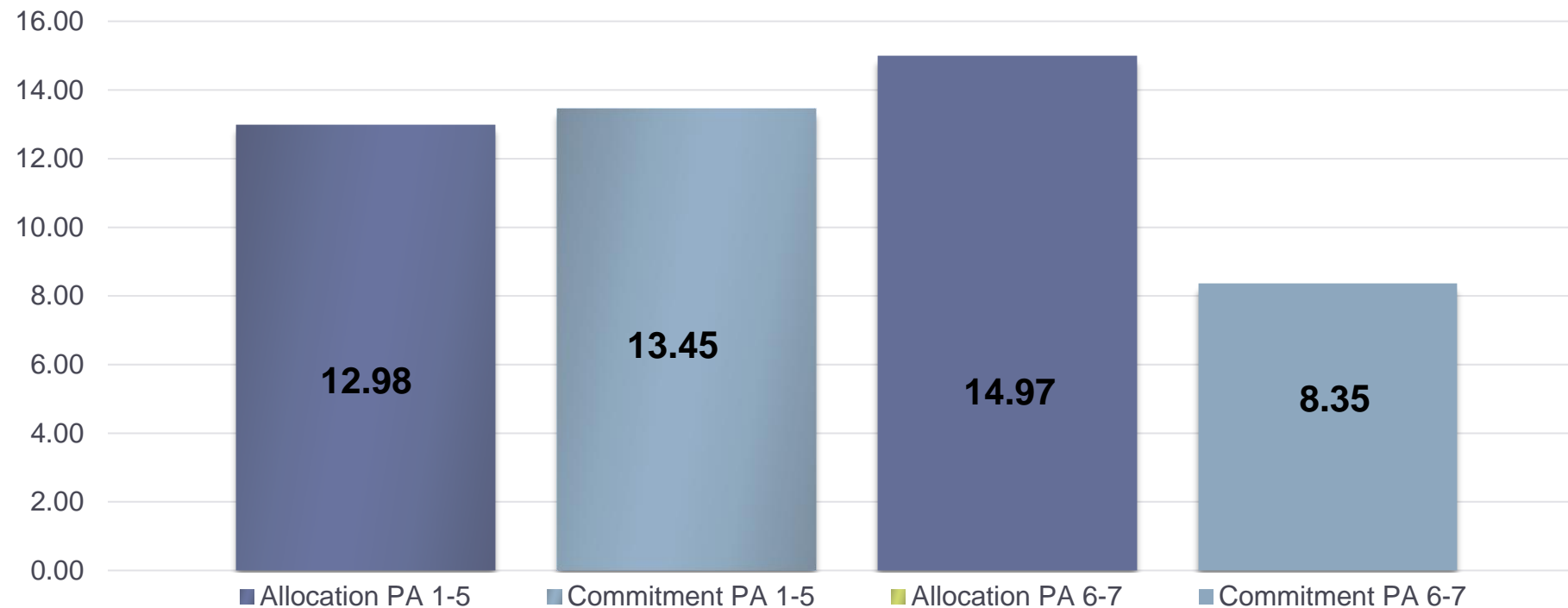
# OPI Territorial Earmarking: 10% commitment for Gozo

- The following amount to a commitment of 100% (€72.1M) towards the 10% (€67.7M) Gozo commitment target for ERDF and CF:
  - 7 ERDF Gozo-based projects; 23 ERDF projects with a Gozo component;
  - 111 loan beneficiaries under the SMEi Financial Instrument;
  - 79 Grant Schemes Beneficiaries; and
  - 10 Beneficiaries under the EERE FI.



# OPII Territorial Earmarking: 10% commitment for Gozo

- The following amounts to a commitment of over 78% (€21.8M) towards the 10% (€27.95M) Gozo commitment target for ESF:
  - 54 mainstream projects including 1 financial instrument and 3 Aid Schemes.



# **Involvement of JASPERS (Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions)**



## JASPERS Assistance

- For the 14-20 Programming Period, JASPERS provided assistance on CBA reviews and related matter on projects focusing on Water, Waste, R&I, Transport and Sustainable Urban Development. All related assignments have been completed.
- JASPERS assistance has now shifted on the 2021-2027 Programming Period. A Country Work Programme is being discussed to set up an action plan for JASPERS support for the new programme.
- In 2022, JASPERS provided assistance to:
  - Transport Malta on the update of the Transport Malta Plan in line with the National Energy and Climate Plan objectives;
  - Wasteserv and MEEE on the proposed Organic Processing Plant project being prepared. The first mission in Malta was conducted by JASPERS experts and the first Guidance Note was issued.

# Monitoring and Evaluation (2014-2020)

# Update on Performance Framework Indicators Achievement OPI



## Achieved

- PA 2: New e-services applications in the areas of health, environment, customs and interdepartmental services
- PA 5: Rehabilitated/ Preserved Land
- PA 6: Urban Development: Public or commercial buildings built or renovated in urban areas
- PA 7: Projects and/or schemes promoting and/or exploring cleaner transport methods
- PA 9: Capacity of VET and Tertiary education infrastructure
- PA 11: Roads: Total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads, of which: TEN-T

## In progress

- PA 1: Number of research facilities
- PA 3: Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support
- PA 4 : Additional capacity of renewable energy production
- PA 5: Sustainable Tourism: Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions
- PA 6: Urban Development: Rehabilitated housing
- PA 8: Health: Population covered by improved health services
- PA 8: Urban Development: Rehabilitated housing
- PA 10: Water supply: Additional population served by improved water supply

# Update on Indicators Achievement

## OPII



- As at end 2022, 69,697 participants (PA 1 to PA 4) were trained of which 52% are females.
- Through WSS (PA 6 and PA 7) as at end 2022, over 72,553 persons were supported. (40% women, 35% foreign background).
- 13 output indicators (of which 5 are Performance Framework Indicators) have been achieved whilst 11 result indicators have reached the target.
- It is to be noted that in cases where indicators have not yet been achieved, a number of operations are still under implementation and thus further progress is expected to be reported towards Programme closure.

## Evaluation - Update

DESCRIPTION	FUND	STATUS
Overview of the Key Processes	ERDF, ESF, CF	Concluded
Assessment analysing the output and result indicators, mapping out the methodologies for data collection, how they will be verified, and publishing simple guidance at a national level for all stakeholders	ERDF, ESF, CF	Concluded
<p><i>Ex-Ante</i> Assessments covering the following financial instruments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ SMEi</li> <li>✓ FSMA</li> <li>✓ EERE</li> </ul>	ERDF, ESF	Concluded
Evaluation Syntheses in line with Article 114(2) of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013	ERDF, ESF, CF	Concluded
<p><i>Ex-Post</i> Evaluation on the competitiveness of SMEs (TO 3) covering both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Repayable grants – the SMEi Operational Programme</li> <li>✓ Non-repayable grants – 5 ERDF and 1 ESF State Aid Scheme</li> </ul>	ERDF, ESF	Concluded

# Evaluation - Update

DESCRIPTION	FUND	STATUS
<u>Annual</u> Internal Assessment analysing the effectiveness of the OPs through the progress of all indicators	ERDF, CF, ESF	Ongoing
<i>Ex-Post</i> Evaluation on the <i>Youth Guarantee 2.0 Scheme</i>	ESF	Ongoing
<i>Ex-Post</i> Evaluation on Employment related funding instruments (TO 8)	ESF	Ongoing
<i>Ex-Post</i> Evaluation on Education related funding instruments (TO 10)	ESF	Ongoing

# Communicating Findings

## TO3 Evaluation – Assistance provided to SMEs



Status: **Concluded**

Deliverable: *Ex-post Evaluation of the SMEi Operational Programme*

Evaluation Criterion	Finding
<b>Relevance</b>	Sound rationale for the implementation of the SMEi in Malta confirmed.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Effective in helping financial institutions to serve SMEs, as confirmed by the rapid roll out of the instrument.
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Effective at increasing the enterprises' performance (turnover) by boosting investments in line with its main objectives.</li><li>- Evidence of project additionality confirmed.</li><li>- The attempt to evaluate its financial additionality was found to be complex and multifaceted.</li></ul>
<b>Coherence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- On internal coherence, the offer of financial instruments backed by EU funds appears to be coherent.</li><li>- There seems to be less coherence externally.</li></ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	The perceived benefits of the SMEi have exceeded the costs.



# Communicating Findings

## TO3 Evaluation– Assistance provided to SMEs



Status: **Concluded**

Deliverable: ***Ex-post Evaluation of 1 ESF and 5 ERDF State Aid Schemes***

Evaluation Criterion	Finding
<b>Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The logic applied to the selection of the State Aid schemes evaluated was sound. All State Aid schemes, except the SME internationalization, funded activities and investments that were considered relevant for SMEs to become more competitive.</li></ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The different State Aid schemes, except for the SME Internationalisation, experienced a good level of uptake.</li><li>• One major driver for the higher attractiveness of the IIS was the awareness campaign launched by Jobsplus, which proved comparatively more effective than the other publicity measures undertaken on the other schemes.</li><li>• Most projects supported by State Aid schemes delivered or will likely deliver the expected short-term results (outputs) shortly, although some delays have materialised because of the COVID-19 pandemic.</li><li>• Limited and mixed evidence is available regarding the achievement of medium to long-term outcomes.</li><li>• The IIS and the SME Consultancy may have triggered some behavioral changes within beneficiary SMEs.</li></ul>

# Communicating Findings

## TO3 Evaluation – Assistance provided to SMEs



Status: **Concluded**

Deliverable: *Ex-post Evaluation of 1 ESF and 5 ERDF State Aid Schemes*

Evaluation Criterion	Finding
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public support offered by the grant schemes has an added value, especially at the project level.</li> <li>The net impact of the IIS and the SME Consultancy is low, except for the SME Consultancy when this is combined with other investment State Aid schemes.</li> </ul>
<b>Coherence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The mix of State Aid schemes included in the OPs was well designed and coherent.</li> <li>There is room to improve complementarity with national initiatives.</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IBs and targeted beneficiaries benefitted from changes introduced in 2014-2020 to improve procedural efficiency.</li> <li>The costs borne by national authorities are reasonable compared to the results achieved, except for the SME Internationalisation scheme.</li> <li>The costs borne to apply for and be reimbursed by the schemes are considered reasonable by SMEs. However, the benefit-cost ratio shrinks for those schemes providing small contributions.</li> <li>Barriers highlighted included the preparation of documentation and their retention, provision of valid quotations for all tangible items purchased, and certain eligibility criteria.</li> </ul>

# **Communication Activities (2014-2020)**

# Cittadella wins RegioStars 2022

- On **17 November 2022**, the European Commission announced that the **winner of the special edition of the RegioStars awards is the Rehabilitation and Restoration project of the Cittadella**. Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms Elisa Ferreira presented the awards to the winners at a ceremony in Evora, Portugal.



# Mini digital campaigns in pics



EU Funds Malta

Published by Nathalie Schembri · 50m ·



Want to try something different this weekend?

Why don't you visit the [Reliving the Sacra Infermeria](#) at the [Mediterranean Conference Centre](#)?

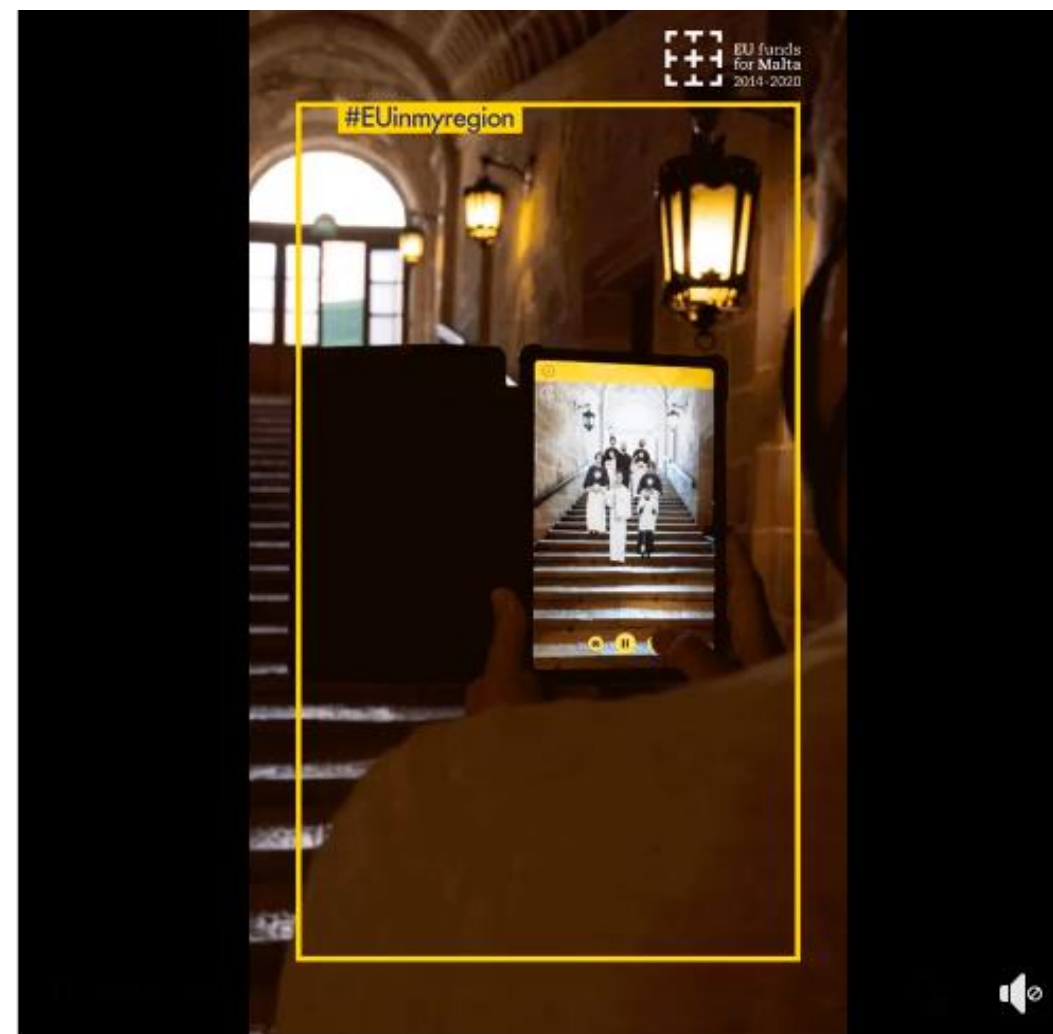
Reliving the Sacra Infermeria project, co-financed under the [#EuropeanRegionalDevelopmentFund](#), gives a new meaning to the MCC by enhancing its cultural and touristic potential through innovative heritage interpretation using Augmented Reality. Moreover, restoration works were carried out on the unused roof over the Sacra Infermeria Hall and Sir Temi Zammit Hall, which works have transformed this area into a belvedere with astounding panoramic views of the outer part of the Grand Harbour 🙌👍

The Augmented Reality Museum opens from 09:00 to 17:00 with the last entry being at 16:00 🕒

Entry tickets may be purchased by the front desk or online from <https://relivingthesacrainfermeria.com/>

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## Social media

Our **social media** platforms have been given a **new updated look** reflecting the new corporate image. Regular posts are published on all platforms.

 **Fondi.eu**  
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Keep up with news on Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 projects by logging onto <https://fondi.eu!>

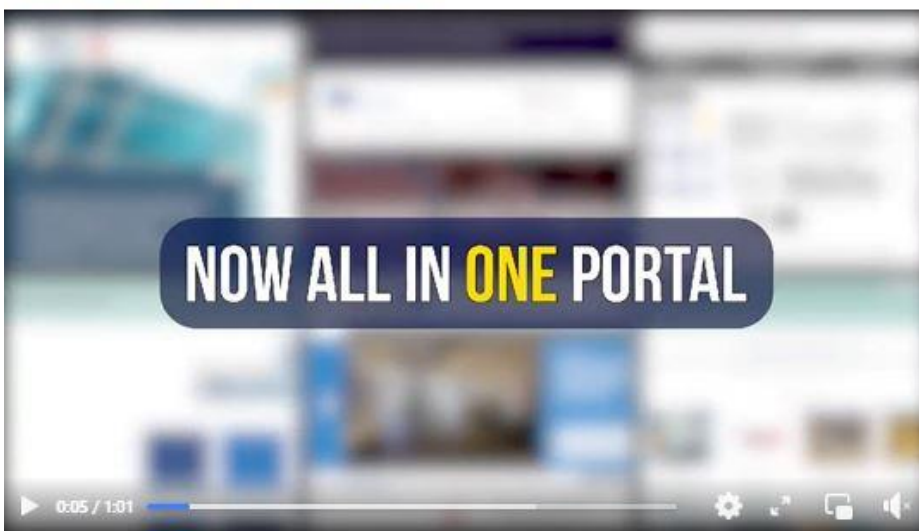
In case you missed it, here is the promo video of our new, user-friendly website, a one-stop shop for  funds.

Find out more about:

- ✅ EU funds in Malta
- ✅ How you can apply to benefit from EU funds
- ✅ EU funded projects in Malta
- ✅ Calls for proposals.

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A year ago, the new cultural and religious tourism experience within St. Dominic's Priory in Rabat was inaugurated. This project was co-financed by the [#EuropeanRegionalDevelopmentFund](#).

👉 Also, check out other projects that benefitted from EU funding: <https://lnkd.in/demBi2At>

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# SFD Enhancements

- ▶ Log in to the main SFD 14-20 user portal is now carried out through new authentication mechanisms (CORP/ iLearn / eID) which ensures a higher level of information security.
- The Funding Entities Database is now only accessible through the Government CORP authentication mechanism.
- An electronic system was also launched to manage the approval process related to the user rights registration for users from the horizontal bodies, Line Ministries and Intermediate Bodies.



**Welcome**

Kindly press the Sign In button below to login with new B2C authentication mechanism. If you do not know your CORP / ILEARN / EID credentials, you need to contact your respective helpdesk for support. For further information, kindly refer to Circular 02/2022.

[Sign In](#)

# Capacity Building Activities (2014-2020)

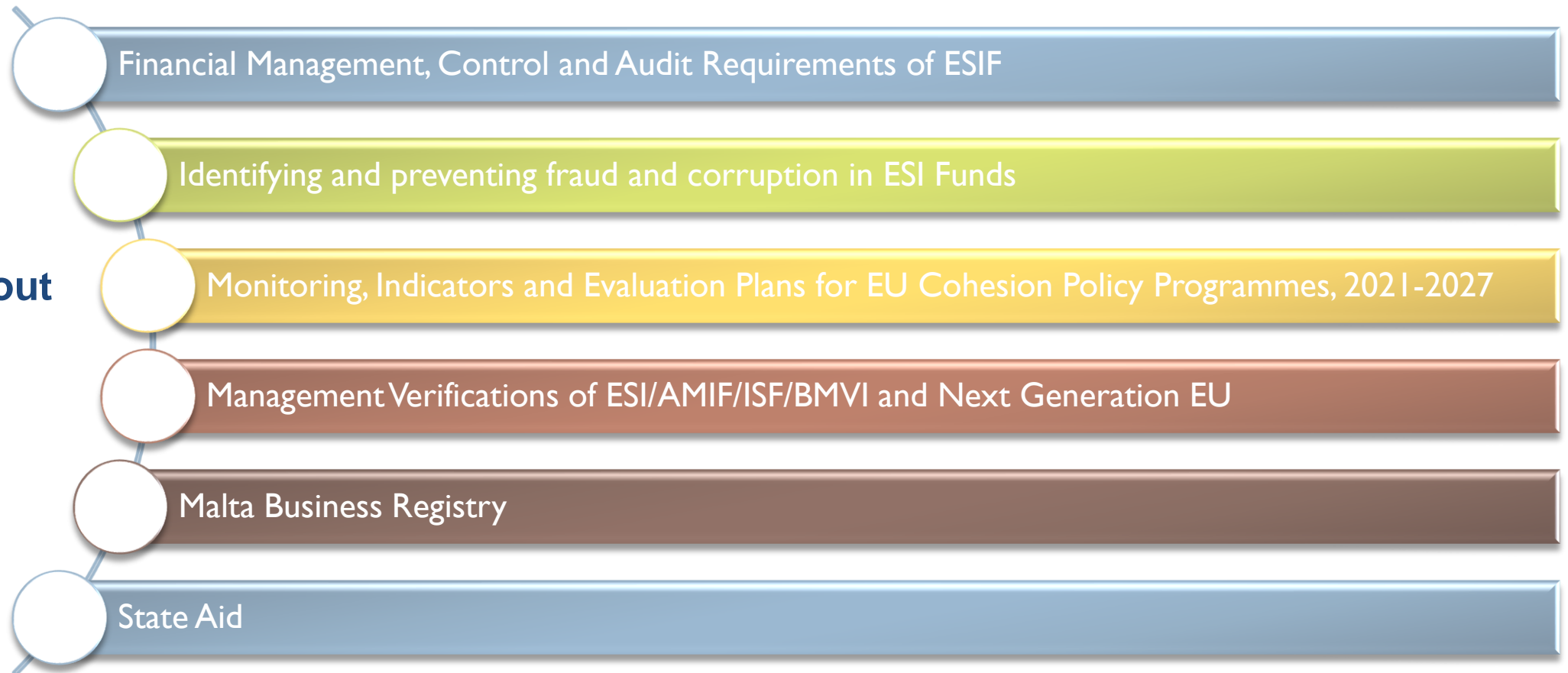


# Training Activities

A mix of training activities were carried out during 2022 for all stakeholders across the board.

These focused on practical topics relevant for the last stage of the 2014-2020 Programming Period, as well as the first stages of the 2021-2027 Programming Period.

**Throughout  
2022**



# Training Activities

## Already carried out in 2023

- Core Principles tied to Payment Checks for Line Ministries
- The new Cohesion Policy Programmes 2021-2027 for Malta
- Malta Business Registry and checks on Ultimate Beneficiary Owners
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption – Basic Level
- Closure Guidelines – 2014-2020 Programming Period

## Upcoming throughout the rest of 2023

- Audit Findings
- Anti-Fraud Strategy - Malta
- Advanced Anti-Fraud and Corruption
- Information Systems Security

# Audits

# Status Update

## Audit on Operations



Reference Period: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Audit Period: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 – 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023

In 2022, the sample issued by the AA resulted in 14 (ESF, FEAD & ERDF) operations and 95 beneficiaries under 7 schemes (ERDF, ESF and REACT EU) that were audited;

This sample was extracted out of a total population of 69 projects and 8 schemes which were certified in the accounting year 2021/2022.

### Results:

- No systematic errors;
- A total of five financial corrections were issued by the Audit Authority. These included 1 error under ERDF schemes, 3 under mainstream ERDF projects and 1 under ESF mainstream projects. It is to be noted that the Error Rate remained below the 2% threshold of materiality level.

All recommendations from the 2021/22 audits conducted on all projects were taken on board by the Beneficiaries.

# Status Update

## Audit on Operations



### Current accounting year update

- Audit Authority to separate the sample of 2022-2023 Accounting year in 2 semesters.
- Groundwork and documentation on the sample of semester 1 to be selected by the AA is currently being prepared by the MA.
- Work was ongoing in 2022 to close off the follow-ups of the System Audit.

### Other Audit work carried out through 2022/2023

- Thematic audits 2014 - 2020 – Audit and Management - verifications to avoid Conflicts of Interests (Col) - May 22
- Audit work for the ECA's 2022 statement of assurance - 2014-2020 programme period – November 22

# Status Update

## EC Audit (Audit No DAC114MT1063)



OPI & OPII

2021DAC114MT1063EPM 'Thematic audits 2014 - 2020' – Audit and Management - verifications to avoid conflicts of interests (Col)

Notification: 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Audit Period: May 2022

Final Report: February 2023

In 2022, the CION conducted an audit covering conflict of interest (Col) aspects related to EU funds.

Throughout the thematic audit process the MA, together with the relevant sampled beneficiaries, presented the current systems aimed at preventing, detecting and identifying Col. This included what data is gathered, verified and monitored to ensure that risks are adequately and proportionately mitigated. This in line with Art 61 of Financial Regulation and PSMC.

The Commission recommendations included the need to ensure a coherent approach. A reply to the Commission report is being prepared, in which details of the applicable institutional arrangements aimed at further strengthening our work will be outlined. Key partners in such a system include Line Ministries and stakeholders involved in the different processes related to the design and implementation of Operational Programmes under shared management.

# **Status Update and Looking Forward OPI**

# PA 1

## Investing in Research, Technological Development and Innovation



## Status Update – PA 1

To date, under the mainstream projects, this PA has a **disbursement shortfall of €9.2M**, which is expected to be covered as follows:

Project Code	Project Name	Allocated	Disbursed	Remaining amount to be disbursed
ERDF.01.122	SLC	€30M	€24.7M	€5.3M
ERDF.01.124	TRAKE	€31M	€28.1M	€2.9M

## Status update & challenges ahead – PA 1

- Progress is registered in the construction works & M&E works under the **SLC** project, being undertaken in parallel, as well as the finishing works under the **TRAKE** project. Procurement procedures for the remaining equipment under TRAKE and SLC are ongoing. Between January & April 2023, an expenditure of c. €462k was contracted under 5 different procurement procedures under **TRAKE**.
- The Aid Scheme focusing on R&I for the private sector under PA 1 will not be launched again. This is in view of the tight timeframes under the current programme given the nature of the investments and the need to mobilize funds under the new programme.
- The indicators related to the Aid Scheme will not be achieved in view of the lack of take-up of this scheme.
- The allocation of the R&I scheme may possibly be absorbed by the mainstream projects given that the public eligible amounts of the said projects were capped at Grant Agreement stage due to budgetary limitations.

## **PA 2**

# **Consolidating Investment within the ICT Sector**

## Status Update – PA 2

To date, this PA has a **disbursement shortfall of €1.5M**, which is expected to be covered as follows:

Project Code	Project Name	Allocated	Disbursed	Remaining amount to be disbursed
ERDF.02.035	CONVERGE	€35.3M	€34.3M	€1M
ERDF.02.030	SINTEGRAM	€7M	€6.8M	€0.2M
ERDF.02.S1	e-Commerce Grant Scheme	€0.6M	€0.3M	€0.3M

## Status update & challenges ahead – PA 2

- Under the **E-Commerce Aid Scheme**, expenditure on 32 approved projects still needs to be disbursed, with a total value of €154,632.50.
- In view of the focus on digitisation for the private sector under the RRP with a commitment of €15M (Component 3, Investment 4), no further calls will be issued under the PA 2 Aid Scheme and a shift of funds from PA 2 to PA 3 Aid Schemes is being considered.
- The **CONvErGE** project has 3 ongoing e-Services developments:
  - **Land Registration Agency pLotteR**: an online paperless system facilitating registration of new properties and/or the transfer of properties.
  - **SpaceForEnsiCS**: Mobile Forensics Laboratory Technology enabling the creation of digital crime scenes.
  - **Case Management System for the Department of Active Ageing and Community Care**: enabling health professionals to communicate better by sharing reports and assessments.

There is no visibility that projects under this PA will not be completed by end of programme.

# **PA 3**

## **Enhancing Malta's Competitiveness through Investments in SMEs**

## Status Update – PA 3

To date, this PA has **disbursement shortfall of €19M**, which is expected to be covered as follows:

Project Code	Project Name	Allocated	Disbursed	Remaining amount to be disbursed
ERDF.03.007	Internationalisation Knowledge Platform	Completed		
ERDF.03.011	Ta' Qali Crafts village			
ERDF.03.014	Xewkija Industrial Park			
ERDF.03.S1	Consultancy	€1.5M	€1M	€0.5M
ERDF.03.S2	Internationalisation	€0.05M	€0.05M	Completed
ERDF.03.S3	Diversification & Innovation	€7.5M	€3.3M	€4.2M
ERDF.03.S4	Growth	€10M	€5.2M	€4.8M
ERDF.03.S5	Start-up	€7.3M	€1.8M	€5.5M
ERDF.03.S7	Equipment and Machinery	€4M	€0	€4M

## Status update and challenges ahead – PA 3

- The biggest challenge under this PA is related to the expected disbursement of €19M under the Aid Schemes.
- The amount of €14.2M which has been approved in grants still needs to be reimbursed to the final recipients. Closer monitoring of implementation of projects by the IB to ensure timely disbursement is being undertaken.
- In the case of projects already approved, challenges related to increase in prices due to the Ukraine war arose and such increase in prices could not be reflected in the allocations due to State Aid limitations.
- A new scheme named 'Equipment and Machinery SME Scheme' was launched in January 2023 with an allocation of €4M. As at 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023, a total of 26 projects were awarded with a total commitment of €1.6M whilst 34 projects with a total commitment of €1.6M are pending evaluation.



# PA 4

## Shifting Towards a Low-Carbon Economy

## Status Update – PA 4

To date, under the mainstream projects, this PA has a **disbursement shortfall of €1.9M**, which is expected to be covered as follows:

Project Code	Project Name	Allocated	Disbursed	Remaining amount to be disbursed
ERDF.04.069	SVDP	€6.6M	€4.7M	€1.9M
ERDF.04.070	Gozo Admin Offices			
ERDF.04.165	AFM			
ERDF.04.168	OPM			
ERDF.04.171	SVDP			
ERDF.04.108	Red Cross PVs			
ERDF.04.111	St. Monica Schools PVs			
ERDF.04.008 ERDF.04.066 ERDF.04.067 ERDF.04.110	Renewable Energy Sources Street Lighting MITA PVs OASI	Completed		

## Status Update and Challenges ahead – PA 4

### Mainstream projects – progress in 2023

- The installation of energy efficiency measures within the first-floor of the Gozo Administration Centre is complete and works are now ongoing on the ground floor.
- Works at the AFM Barracks for the introduction of energy efficiency measures have started, following the award of tenders for apertures, heat pumps and lighting fixtures.
- Following the completion of the first project, the Elderly Peoples' Home is currently evaluating bids relating to the installation of more energy efficient measures in other sections of the building.
- Close monitoring of mainstream projects is needed to ensure timely conclusion & disbursements by Programme closure, both in terms of contracting as well as implementation on the ground.
- There is no visibility that the mainstream projects under this PA will not be completed by end of programme.

# Status Update and Challenges ahead – PA 4



## EERE Malta Financial instrument:

- An allocation of €15M ERDF funding was made available for the implementation of the EERE Financial Instrument under PA 4.
- By March 2023, 290 loans were granted by the 2 Financial Intermediaries implementing this FI, for a total amount of c. €8.4M.
- Widening of the eligibility criteria and the possibility of benefitting from an RRP grant for the purchase of green modes of transport together with the advantageous rates for loans under this FI is expected to increase interest in such loans.
- In 2023, intense marketing actions were launched to encourage take up of loans under the FI, including loans for the purchase of green transport for the commercial sector. This marketing campaign included the holding of Info sessions and the launch of a website dedicated specifically to EERE Malta (Feb 23), a Social Media Campaign (Mar 23) and other press-related activities (April 23).
- Challenges faced in the implementation of this FI relate to the limited time-frames remaining for disbursement until Dec 2023, supply chain issues for green modes of transport, as well as State Aid limitations.

# PA 5

## Protecting our Environment – Invest in Natural and Cultural Assets

## Status update and challenges ahead – PA 5

To date, this PA has a **disbursement shortfall of €14.1M**, which is expected to be covered as follows:

Projects	Amounts to be disbursed
Grand Masters' Palace Regeneration Project	€1.0M
The Southern Coastal Watch	€1.4M
Conserving, protecting and promoting ecclesiastical cultural heritage	€1.6M
Extension/Refurbishment of St. John's Co-Cathedral Museum	€0.5M
Socio-Cultural Organisations Promoting Heritage Experiences (SCOPE)	€1.1M
MICAS	€3.1M
Conserving, protecting and promoting the Porto Salvo and St Dominic Basilica in Valletta	€1.2M
Restoration of St Paul's Anglican Pro-Cathedral Tower and Church	€2.1M

The remaining shortfall will be covered through the other 11 projects being implemented by other Public Entities, Local Councils and NGOs.

## Status update and challenges ahead – PA 5

- The restoration of the **Culture Mill** by the Naxxar Local Council has been inaugurated in April 2023.
- The restoration works on various **coastal watch towers** (Red Tower, St, Maria Battery and Tunnara) are complete and the towers are open.
- The restoration works on **various churches and ecclesiastical works of art** around Malta and Gozo have been complete, while others are still ongoing and will be completed by end of 2023.
- Siteworks at **MICAS** are revolving around the construction of the glass and steel roofing structure. Electrical and mechanical services are currently also being installed while the finishes including a raised flooring all through the complex are about to start off.
- Being sites of historical nature, most projects under this PA are of a sensitive nature, sometimes with restricted access and the possibility of archaeological findings making works more complex. Quick redesign or mitigation measures are sometimes needed to address such circumstances.
- Regular meetings have taken place with all stakeholders to sensitize them on the need for timely decisions in order to ensure the completion of the projects. Constant communication is being maintained to ensure that the stakeholders remain committed to the agreed targets.
- There is no visibility that projects under this PA will not be completed by end of programme.

# **PA 6**

## **Sustainable Urban Development**



## Status Update – PA 6

To date, this PA has a **disbursement shortfall of €6M**, which is expected to take place as follows:

Project Code	Project Name	Allocated	Disbursed	Remaining amount to be disbursed
ERDF.06.997	Valletta Design Cluster	€4.3M	€4.3M	Completed
ERDF.06.996 (A)	Marsamxett Balconies Scheme	€0.6M	€0.6M	Completed
ERDF.06.996	Regeneration of Lower Valletta	€17.9M	€12.7M	€5.2M
ERDF.06.996 (D)	Ħiliet il-Komunità	€1.2M	€0.4M	€0.8M

## Status update and challenges ahead – PA 6

- The upgrading **works of the external façades and common areas of social housing** in 4 blocks at Mattia Preti Square with a value of €5M are ongoing. Difficulties on the ground with progress of works have been encountered both in relation to performance of contractors and/or subcontractors, as well as the residents' reaction to inconvenience caused during works.
- The tender for the **excavation of a passengers' lift** connecting Marsamxett Road to Boat Street, enabling pedestrians' easier access to the shoreline, is currently at implementation stage. However, the site is of historical importance and hence extra care needs to be given on the methodology of works carried out.
- The award of the tender for the upgrade of the **Marsamxett shoreline**, with a value of circa €1M, experienced delays due to appeal court proceedings. The court confirmed the validity of the award and the contract is now at early implementation stage.
- There is no visibility that projects under this PA will not be completed by end of programme.

# PA 7

## Shifting Towards a More Low-Carbon Transport Sector

## Status Update – PA 7

To date, the project has a **disbursement shortfall of €20.8M**, which is expected to take place as follows:

Components	Amounts to be disbursed
Buġibba/Marsamxett/Sliema/Bormla ferry landing sites	€11.9M
ITS platform and Traffic Control Centre (hardware, software and furniture)	€4.9M
Gozo Park & Ride	€4M

## Status update and challenges ahead – PA 7

- As of Jan 2023, the construction for the Bugibba ferry landing site was in its initial phases.
- Following the re-publication of the tender for the Marsamxett ferry landing site (value of c. €14M), evaluation is now ongoing expected to be concluded by Q2 2023.
- The contracts for the ITS platform (hardware and software) are currently under evaluation; if there is no valid award, there is not the material time to re-publish and award.
- The construction works at the Gozo Park and Ride, which will complement the service provided by the 6 electric buses procured under this project, are ongoing.
- The Managing Authority and the different stakeholders under this project are in constant liaison to make sure that contracts are awarded and are being implemented so that the shortfall is met by end of year.

# PA 8

## Investing Towards a More Socially-Inclusive Society

## Status Update – PA 8

To date, this PA has a **disbursement shortfall of €16.9M**, which is expected to take place as follows:

Project Code	Project Name	Allocated	Disbursed	Remaining amount to be disbursed
ERDF.08.032	Paola Hub	€33M	€19.9M	€13.1M
ERDF.08.043	Social Housing	€9.8M	€6.9M	€2.9M
ERDF.08.141	Hospice	€0.8M	€0.7M	€0.1M
ERDF.08.990	COVID-19	€19.2M	€18.4M	€0.8M
ERDF.08.142	Caritas	Completed		
ERDF.08.031	Meeting Place			

## Status update and challenges ahead – PA 8

- The **Paola Hub** is progressing at a steady pace with 50% completion on the internal and external finishes on all 17 levels. Water proofing and insulation are at an advanced stage. Works on heating, ventilation and AC Systems are almost complete. 65% of works are complete on the 1st stages of installation of lifts. Nonetheless, the delays in implementation cannot be fully recovered and the project will not absorb the full ERDF allocation.
- An assessment is currently being carried out to identify potential additional expenditure under the **COVID project** to ensure full absorption of funds under this PA, including lease of bed space and procurement of PPEs, subject to procurement checks.
- Under the **Social Housing project**, the only remaining tender to be awarded for the installation of 8 energy efficient lifts is currently in its final evaluation stages. The Beneficiary needs to continue monitoring very closely the contracts for civil works which precede the installation of lifts to ensure timely conclusion and disbursement of the remaining funds allocated on the project.
- All projects need to be closely monitored to ensure timely progress on the works and steady flow of disbursement.
- There is no visibility that projects under this PA will not be completed by end of programme.



## Status update and challenges ahead – PA 8

- Potential additional expenditure under the **COVID project**:
  - The MA is in the process of reviewing expenditure incurred by the beneficiary during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is related to PPEs, mainly goggles, disposable face visors/shields, masks and gowns, with a combined total value of c. €15.7M.
  - During the COVID-19 outbreak, a number of medical interventions had to be postponed due to prioritisation allocated to COVID-related cases. As a result, Malta is facing significant waiting lists of patients waiting for medical interventions, in several areas. In order to address these waiting lists, the Government has embarked on a number of contracts with private hospitals, to ensure that the medical interventions needed are undertaken in a more timely manner and at the same time alleviate pressures from the main hospital. One of the potential interventions considered under PA 8 is the creation of additional bed space. The MA is assessing the inclusion of such expenditure under the Programme.

# PA 9

## Developing our Future through Education, Training and Lifelong Learning

## Status Update – PA 9

To date, this PA has a **disbursement shortfall of €3.9M**, which is expected to take place as follows:

Project Code	Project Name	Allocated	Disbursed	Remaining amount to be disbursed
ERDF.09.044	INVEST	€3M	Completed	
ERDF.09.036	MCAST	€30.8M	€26.9M	€3.9M

## Status update and challenges ahead – PA 9

- As of Jan 2023, the last contracts under the MCAST project - two furniture contracts - were signed.
- Ongoing works at the **MCAST** Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT) are focusing on M&E, internal finishes and facades. All works are expected to be finalised by Q3 2023.
- Close monitoring of the implementation of the remaining works and provision of equipment is needed to ensure project completion by Q1 2023.
- There is no visibility that projects under this PA will not be completed by end of programme.

# PA 10

## Investing in a More Environmental Friendly Society

# Status Update – PA 10

To date, this PA has a **disbursement shortfall of €18.3M**, which is expected to take place as follows:

Project Code	Project Name	Allocated	Disbursed	Remaining amount to be disbursed
CF.10.096	Water Campaign	€21.2M	€17.8M	€3.4M
CF.10.136	Rainwiin	€1.8M	€1.7M	€0.1M
CF.10.998	Major Project	€89.5M	€80.6M	€8.9M
CF.10.137	Wastewater plant	€5.0M	€4.3M	€0.7M
CF.10.134	Wied Fulija	€3.8M	€3.5M	€0.3M
CF.10.135	MMRF	€13.4M	€9.8M	€3.6M
CF.10.138	Waste Campaign	€6.9M	€5.6M	€1.3M

## Challenges ahead – PA 10

- The main disbursements expected under this PA in 2023 are under the Water Major Project, due to the different components being implemented and the advanced stage of implementation under a number of such components.
- The Water Campaign project is also expected to continue disbursing in 2023, due to delays in the implementation attributable to the cancellation of public events due to COVID 19 during 2020 and 2021. A new contract focusing on the supply and installation of equipment with the aim of improving the hydrological monitoring infrastructure, was awarded in 2023.
- All tenders under this Priority Axis have been awarded, with the exception of a small number of procurement processes under the Water Major Project and one under the MMRF project which is currently being evaluated.
- Close monitoring of implementation is needed to ensure that any issues are dealt with swiftly to arrive at disbursements on the ground. Monthly monitoring of payments is being undertaken to ensure that any delayed payments or issues are addressed promptly.
- No visibility that there are projects under this PA which will not be completed by end of programme.

# **PA 11**

## **Investing in TEN-T Infrastructure**



## Status Update – PA 11

To date, this PA has a **disbursement shortfall of €27.5M**, which is expected to be covered as follows:

Project Code	Project Name	Allocated	Disbursed	Remaining amount to be disbursed
CF.11.013	Removal of bottleneck on TEN-T (Kappara)	Completed		
CF.11.132	Eliminating Bottlenecks in the TEN-T Core Port of Valletta	€38.1M	€11M	€27.1M
CF.11.133	Enhancement of the TEN-T Road Network	€40.9M	€40.5M	€0.4M

## Challenges ahead – PA 11

- Under the **Ten-T Maritime Project**, after a delay of ten months due to appeal procedure pending the award of the Ras Hanzir new cargo facility, the contract with the successful bidder was signed in Q4 2022. Works are expected to begin in the first half of 2023, with the first payments related to mobilization and design having been processed in Q1 2023.
- It is envisaged that the **Ten-T Maritime Project** will not be completed by end of programme and therefore discussions are currently being held for the phasing of the Ras Hanzir component into the 2021-2027 programming period, as per section 6 of the Guidelines on the closure of Operational Programmes.
- Additional actions under this PA to be discussed.

**PA 13**  
**REACT-EU**

## Status Update – PA 13

To date, this PA has a **disbursement shortfall of €6.7M**, which is expected to be covered as follows:

Project Code	Project Name	Allocated	Disbursed	Remaining amount to be disbursed
ERDF.13.001	Supply of High Technology Equipment for Mater Dei Hospital	€11.2M	€4.5M	€6.7M

# Status update and challenges ahead – PA 13

- Five awards of procurement processes amounting to a value of c. €2.6M since January 2023.
- The publication period of the tender for the procurement of IVF equipment with a value of c. €1.75M closed on the 20th April 2023.
- Another tender for the procurement of 400 all-in-one dedicated workstations with a value of c. €4M is planned to be published by Q2 2023.
- The Beneficiary needs to continue monitoring very closely to ensure that the latter tender is published in time, evaluated immediately and both the abovementioned contracts are signed to ensure timely conclusion and disbursement of the remaining funds.
- Challenges remain in relation to structural works required to receive the delivery of equipment already contracted, in relation to the operating theatres and the Urology Department. Delays with the completion of the structural challenges will imply delays in delivery of equipment.

# **Status Update and Looking Forward OPII**

## Status Update – PA 1

- PA 1 has an over commitment of €6.2M of which **€3M still to be disbursed**.
- In addition, disbursed also circa €1M nationally funded A2E.
- Over 2,300 operations under the A2E scheme have been concluded to date.

OP Allocation	PA Commitment	% Committed/ Allocation	Disbursed	% Disbursement/ OP allocation	Certified PE Amount	% Certification Shortfall/ Allocation
€26M	€32.9M	127%	€29.9M*	115%	€24.7M	5%

## Challenges ahead – PA 1

- ▶ Covid wage supplement having an impact on IIS and A2E double funding checks thus verification checks taking longer to carry out.
- ▶ Both TFE and YG were given additional resources in recent months to continue addressing needs in the area.
- ▶ A new tender for Research and Census on Youths not in Employment Education and Training (NEETS) for the reinforced youth guarantee amounting to around Eur400K still on the market.
- ▶ Monthly monitoring is being implemented to ensure that any delayed payments or issues are addressed promptly.



## Status Update – PA 2

- PA 2 has an over commitment of €0.5M, but still has a **disbursement shortfall on committed amounts of €5.7M.**
- 6 operations have concluded their activities to date and are at the final administrative stages.

OP Allocation	PA Commitment	% Committed/ Allocation	Disbursed	Disbursement Shortfall/OP Allocation	Certified PE Amount	% Certification Shortfall/ Allocation
€40M	€40.49M	101%	€34.8	13%	€27.7M	31%

## Challenges ahead – PA 2

- ▶ Fragmentation of ESF operations, in particular small projects remains an issue which puts the resources involved at each level under significant pressure.
- ▶ Timely implementation of projects and disbursement till end of 2023.
- ▶ Close monitoring of implementation is needed to ensure that any issues are dealt with swiftly to arrive at disbursements on the ground.
- ▶ Monthly monitoring is being implemented to ensure that any delayed payments or issues are addressed promptly.
- ▶ Disbursement shortfall over OP Allocation of **€5.16M**

## Status Update – PA 3

- PA 3 has an under commitment of **€0.6M** with **€4.2M** still to be disbursed over the committed amounts.
- 2 mainstream project and over 3,500 operations under IIS have been concluded under this PA.

OP Allocation	PA Commitment	% Committed/ Allocation	Disbursed	Disbursement Shortfall/OP Allocation	Certified PE Amount	% Certification Shortfall/ Allocation
€40.9M	€40.3M	99%	€36.1M	12%	€26.5M	35%

## Challenges ahead – PA 3

- ▶ Scholarships students are in their final year of studies and thus any delays may result in disbursement issues.
- ▶ In relation to the IIS Aid Scheme, Eur2.2M (29%) are to be paid by end of scheme. In Q1 of 2023, an additional 800K were approved under IIS, raising the budget to €7.45M. Moreover, due to the closure of the scheme (end of March), Jobsplus received over 600 new applications in Q1 2023, which resulted in a shift in focus on processing the application forms, which is having an impact on disbursement.
- ▶ Close monitoring of scholarships and IIS Aid Scheme implementation and disbursement is needed to ensure that any issues are dealt with swiftly to arrive at disbursements on the ground.
- ▶ Under commitment of **€0.6M**.
- ▶ Disbursement shortfall over Commitment of **€4.2M**.
- ▶ Certification shortfall of **35%**. FI amounts have to be certified as per Regulation and Endeavour SCO milestone related to result pending to be verified at a later stage thus impact on certification.

## Status Update – PA 4

- PA 4 has an under commitment of €0.2M, with a **disbursement shortfall on committed amounting to €3.3M.**
- 6 operations have concluded their activities to date and are at the final administrative stages.

OP Allocation	PA Commitment	% Committed/ Allocation	Disbursed	Disbursement Shortfall/OP Allocation	Certified PE Amount	% Certification Shortfall/ Allocation
€13.5M	€13.3M	99%	€10.1M	25%	€5.7M	58%

## Challenges ahead – PA 4

- Fragmentation of ESF operations, remains an issue under this PA which puts the resources involved at each level under significant pressure.
- ESF.04.085 – Towards a more professional workforce in the public administration: Participants are nearing the end of their studies and thus any delays may result in disbursement issues.
- Timely implementation of projects, contracting and disbursement till end of 2023.
- Monthly monitoring is being implemented to ensure that any delayed payments or issues are addressed promptly.
- Certification shortfall over OP allocation of **58%**.

## Status Update – PA 6 & PA 7

PA	OP Allocation	Disbursed	Certified PE Amount	% Certification Shortfall/ Allocation
Priority Axis 6	€38.5M	€65.99M	€21.2M	45%
Priority Axis 7	€111.1M	€202.6M	€99.8M	10%
<b>Total</b>	€149.6M	€268.59M	€120.9M	19%

## **Challenges ahead – PA 6 & PA 7**

To date amounts certified represent 81% (Eur 121M) overall of ESF and REACT EU resources.

Cooperation from all relevant stakeholders is key to ensure total absorption and timely certification.

Further discussions to take place tied to data on indicators for participants who were supported through such measures through the grants awarded and supported through the ESF and REACT EU.



# **Status Update and Looking Forward Evaluation & Communication**

## Status update and Looking Forward

### ESF longer-term result indicators (to be reported in 2023)

- The MA will formally report on the longer-term result indicators in the Final Report, however data collection takes place on a regular basis as a means of monitoring the progress of the various Investment Priorities.
- To date, three survey rounds have taken place, with the last survey covering those ESF participants who completed/left training between 1st January 2020 to 30th June 2021. The fourth survey round is scheduled to take place in the coming months, covering participants who exited the ESF operations between 1st July 2021 – 31st December 2022.
- The survey has the aim of collecting the data needed to report on the ESF longer-term result indicators (measuring participants' status 6 months after leaving the intervention). Furthermore, the survey collects additional data which provides the MA with direct feedback from participants, allowing the MA to assess the success of its operations through a bottom-up approach, whilst having a more complete profile of participants.

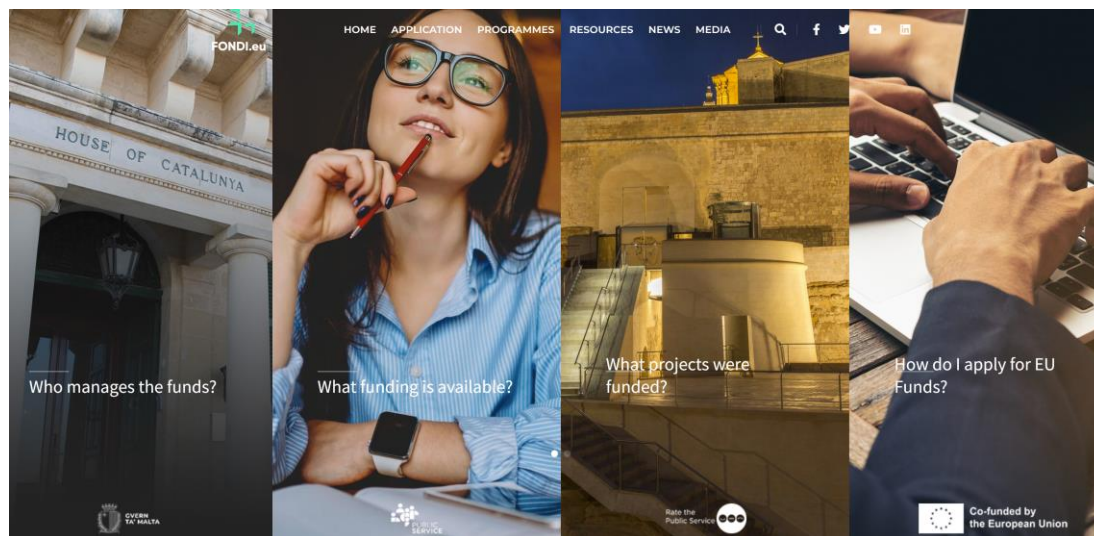
# 2023 Annual Event



The development and launch of the website [www.FONDI.eu](http://www.FONDI.eu) is the 2023 Annual event.

This portal is intended to providing information to assist applicants in one address.

The launch took place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023, together with the launch of the new 2021-2027 programmes.



# Looking forward: Upcoming Communication events

Participation in:

- **Europe Day** Event in Gozo on 29 April and the Event in Malta on 9 May; and
- **Public Service Expo** from 10-12 May;

Organisation of:

- **Women and European Funds** conference on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023.





## Concluding Remarks

- 2023 is the final year of the eligibility period for the 2014-2020 programme timely inputs by actors is fundamental to ensure full absorption.
- N+3 targets for 2022 were achieved across all Funds.
- Implementation on the ground has continued to progress under all OPs, at this juncture the MAs are using this AIR cycle as a review exercise, ahead of presenting the last programme modifications before September 2023.
- Verifications of expenditure continued steadily throughout the year leading to an increase in certification which now amounts to €464M (OPI) and €197M (OPII).
- Further verifications are currently ongoing but timely implementation of projects leading to disbursement is crucial to enable Malta to reach full absorption.
- As we approach closure, further output and result indicators are being reported as achieved. Work will continue in terms of monitoring of their achievement and linked verifications.
- Moreover, parallel to focusing on the disbursement targets, the MA is also closely monitoring the achievements of the objectives of the programmes in the different priority areas.
- Further work on new evaluations is ongoing. The collaboration of all stakeholders is highly encouraged.
- All stakeholders are once again reminded to continue with their communication efforts to showcase the impact that EU support is having on the day-to-day life of the citizens living in Malta and Gozo.

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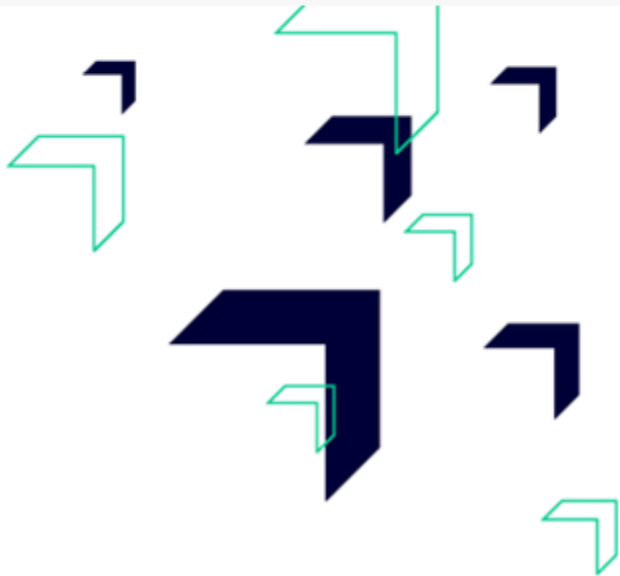


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