

*COMBINED STRATEGIC AND ANNUAL  
PROGRAMME REPORT  
FM14-21*

Malta

2020

## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year under review, i.e. 2020, turned out to be a very challenging year for all humanity around the world and not least, for Malta. The economic implications and repercussions of the COVID-19 global pandemic are deep and far-reaching, affecting the economy of virtually every nation on earth. The virus had a significant impact on the demand and supply sides of numerous sectors, not only in reducing disposable income but also by changing the channels through which products and services are bought and sold.

Malta is no exception! Our islands suffered even more due to their insularity and above all, their economic dependence on the revenue generated by the tourism industry, considered as the largest GDP contributor, nation-wide. Malta has been significantly affected by the pandemic, mainly due to the impact on the tourism sector, but also due to the partial blockage of the country and the interruption of international supply chains. Malta's GDP contracted significantly in the first half of 2020 as household consumption and construction activity fell sharply due to safety measures established by the authorities, and restricted air traffic interrupted international tourist arrivals to the island. (European Commission, 2020)

Inequalities have surely widened even further with the realities of this pandemic, which has gripped the whole world for the past year. On top of income-based inequalities in an economy, which is highly dependent on tourism, one cannot ignore the additional strain that the restriction of daily activities and schooling has had on the particular cohort of children and vulnerable youths, for whom the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 in Malta are mostly focussing on.

On a positive note, despite the setbacks suffered by the pandemic, the Project Promoters continued implementing their pre-defined projects in the best way possible! In the case of PDP1, the infrastructural works on the Sensory Integration Therapy (SIT) centre were still completed by end 2020, but some aspects, essential to the operation of the Centre, were still pending due to either deferred delivery of some equipment or unavailability of professional staff, that had to be relocated to provide support through contact tracing. PDP4: Malta Maritime Museum also continued on the renovation and restoration of the old, dilapidated parts of the historical building, while setting up a specialised unit, after recruiting a digitisation manager, who is now responsible of recruiting the professionals and procuring the specialised equipment required to carry out the various tasks of recording and digitising.

Even PDP 2: Opportunity Knocks, PDP3: Training in Good Governance and SGS1: Small Grant Scheme for urban localities, being all soft projects, did their best to carry out those tasks, which in the circumstances, could still be done through alternative means e.g. online mentoring to youths (PDP2) and online Committee meetings for the selection of projects (SGS). Most of the training in PDP1, PDP2 and PDP3, had to be postponed, especially where it was crucial that the training is primarily hands-on or interactive. This was the case in parts of the specialised training of certified/trained therapists for SIT purposes (PDP1), in the case of training opportunities in specific skills like hairdressing for OK youths (PDP2), and in the case of interactive teambuilding exercises and internships for local council staff and elected members (PDP3).

A Mid-term Review was held with FMO during October 2020, whereby the risks and difficulties encountered during this extraordinary year were highlighted and discussed at length with FMO. Some of the PDPs are even concerned that due to the delays experienced during this year, some result indicators might not actually be reached, especially (1) increase in number of visitors to Malta Maritime Museum bearing in mind that the Museum has already been closed since March 2020 (due to COVID restrictions and lack of tourists) and (2) the total number of children to be given the service at the SIT centre by the end of the project. As a result of this exercise, the FMO granted extensions to the duration of all four (4) projects. Besides, following discussions with FMO and the Donors during the Annual Meeting held in May 2020, it was agreed that the results will continue to be monitored till the very end of the programme i.e. April 2024, if they are not reached by the end of the respective project.

From a financial perspective, in contrast with 2019, a disbursement of almost 30% of the total projects' costs, amounting to around €2.2million, was registered on the programme during year 2020,

The JCBF met in November 2020, online as well, as travel restrictions were once again imposed in the 2nd quarter of the year due to COVID-19. Efforts were made throughout the year to make contact with local stakeholders having invested interest in any one of the priorities agreed upon by the JCBF, namely Clean Oceans; Gender Equality and Gender-based violence; and Health Issues. The same problem of

identifying and finding donor partners, who are ready to partner up with the Maltese proposers, persisted during 2020, despite the efforts made by the NFP and representatives in the respective donor states. 2 main proposals and another 2 tentative ones were presented to JCBF members during the November meeting but until the end of 2020, no initiative had yet been granted funds to implement activities. Due to travel restrictions, no bilateral initiatives related to the PDPs were held.

The programme is now looking forward to a hopefully better year for the whole world, with the possibility of travelling and interacting once again! Coupled with the positive move of the granting of the extensions on the projects, all project promoters are prepared to face a challenging year ahead in order to catch up on those activities, which were hindered due to the pandemic and resume their commitment towards achieving the expected and desired results!

## B. PERFORMANCE

### MT-LOCALDEV Local Development and Poverty Reduction

#### 1. Programme context

Recent figures from the National Statistics Office (NSO), issued in the *EU-SILC 2019: Salient Indicators* (20 August 2020)<sup>[2]</sup> still show that those at risk of entering poverty are over 78,000. The report states that the number of persons living in households with a national equivalised income below the at-risk-of-poverty line (€9,212) was 82,758. This translates into an at-risk-of-poverty (ARP) rate of 17.1 per cent, 0.3 percentage points higher than that recorded for the previous year (2018). It also reports that at a district level, the distribution of persons under the ARP threshold was uneven across the Maltese Islands, with the Northern Harbour district having the largest share of ARP persons followed by the Southern Harbour district.

In October 2020, the government's Pre-2020 Budget document claimed that Malta's Material Deprivation Rate (MDR) had dropped by over half in four years. Between 2014 and 2018, the MDR dropped from 29.4% in 2014 to 12.1% in 2018. This change subsequently resulted in a drop in the At-Risk-Of-Poverty or Social Exclusion Rate (AROPE). Quoting data from European data aggregator EUROSTAT, the AROPE rate is believed to have dropped from 24.5% in 2013 to 19% in 2018. The MDR in this case looks at individuals and household's ability to cover expenses like taking a one-week holiday from their home, buying white goods like a washing machine, television or telephone, car or even the ability to pay rent or utility bills. If people cannot afford these basic items, they are regarded as materially deprived. According to the report, these gradual declines are regarded as *'better than that of the EU average when it comes to inequality and at-risk-of-poverty indicators, however the long-term sustainability of Malta's welfare model remains contingent on a balancing act between pressures for greater generosity and broader budgetary pressures in light of ageing.'*<sup>[3]</sup>

Touching on economic gains distribution, the Maltese Minister for Finance said that even though the local media published reports on poverty, one also needs to consider Malta's situation, in comparison to the rest of the EU states. He said that when one looks at the whole picture, Malta has managed to reduce poverty numbers to 19% whilst the EU median is 22%.<sup>[4]</sup> The Maltese economy has undergone a strong and job-rich expansion in recent years. In parallel, some fiscal incentives have been introduced to tackle social exclusion, such as childcare reforms and other initiatives focussing on increasing active inclusion in the labour market.

Within this scenario, the EEA and Norway Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 had awarded grants for projects (including a small grant scheme), which directly responded to Programme Area 10, emphasising *Local Development and Poverty Reduction*. Through these projects, besides contributing to further social and economic cohesion, Malta is also investing in a number of key strategic issues targeting the most vulnerable, within both Maltese and migrant communities, specifically in a pandemic situation, which has greatly affected all the world round!

#### 1.1 PDP 1 – Reduction in social inequalities in health and the burden of disease

This PDP, with the Ministry for Health as Project Promoter, is spread over three main areas of health provision in Malta, namely Sensory Integration Therapy (SIT), screening for phenylketonuria (PKU) and Nucleic Acid Amplification Testing (NAT).

Admittedly economic development has boomed during the project years, with the exception of the overwhelming circumstances of the last 12 months, with two resultant effects: firstly, major growth in employment opportunities beyond the capacity of the local labour market, making it quite difficult to recruit temporary staff for project administration purposes and, secondly, a boom in the construction industry, aimed at meeting the demand for new accommodation for economic migrants visiting Malta to fill the gap between supply and demand in the labour market. The population growth experienced in recent years due to the wave of economic migrants, who helped out to meet the gap between local labour supply and the current demand for labour, resulted in an excess growth of around 30,000 people when compared to forecasts based on the intercensal period (2005-2011). As for the building boom, in 2018, a staggering 12,173 new applications (an all-time record) were received by the Planning Authority, as per its annual figures for total building permits (ref to [https://issuu.com/planningauthority/docs/annual\\_report\\_2019](https://issuu.com/planningauthority/docs/annual_report_2019))

In general, an economic boom should be a positive development for any nation. However, economic booms typically result in an influx of economic migrants and a resultant hike in the rental market prices. One is therefore bound to start observing widening inequalities within the resident population. Considering that most economic migrants are young adults in their peak reproductive age, one cannot but focus on children as a vulnerable population, especially children with disabilities, who are most likely to be affected by rising societal inequalities. The Government is conscious of these developments and of its social responsibility to mitigate such inequalities, especially in limiting cumulative disadvantage in children with disability.

### **1.2 PDP 2 – Opportunity Knocks (OK)**

Opportunity Knocks (OK) project is very much in line with the '*National Youth Policy - Towards 2020: A shared vision for the future of young people*'<sup>[1]</sup> launched in 2014. This policy is implemented through two strategies, which the project referred to at its inception, and to date, is still recognizing in its implementation. Mainly, this policy is intended to support young people through cross sectoral collaboration and enhance their social participation and their learning and employment prospects. Through the implementation of this project and with close reference to the grants' objectives, youths at risk of social exclusion are assisted to leap forward in life and lead a socially and economically independent life. This is carried out by frequent contact and direct assistance, thus ensuring that the targeted cohort is supported accordingly. During 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these youths were much more at risk of being isolated from the rest of society and hence, the project, through virtual means, assisted in avoiding this situation to aggravate.

### **1.3 PDP 3 – Training of Local Staff in Principles of Good Governance, Transparency and Accountability**

From the training needs analysis carried out by the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform within the Council of Europe, a peer review on Local Government in Malta report drafted by experts engaged by the Council of Europe and from the Annual Report carried out by the National Audit Office on the financial and systems processes of the said Local Governments, the need for a newly introduced reform in local governance in Malta emerged. The same need provided more impetus on the necessity of training to all those involved in the local governance sector, particularly on good governance, transparency and accountability. Following the June 2019 local council elections in Malta resulting in a new group of mayors and local councillors, as well as the impact of the reports mentioned above, it was deemed the right moment in time to initiate such initiatives.

For this purpose, PDP3 adopted an integrated approach, aimed at creating a scenario conducive to economic development, whilst sustaining improved urban localities, so as to render these safe, liveable and environmentally friendly, complemented with social and educational services for stronger sustainable neighbourhoods.

### **1.4 Small Grant Scheme for Urban Localities**

In order to address inequalities between different districts, the Local Government Division (LGD) within the Ministry for the National Heritage, The Arts and Local Government (MHAL) has elaborated on a sustainable development strategy for urban localities by adopting a bottom-up approach, thus involving all stakeholders. In line with the guiding principle of the Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development<sup>1</sup>, the objective of this strategy aims to enhance urban areas in order to improve the quality of life and sustainable living standards of deprived communities. This grant scheme aims to address the inequalities and socio-economic challenges encountered by localities considered as Urban areas through a number of pilot initiatives in physical, economic and social regeneration of these deprived urban communities.

The strategy will form the basis of small project initiatives funded through this Small Grant Scheme, which will be implemented in parallel with PDP3 above. Considering the high at-risk-of-poverty rate, high unemployment rate and the socio-economic challenges associated with urban development, the regeneration projects shall contribute to the re-vitalisation of these urban towns and cities, thus addressing the social and educational needs of citizens. In order to improve the quality of life and sustainable living standards of these deprived communities, the LGD, through the Norway Grants 2014-2021, shall also be providing training to the administrative and politically appointed Local Council representatives. The training, though separate from the SGS, will focus on good governance as well as transparency and accountability and hence, induce essential skilling in good practices in the running of a Local Council and management of the scheme.

#### 1.5 PDP 4 – The Malta Maritime Museum: local development through cultural heritage

The project promoter of PDP4 is Heritage Malta, the national agency for museums, conservation practice and cultural heritage. Through its activities, the project's main objective is to renovate the historical building which houses the Malta Maritime Museum (MMM) in Vittoriosa (*Birgu* in Maltese), known as the former Royal Naval Bakery. It is the largest museum on the Island with a collection of over 20,000 artefacts and for this purpose, the project is two-fold i.e. structurally renovating the derelict part of the building, thus enhancing the exhibition area while starting on a digitisation exercise of around 2,600 artefacts, picked out of the whole collection.

Vittoriosa, another urban city situated in the Harbour area, which is considered to have the highest rate of persons at risk of poverty and is characterised by high unemployment, particularly among youths. The high population density, coupled with the high level of urbanisation and the socio-economic inequalities of the Harbour area, call for measures to address the needs and problems of the area. Due to their major role in Malta's rich history, however, the Harbour district happens also to be characterised by a high concentration of rich urban fabric including a significant concentration of historical and cultural buildings, which have a direct effect on the economic and touristic activity in the area.

The upgrading of the Maritime Museum to international standards and the digitisation of some of its artefacts would enhance the contribution of cultural heritage to the sustainability of Malta's economy, especially the Three Cities area, historically referred to as the collective name for Cospicua, Senglea and Vittoriosa. To achieve this, HM is utilising Norway funds to progress its vision for this museum. This can indeed attract more tourists to the area thus increasing the effectiveness and performance of Heritage Malta as well as Malta's economy and address local development in the Cottonera area.

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[1] [https://education.gov.mt/en/resources/Documents/Policy%20Documents/National\\_Youth\\_Policy\\_Towards\\_2020.pdf](https://education.gov.mt/en/resources/Documents/Policy%20Documents/National_Youth_Policy_Towards_2020.pdf)

<sup>1</sup> [https://issuu.com/planningauthority/docs/sped\\_approved\\_doc\\_\\_1\\_](https://issuu.com/planningauthority/docs/sped_approved_doc__1_)

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[1] [https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/101458/coronavirus\\_ensure\\_nobody\\_is\\_driven\\_into\\_poverty\\_n\\_gos\\_urge\\_government#.X\\_MzINhKjIU](https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/101458/coronavirus_ensure_nobody_is_driven_into_poverty_n_gos_urge_government#.X_MzINhKjIU)

[2] [https://nso.gov.mt/en/News\\_Releases/Documents/2020/08/News2020\\_135.pdf](https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Documents/2020/08/News2020_135.pdf)

[3] <https://newsbook.com.mt/en/78000-below-poverty-threshold-deprivation-rate-dropped-in-last-4-years/>

[4] <https://newsbook.com.mt/en/minister-sciicluna-presents-the-pre-budget-document-2020/>

## 2. Results

### *Outcome 1: Improved access to and quality of health services in Malta*

#### **Results for Output 1.1 – Professionals trained in Sensory Integration Therapy:**

- Twelve (12) Occupational Therapists (OTs) have completed the training by The Collaborative for Leadership in Ayres Sensory Integration (CLASI);
- Another eight (8) Maltese OTs and two (2) Norwegian OTs are also being trained in phase 2;
- Two (2) Speech and Language Pathologists (SLPs) and two (2) Physiotherapists (PTs) have completed the foundation training in SIT.

**Results for Output 1.2 – Sensory Integration Clinic set up and operational:** Infrastructural, M&E works, lift, various SIT and specialised equipment are all in their final stages of completion, signifying the complete setting up of the SIT centre.

**Results for Output 1.3 – PKU Screening service developed:** The objectives of this component of PDP1 can be grouped into three categories:-

- setting up of PKU screening for all newborns, starting in July 2020;
- setting up of confirmatory testing for screen positive samples, with a suitable method identified towards the start of 2020. work on method validation shall resume towards the second quarter of 2021; and
- training of scientists and clinicians in PKU screening - partially achieved through the training of two (2) medical laboratory scientists.

**Results for Output 1.4 – Nucleic Acid Amplification (NAT) testing developed:** A fully automated Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT) system has been set up, with a total of 9 professionals trained on the operation of the system.

### *Outcome 2: Improved well-being of vulnerable children and youths*

**Results for Output 2.1 – Opportunity Knocks (OK) pack developed for children and youth at risk:** 1,457 OK packs developed and distributed;

**Results for Output 2.2 - A residential safe house for young people (under 18 years of age) set up:** 21 youths are being given shelter in residential safe houses in urban locality;

**Results for Output 2.3 - Integrated services for children and youths at risk provided:** 3 social workers (executive III), 4 part time professionals (executive IV), 1 prevention officer, 1 coordinator, 1 psychotherapist and 1 senior administrator were engaged as part of the multi-disciplinary team, providing integrated services.

#### *Outcome 3: Improved quality of life of deprived communities in urban localities*

**Results for Output 3.1 – Public Administration staff in targeted localities trained in good governance principles:** It is to be noted that PDP3 achieved most of the expected results as per Programme Agreement within the first year of implementation 2019, namely:-

- 89 public administration staff - 41 males and 48 females - representing 66 Regional/Local Councils were trained in principles of good governance, transparency and accountability.
- 27 public administration staff - 14 males and 13 females - representing 12 Local Councils were trained in good governance, transparency and accountability with direct relationship to the small grant scheme application form and guidelines.
- 18 public administration staff - 12 males and 6 females - representing 11 Local Councils attended another training session on good governance, transparency and accountability, focusing on a final updated version of the small grant scheme application form and guidelines.

**Results for Output 3.2 – Pilot Initiatives under the Small Grants Scheme (SGS) implemented:** Grant Offer letters were sent to five (5) successful applicants on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

#### *Outcome 4: Cultural Heritage Management enhanced*

**Results for Output 4.1 – Malta Maritime Museum restored and upgraded:** still work-in-progress though quite in an advanced stage!

**Results for Output 4.2 – Innovative presentation of the Malta Maritime Museum’s collection supported:** also work-in-progress, with most of the professional staff recruited and specialised equipment procured.

#### *Bilateral Outcome: Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the programme*

By 2020, all PDPs had established links with a donor partner hailing mostly from Norway and Iceland.

The stronger donor/beneficiary bilateral relationship exists within **PDP3**, since it is a professional relationship becoming even stronger after having both parties working together during the previous programming period 2009-2014. KS, the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities in Oslo, Norway were roped in again due to their expertise and resources with regards to urban development, inclusiveness, citizen participation, good governance, energy issues as well as climate change issues in order to assure provision of knowledge and experience. An MOU was signed between the Local Government Division of Malta and KS in June 2019, whereby the latter will be assisting in the formulation of training modules, the compilation of SGS calls and form part of the Projects' Selection Committee for the selection of projects. Unfortunately, due to the travel restrictions brought about by the pandemic, KS official could not travel to Malta during this last year and participated in all the meetings held via video conferencing. KS shall also be instrumental in providing training to elected representatives on their expected functions within a regional and local council, from a financial, administrative, leadership and ethical point of view, later on during the project implementation.



Following the initial bilateral collaboration organized by the Norwegian Directorate of Health, whereby 2 Maltese officers from the Ministry for Health, the Project Promoter (PP) for **PDP1**, attended the networking meeting on the challenges in caring for vulnerable children and adolescents, the Polish Ministry for Health had once again invited the Maltese representatives to participate in a second online discussion and workshop. Discussions were ongoing whether to host these network meetings every 6 months to one year in each country selecting a particular topic. The NFP was in discussions with MFH, with a view that the latter makes a full 2 to 3 year proposal on a bilateral initiative, planned out together with the Network, and which could also include the event to be organised in Malta on a national level. However, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this proposal was not pursued further, while the Polish Ministry of Health has planned a webinar in April 2021 as part of this network. The topic will be the state of vaccination programmes for children and adolescents during the COVID 19 pandemic. Although this activity was not included in the original contract or linked to the objectives of the project, it was deemed to be an opportunity for further collaboration with the donor partner. Presenting the challenges faced by the children and youths, it was thought to be a positive endeavour and a means to further strengthen the partnership with the donor as well as develop collaboration with other European countries.

At application stage, **PDP2** had already made contact with the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, who had shown interest in collaborating and even signed a letter of intent. It was agreed between both parties that such bilateral relation is significant to share knowledge and good practices and a bilateral visit in each respective country was being planned by both parties, in order to consolidate and share good practices on both sides. APPOĠĠ Agency submitted a proposal entitled *Sharing of Good Practices in Youth welfare services* with a budget of €6,000, in preparation of PDP2 'Opportunity Knocks (OK)'. This initiative is meant to enrich experience for all participants so as to better organise and implement services for vulnerable youth. The Donor partner had requested an extension of the time frame to September 2019 and an application with an amended timeframe to June 2020 was submitted. A visit to Oslo was planned to take place on 15-18 March 2020 but unfortunately, after all logistical preparations were made for 3 Maltese delegates to visit Norway, the COVID 19 pandemic stalled everything and the initiative had to be cancelled in the last minute. The visit is scheduled to take place at a later date, once safe travel resumes.

With regards to **PDP4**, and following the advice of the Donor States, Heritage Malta together with the curating staff of Malta Maritime Museum (MMM), continued pursuing the attempt to strike a bilateral relationship with Stavanger Museum. An initial online contact was made and both sides reached an agreement that the collaboration would be a great opportunity for the curators and administrators of both museums to get experience of good practices in exhibiting and digitising a maritime collection. As soon as Stavanger Museum informed Heritage Malta that there were issues of capacity, the NFP requested the Donors' intervention. Thanks to the latter's support, the bilateral initiative in preparation of Heritage Malta's PDP4 'The Malta Maritime Museum: local development through cultural heritage', entitled '*Preparatory visit to Norwegian Maritime Museums*', was submitted. The visit to Stavanger was scheduled to take place on 11-12 March 2020, but due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the visit was cancelled in the last minute, on 9 March 2020. The visit is scheduled to take place at a later date, once safe travel resumes.

The above bilateral initiatives were all being followed by the JCBF, since all the expenditure related to the visits were to be reimbursed through the Bilateral Fund. As stated above, no bilateral initiatives related to the PDPs were carried out during 2020 due to the pandemic and this was brought to the attention of the JCBF members during the 4th JCBF meeting held in November 2020.

### *Pre-defined projects*

#### **PDP 1 - Reduction in social inequalities in health and the burden of disease**

**Setting of the SIT Centre** - All the infrastructural and M&E works are in their final stages of completion, marking the complete setting up of the SIT centre. These works are complemented by the intensive procurement of various SIT and specialised equipment, including assessment tools, feeding equipment, a fully-equipped kitchen and special therapy rooms. Due to the COVID-19 situation, some items like the matting for the therapy rooms took longer than expected to be imported because of the restrictions in supply logistics. The top floor of the Marsa Primary School, housing the SIT centre, is now completely accessible to the target group (mostly disabled children) by means of a lift, in replacement of the former stairway which serviced the 3 floors of the school. The service is targeted to commence in the early



months of 2021, always depending on the COVID-19 situation and prevailing restrictions for ensuring safety to vulnerable groups, including autistic children and their parents/guardians. As a consequence, the parents are currently having either very limited alternative therapy sessions (if any) or they might still be resorting to funding provided by the Community Chest Fund to take their children for services abroad - if made possible due to the pandemic!

in parallel, twelve (12) Occupational Therapists (OTs), who will be responsible for providing SIT services have completed the training by The Collaborative for Leadership in Ayres Sensory Integration (CLASI). Phase 2 training, where another 8 Maltese OTs and 2 Norwegian OTs are being trained, is ongoing and participants have completed modules 1, 2 and 4 and are in the process of completing module 5. Modules 3 and 6 are specifically on-site modules and are scheduled for May and October 2021 respectively. However, due to the pandemic, the trainers might still have to consider providing the training online, should the situation not improve and travel continues to be restricted. Two Speech and Language Pathologists (SLPs) and 2 Physiotherapists (PTs) have completed the foundation training in SIT, which is required to support the SIT services coordinated by the OTs. The training of the 2 SLPs in SOS feeding has had to be postponed due to the restrictions in travel to Greece brought about by the pandemic. The possibility of providing online training is also being investigated.

The target of training at least 12 OTs, 2 SLPs and 2 PTs has been reached. Additional Maltese OTs (8 in number) will also be completing the training by the end of the project to ensure sustainability of the service and also target the potential increase in referrals for the SIT services. The 2 Norwegian OTs will also complete their training by the end of the project and will be able to set up similar services in Norway. The training of these professionals, who will provide a free service that was previously unavailable, links well with the programme objective of 'universal access to health care'. The ultimate objective is to ensure that children with SI difficulties are provided the necessary intervention to prevent long-term disability and promote participation within society both in the early years as well as in later life as adults capable of self-reliance through engagement in work-related activities. This would support the target for a 'reduction in social inequalities in health and the burden of disease'.

**PKU Screening service developed:** The objectives of this part of PDP1 can be grouped into three categories, i.e. setting up of PKU screening, setting up of confirmatory testing for screen positive samples and training of scientists and clinicians in PKU screening.

Work on the first objective started within the first year of the project with the analysis of kits available on the market to allow MFH to screen all newborn samples received for PKU. Procurement of these kits started soon after the most suitable option for our screening programme was identified. Trials started as soon as the first consignment of kits was received. This helped the medical laboratory scientists to get used to the new procedure and also identify steps in the process, which required improvement. As soon as the quality of the results improved, data was collected to study the distribution of values for the local population. Analysis of this data allowed us to move on the final stage of this objective, which was the screening of all newborns for PKU, which started in July 2020.

The second objective required the purchase of equipment, which would allow MFH to perform second tier confirmatory testing to confirm any positive (abnormal) results obtained from the screening programme. A UHPLC with fluorescence and PDA detectors was procured in December 2018. Training on the use of this equipment was provided to 2 medical laboratory scientists and this was followed with the identification of appropriate methods, which could be used on this equipment to measure phenylalanine and tyrosine levels as second tier confirmatory tests. This phase took us longer than planned since one of the medical laboratory scientists assigned to this project had to stop from work on maternity leave. Work on this equipment continued at a slower pace and a suitable method was identified towards the start of 2020. Unfortunately work on this equipment was affected once again throughout 2020 due to the pandemic. However it is planned that work on method validation shall resume towards the second quarter of 2021.

The third objective has only been partially achieved with the training of two medical laboratory scientists on the use of the UHPLC equipment. Training planned for clinicians and also medical laboratory scientists in the management of a PKU screening programme, which was planned to happen with the assistance of the Norwegian Newborn Screening Centre, had to be suspended due to restrictions introduced for travelling from and to Malta.

**Nucleic Acid Amplification (NAT) testing developed:** A fully automated Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT) system has been set up; which has provided the National Blood Transfusion Service (NBTS) with the facility for an additional screening protocol for donated blood to avoid the transmission of specific infectious diseases. Consumables and reagents are supplied on a routine basis to carry out the necessary testing.

The NBTS is now carrying West Nile Virus (WNV) screening of all the blood donations coming from donors with a history of travel to endemic countries within the previous 28 days; thus eliminating the need for deferral. There is also the possibility to expand testing for other tropical diseases if need be. The NAT infrastructure has also provided the capability to expand the molecular screening portfolio (over and above WNV testing) for other viruses with a very high sensitivity to complement other serological tests which are required by law. This has permitted the re-assessment of the ban on males, who have sex with other males (MSM) from donating blood. This was very well received by the LGBTIQ lobby, who perceived the ban as discrimination against their community.

A total of 9 professionals have been trained on the operation of the NAT system.

**PDP 2 - Opportunity Knocks -**

A residential safe house for young people (under 18 years of age) was set up in an urban town in Malta and 21 youths are being given shelter in it. Residential safe house settings are instrumental in supporting these highly vulnerable young people, who, in most cases, have only experienced dysfunctional families throughout their lives.

Till the end of 2020, 3 social workers (executive III), 4 part time professionals (executive IV), 1 prevention officer, 1 coordinator, 1 psychotherapist and 1 senior administrator were engaged as part of the multi-disciplinary team. At the project's beginning, the PP had encountered great difficulties in recruiting/engaging the envisaged complement of human resources for these teams. This issue was not exclusive to this project but reflects a nationwide shortage of professionals working in such a specific social field. Consequently, this delay resulted in delayed achievement and disbursement on the project. To such aim, the PP requested, and was granted, an extension of the project deadline until December 2021, with the hope of overcoming the consequences of these delays earlier on in the project.

Through the intervention of this multi-disciplinary team of professionals, a number of services, including mentoring, continued to be provided to the participating cohort of young people. The participating group of vulnerable young people are being offered various opportunities to gain independence and lead a socially integrated life. In all, they managed to reach the following targets:

- 325 youths were assisted on an individual basis;
- 134 prevention sessions were carried out, throughout which 1,457 youths were reached;
- workshop sessions at the Centre of Residential Restorative Services (CoRRS) at Imtaħleb were organised, throughout which 16 youths were reached;
- Communication/meetings with 85 other stakeholders were held to promote the aim and objectives of the project.

1,457 OK packs, including the OK cube net, brochures and other related promotional merchandise, were distributed amongst youths during 134 prevention sessions held in various settings such as schools, youth centres, football clubs & other youth organisations.

To date, 42 youths were engaged in an Opportunity Initiative (funded through the EEA grants), for which they showed interest, as per list hereunder:

<b>OK Opportunity</b>	<b>No. of youths successfully</b>	<b>No. of youths attending courses</b>
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	<b>completed the opportunity</b>	
Beginner Make-up Course	8	0
Beginner Hairdressing Course	0	4
One-to-one Hairdressing Course	3	1
Beginner Barbering Course	4	3
Beginner Nail-tech Course	4	0
Security Course	3	0
Driving Lessons	0	6
English O' Level lessons	0	2
Maltese O' level lessons	1	1
MCAST part time Electronics for the automotive Industry	0	1
MCAST Part time Dog Canine	0	1

In the meantime, the Project Promoter (PP) is augmenting its collaboration with other stakeholders involved in the field of children and youth, whilst promoting further the project to reach a larger cohort of beneficiaries.

### ***PDP 3 - Training in Good Governance -***

As already stated and indicated above in the Results section, PDP3 achieved most of the expected quantitative results with regards to training within the first year of implementation i.e. 2019. However, training will be continued to local councils' administrative staff and elected members throughout the implementation of the projects, in parallel to the implementation of the small projects under the SGS. During 2020, negotiations pursued between the Local Government Division (LGD) and the Local Councils' Association (LCA) for the provision of an intensive training work-programme, which will also include sessions in team building between various local councils, to be held as soon as the pandemic situation permits. An MOU shall be signed between both parties, outlining the trainings and remuneration thereof. Although all the preparations were in place, the process was delayed due to the COVID 19 pandemic, in the hope that these training sessions are held in a physical environment, thus facilitating greater networking between the participants.

From a bilateral relations point of view, the collaboration between the Local Government Division and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) is fostering the sharing of knowledge on good governance within this pre-defined project and gaining support in the implementation of the small grant scheme.

As expected, the COVID-19 pandemic has, however, considerably impacted the project as a whole. Physical meetings had to be replaced by online ones during 2020 (which isn't always the best solution) and certain training initiatives (including those by KS) had to be postponed in the hope that things would be returning to some form of normality sooner rather than later. In this respect, all training sessions were postponed to 2021 and the project was extended by a further year, that is until end of December 2022. The Internships are also currently on hold, in the hope that, during Q1 2021, LGD Malta and KS Norway would be able to start planning the postings and travel arrangements, once all travel bans to and from both countries are uplifted!

### **SGS 1 - Small Grant Scheme for Urban Localities -**

The first Project Stakeholders Committee (PSC) meeting was held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2019 after the Covenant between the Programme Operator (PO) and the Small Grant Scheme Operator (SGSO) and the agreement between LGD and KS were both signed. During this first meeting, the Rules of Procedure were agreed upon and the way forward in preparation for the publication of the first call for proposals.

The SGS was launched officially on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, 2019, which was followed by a process towards reaching mutual agreement between the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO), PO, SGSO and PSC on the Call Pack of Documents, including the Application Form, Guidelines, Manual of Procedures and Call Term of Reference. The 1<sup>st</sup> Call was published in December 2019, with 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020 as deadline for submission of proposals.

In May 2020, due to COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings, the first written procedure was launched in order to get approval or otherwise from the PSC members on the administrative assessment of the 10 received proposals, in reply to the 1<sup>st</sup> call. During this written procedure, 3 applications were rejected due to late submission (x2) and missing documents (x1), while 7 applications were recommended to proceed for phase 2 of the evaluation process, after asking for clarifications. All 3 rejected applications were re-confirmed after an appeals process was carried out.

The PSC met physically on 3rd August 2020, to decide on the qualitative assessment exercise, which was carried out by external assessors appointed by RSM Ltd, and decide on the award of grants or otherwise, accordingly. Out of the 7 evaluated proposals, one (1) failed the technical assessment while the following 6 proposals were awarded grants under the SGS, namely:

1. **Birgu** (Vittoriosa in English) **Local Council (LC)** – “*Installation of lift and Construction of Walkway and Roof Cover at Auberge D’Angleterre in Birgu*” – the original total project cost was €115,286 but since the ‘hard’ element exceeded substantially the ‘soft’ measures, the grant which could be offered through Norway grants was only that of €19,720. This was due to the adjustment to their requested budget, which the SGSO had to carry out for the project to be in line with the conditions of the SGS Call. The LC decided to reject the award and will not be implementing the project;
2. **Floriana** (Furjana in Maltese) **LC** – “*Senior Citizens Centre – the creation of a stimulating Social Environment*”, with a total project cost of €100,000 – grant amount €85,000;
3. **Pieta’ LC** – “*Developing Community Infrastructure for stronger social Inclusion within Pieta’*” – the development of an additional storey, above the LC premises, able to house a community care centre. Total Project Cost €100,000 while grant amount €85,000;
4. **Santa Venera LC** – “*Development of the Sta Venera Skills Centre*” – through the restoration of 2 rooms in a central public garden area to be used as a small training centre for participants. Total Project Cost €100,000 while grant amount €85,000;
5. **Ta’ Xbiex LC** – “*Smarter Bins: Smarter Waste Management and Improved Quality of Life*” - an investment in 9 smart bins along the promenade, which suffers a poor waste management system, negatively affecting the locality’s urban environment. Total Project Cost €95,500 while grant amount €81,175;
6. **Tarxien LC** – “*Tarxien Reach Out Centre*” – a community centre forming part of a large building housing the Tarxien District Medical Clinic and the public library branch, to be used as a physical exercises centre and for other academic courses. Total Project Cost €69,431 while grant amount €59,01

All projects are of a duration of 12 months. Grant Offer letters were sent to five (5) successful applicants by the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

A 2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Proposals, once again open to urban localities, is expected to be published by early 2021, due to the fact that the first SGS Call did not absorb all the available budget.

#### ***PDP 4 – The Malta Maritime Museum: local development through cultural heritage***

**Renovation of the MMM building** - A major part of the Norway funds granted to this project are allocated towards civil works and the rehabilitation of the Malta Maritime Museum premises, including the reversal of changes made to the structure of the building during the British colonial period. The structural upgrading also includes the significant expansion of the Museum display area and the creation of new spaces for the reserve collection and the permanent exhibition. Furthermore, the ground floor of the museum, which is the reserve collection stores section, shall be made more accessible to the public.

Contrary to impacts seen on the other PDPs, once started, the structural works in the rear, dilapidated silo area of the museum could still continue unhindered, following the temporary closure of the museum for visitors due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Once the tender for works was awarded, excavation and preparatory works had started immediately. Until the end of 2020, the silo preparatory works were complete and the mason could start work next. Sandblasting of the steel structures and other restoration works, as well as roof treatment were well underway by the end of 2020. The restoration and civil works have been subdivided into different areas, so as to facilitate the logistical architectural supervision of the contractor, namely:-

- Area A - reconstruction of masonry silo - The restoration treatment for the steel structure in the large **silo** has finally commenced. The steel base structure supported huge concrete silos on it and time and lack of maintenance in this area has seen its toll on the structure. Nonetheless, sand and grit blasting has exposed a magnificent structure still in optimal condition of repair and a series of surface treatments will reinstate the structural steelwork to its former glory. Once done, a meticulous restoration to the silo walls and masonry walls of the silos will be carried out;
- Area B - the area of the main staircase - demolition work on the old staircase is on hold until all masonry vault works are finished. The structural design of the spiral steel staircase is underway;
- Area C - ex-boiler room - the aim is to re-instate the silo as it was in past days including its steel structures i.e. retaining character with regards to volume. Historical channels, of use when it was still used as a boiler room, were uncovered underneath the flooring. Steel sandblasting works are underway. Structural design is being reviewed;
- Area D, E - oldest part of the building dating to the 1600's - ample evidence that this area served as a weapons' arsenal during the Knights' period and hence restoration works, which are currently underway, resulted quite challenging;
- Area F - the large, with double height, reserve collection area, which served as a boat restoration workshop. The roof had to be replaced and now has 2 levels i.e. an intermediate one was created and restoration of the interior walls is in an advanced stage.

Restoration interventions seek to expose the stone surfaces and timber beam faces so that this will enable the specialist treatment aimed at retaining as much as possible of the original structural elements. After decades lacking a comprehensive maintenance plan, delicate interventions are now being done to the roofing to determine the extent of deterioration in a more holistic manner. The timber beams and masonry stone slabs (*xorok* in Maltese) are being carefully treated. Some replacing of structural elements may be necessary if concerns of structural safety or integrity would have been raised.

**Digitisation of the MMM collection** - The remaining allocation of the grant has been apportioned for the **digitization of not less than 2600 artefacts** within the Malta Maritime Museum, making for a more interactive and innovative visitor-centred presentation of the collection. This is a major first for Heritage Malta and part of a long term project to digitize hundreds of thousands of items, which form part of the **national collection**, ranging from paintings to porcelain, archaeological artefacts, arms and armour, natural history specimens, clothing, and intangible cultural heritage assets. By February 2020, Heritage Malta (HM) succeeded to recruit the project manager for this digitisation component of PDP4, who in turn, was instrumental in recruiting the professional staff members (like videographer, photographer, archiver etc) so that concrete work could be started on the archiving and recording procedures required to digitise not less than 2,600 artefacts from the Museum's collection. This recruitment exercise was complemented

by the procurement of various specialised equipment like 3D scanner and cameras, to assist in the exercise. The digitization process involves the acquisition of various digital formats including: photography, videography, 3D laser scanning and photogrammetry, besides the setting up of a collection management system (CMS), which will eventually grow into the **national collection management system**. Till the end of 2020, the digitisation unit was mostly testing the equipment on various types of artefacts. The process to procure the CMS and other hardware is also work-in-progress.

A number of university students will also be given the opportunity to carry out a *stage* with Heritage Malta, specifically on this digitisation exercise, as part of their studies. It is envisaged that the Digitisation Unit will be officially opened in Q1 2021, saving any ulterior pandemic restrictions.

The exciting and substantial overhaul underway, promises to place the Museum firmly on the map of any foreign or local visitor's itinerary.

### 3. Implementation

#### Financial status

Project Code	Project Title	Eligible Expenditure covered by the Grant	Total Project Cost	Disbursement by end of December 2020
FBR	Fund for Bilateral Relations	340,000	340,000	€8,606.63
PDP 1	Reduction in Social Inequalities in Health and the Burden of Disease	€2,046,000	€2,407,059	€1,494,721.62
PDP 2	Opportunity Knocks (OK)	€800,000	€941,176	€191,570.46
PDP 3	Training of Local Council Staff in Principles of Good Governance, Transparency and Accountability	€170,000	€200,000	€27,787.89
PDP 4	The Malta Maritime Museum: local development through poverty reduction	€1,713,200	€2,015,529	€347,570.30
SGS	Small Grant Scheme	€1,000,000	€1,200,000	Nil

SGS PO Costs	SGS PO Costs	€105,200	€123,764.71	€36,952.41
PO Costs	Programme Operator Costs	€299,600	€352,470.59	€124,392.21
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>€6,474,000</b>	<b>€7,579,999.30</b>	<b>€2,231,601.52</b>

As can be seen from the table above, despite the setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, activities on the programme never came to a complete halt but all efforts were made to continue with the implementation as much as the prevailing circumstances permitted.

There were factors, which had different impacts on the implementation. For example, it was sometimes difficult for contractors to find providers to subcontract for the different services required for the structural works (PDP1 and PDP4). Whilst this created some initial delays, once suppliers were secured, work progressed at a very fast pace. Besides, further delays were experienced in the past 12 months across several supply tenders (notably for special equipment under PDP1 and digitisation equipment under PDP4), because of the closure of production facilities abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic and interruption of international supply routes. Most of these have been overcome by the end of 2020, but obviously, some still remain.

On a national basis, the COVID-19 Response Team had to grow accordingly to keep operating a track and trace system efficiently in a context of limited health care professional supply. This meant redeployment of existing clinical staff to the Response Team. Some of the redeployed healthcare professionals were actually the SIT trained therapists earmarked for the Sensory Integration Therapy service. This and other factors caused substantive delays, notably in the launching of services (SIT Centre, Local Councils' training, Training opportunities for youths), which was immediately highlighted in the Mid-Term Review submitted to the FMO in October 2020. To this effect, all the PDPs could be granted further extensions to their eligible duration of projects, thanks to the fact that Malta had started on this journey relatively very early in the negotiation phase.

Besides the activities directly attributable to PA10 under the responsibility of FPD as NFP and NFP as PO, Malta is pleased to report that it is also participating in other programmes, funded through the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021.

- In September 2020, **SOS Malta** selected 7 out of the 8 projects submitted for co-funding under the **Active Citizens Fund (ACF)** following the first call for proposals that was extended to March 2020. The maximum co-funding amount offered per project was €30,750 (90%) with the remaining 10% having to be put up by the organisations themselves. In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic it was decided by the FMO to give the successful organisations the opportunity to waive the 10% co-funding requirement and tailor their projects to fit in with the 90% of the funds originally applied for. It was also necessary to align all the proposed project activities with the conditions put in place to curb the spread of the pandemic. This meant that the project implementation was delayed by a few months. In the meantime, the Pre Determined Project (PDP) managed by SOS Malta kicked off at the end of 2020 with the engagement of a researcher to report on the issues that were of most interest to or impacting civil society organisations in Malta. More information can be found on <https://activecitizensfund.mt/acf-fund>.
- **Women4IT**, under the **Fund for Youth Employment** with a budget of €347K (for Malta only), is an all-inclusive free-of-charge service that supports training and employment of young women in digital jobs. During 2020, Tech.mt continued working on the project by promoting it on different channels such as TV and social media to encourage young women to participate in the programme. Different entities, such as NGOs that work with women, have been contacted for collaboration to promote further the project and encourage young women to participate. In the last quarter of 2020, Tech.mt issued a public tender for which there were no successful bidders. The tender will be re-issued in Q1 2021. Once a successful bidder



has been selected, the training programme will be offered in a hybrid manner, a mix of face-to-face and online learning. (please refer to <https://www.mca.org.mt/initiatives/women-4-it> for more information)

- **SUPMed Project** - under the **Regional Cooperation Programme** - entitled *Reducing the Consumption and Disposal of Single-use Plastics (SUP) in the Tourism Industry in Cyprus, Greece and Malta*, officially started on 1/7/2020, following a project kick-off meeting which took place on the 25/06/2020. Since then, the six project partners involved in the project (Aspon Consulting Ltd as the Lead Partner (CY), Heraklion Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GR), Anelixis Development Consultants S.A. (GR), Cellock Ltd (CY), AIS Environment (MT) and the Cyprus Hotel Association (CY)) have been holding monthly communication and progress meetings. During this period, a communication plan for the project dissemination activities was drafted to serve as guidance on the way forward. A number of questionnaires were developed and distributed to pilot hotels selected by Aspon, Anelixis and AIS Environment in their respective countries (4 in Cyprus, 3 in Greece and 3 in Malta). and distributed to the pilot hotels. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 peak tourism summer season could not be sampled effectively. Consequently, the data collection and monitoring of stakeholder behaviour will be extended to the summer 2021 season. Concurrently, the project partners are developing a Decision-Support Tool (DST) to guide potential interested parties on the effects of Single-Use Plastics in the Mediterranean region. This process entailed various literature reviews to identify single-use plastic (SUP) alternatives and related data, which will form part of the DST. The project partners have been jointly working on the structure, features and functionalities of the DST, which are all outlined in the user requirements and technical specifications that are being used to build this specific tool. ([https://www.supmed.eu/index.php?option=com\\_sppagebuilder&view=page&id=95&Itemid=106&lang=en](https://www.supmed.eu/index.php?option=com_sppagebuilder&view=page&id=95&Itemid=106&lang=en))
- **2 projects** are being implemented under the **Fund for Social Dialogue and Decent Work**.
  - The first one entitled **Fostering improved working relations for Micro and Small Businesses** is being implemented by the **GRTU Malta Chamber of SMEs**, with a total grant of €15,620. The two main activities are (1) Training to GRTU staff on employment law, aimed at empowering staff to better advise employers on working conditions (completed by Q3,2020) and (2) a Final Conference targeting employers on better working conditions. This will be completed by Q4 2021. Training, sub-contracted to Fenech & Fenech for €2,596, consisted of 12-hours training, split into 4 online sessions of 3 hours each (due to the COVID-19 pandemic and covering subjects like Employment Law in Malta and the EU, different types of Employment contracts, Termination of employment, Working hours and Leave. 6 staff members of the Malta Chamber of SMEs were trained, the CEO and 5 employees. Each participant received a certificate of participation.
  - The second project entitled **Promoting Improved Social Dialogue in Malta (PRISM)** shall be implemented by **Servizzi Ewropej f'Malta** (formerly known as **MEUSAC** - <https://sem.gov.mt/about/>), with a total project cost of €14,580. The project shall include a study visit to Norway involving 6 MEUSAC staff members, who will gain a better understanding of the Nordic model of tripartite dialogue; a policy paper outlining recommendations for changes to tripartite dialogue in Malta, based on the best practices acquired during the study visit in Norway and finally presenting the policy paper to relevant Maltese stakeholders such as employer organisations, trade unions and government targeting 50 overall participants. It is envisaged that the Grant Offer is to be received in early 2021 and the contract to be signed soon after. Hence, no activities linked to this project were implemented in 2020, though the entity was informed that their application form was approved for funding.

### *Conformity with specific requirements*

With reference to Malta, the Programme Agreement stipulates four (4) general conditions attributed to the implementation of the programme.

Annex 9: Agreement Conditions outlines three (3) of these general specific conditions, together with the NPF's comments.

Since Condition No.2 is not listed in this annex and there isn't the possibility to include it at this stage from our end, it is worth noting that this condition has already been met. The condition regards PDP4, wherein, for Outcome 4 indicator, the NFP was obliged to ensure that the PO shall submit to the FMO for approval the baseline value, together with a description of the data collection method used, no later than six months after the signing of the Project Contract with Heritage Malta, related to the "*Average audience experience rating (on a scale of 1 to 5), where the baseline is still to be determined*". Heritage Malta installed a device at the Maritime Museum exit area for the visitors to rate their experience at the museum. The total number of visitors, who participated in the survey, was 309 and the rate had a scale of between 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest. The resultant baseline value for this indicator is 3.12, and hence, by the end of the project, the target to be achieved shall be that of (+1), meaning an amount of 4.12 of satisfied visitors.

## Progress by the Joint Committee on Bilateral Funds

### Pre-Defined Initiatives

Throughout 2020, the NFP pursued various proposals for funding in line with the Strategic priorities under the Fund for Bilateral Relations (FBR), namely Clean Oceans, Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence and Health. These were further discussed during the annual JCBF meeting held online, on 11th November 2020.

#### (1) *Clean Oceans*

- In April 2020, the NFP contacted **ŽIBEL**, an NGO working in the sector of litter, with special interest in plastic waste. After various communications, ŽIBEL held a meeting with the Norwegian NGO, *Hold Norge Rent*, in September 2020. The project idea consisted of knowledge sharing on how each NGO operates, thus gaining experience from each other's expertise. ŽIBEL has been waiting for budget request from *Hold Norge Rent* before submitting an application. The main concerns of the NGOs were (a) financing of a human resource to run the project and (b) procurement of required equipment, which cannot be funded from bilateral funds.
- Another proposal delineated the setting up of a bilateral initiative between the Applied Underwater Robotics Laboratory (AURLab) of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology and the Classics and the Archaeology Department of the **University of Malta**. This initiative entitled ***An Exchange of Expertise – technologies for the study of shipwrecks as yardsticks for marine pollution***, has the potential to increase public awareness on the potential impacts of deep-sea marine litter and plastic pollution and can thus contribute to effective waste management strategies on a local and international level. The project is proposing a budget of €76,182 (including €3,887 VAT) and is envisaged to be implemented between May 2021 and September 2022. The proposal was presented and discussed during the last JCBF meeting. A formal request to the Committee, for approval of the project, will be effected during 2021 after the NFP will discuss the project further with the Project Promoter.

#### (2) *Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence*

- In view of the sharp rise in Domestic Violence cases due to the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020<sup>2</sup>, it became apparent that the main challenge was the lack of centralisation of data available. With a view to augment collaboration and enhance the service provided in a holistic manner, APPOĠĠ Agency enquired whether the hereunder proposed initiatives, which would include other local public entities (eg Malta Police Force, lawyers, etc), could be funded through the Grants:
  - The configuration of a common database to be accessed by all entities and share data
  - Engagement of an external evaluation expert team to assess the risk assessment tools being currently utilised

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[https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/106225/domestic\\_violence\\_reports\\_to\\_police\\_have\\_increased#.YF39da9Kiyl](https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/106225/domestic_violence_reports_to_police_have_increased#.YF39da9Kiyl)

- Strengthening lawyers' assistance
- Training opportunities
- Development (refurbishment) of a DV hub
- Concurrently, the NFP received various enquiries after a thematic factsheet on Domestic and Gender-based violence published by the FMO, was forwarded to a number of stakeholders in May 2020, including the The Commissioner on Gender-based and Domestic Violence, the Police Department and other public related authorities, with a view to encourage any one or more of these stakeholders to come up with ideas and/or partner possibilities for an initiative in this field of expertise.
- For the past twenty years, **Fondazzjoni Sebħ (FS)** has been providing the services of a second stage shelter for victims of domestic violence and their children. A Proposal entitled *Fondazzjoni Sebħ: Psychological Support for Victims of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women*, was forwarded to the NFP with the proposed activities of this initiative being:
  - Provision of psychological and psychotherapeutic support to women, who experienced violence, over and above the current services that are currently offered by FS;
  - Cooperation between FS and a Norwegian agency to ensure implementation and promotion of best practice within the context of DV;
  - A conference with the aim of disseminating the outcomes and any relevant knowledge.
    - The project is envisaged to have a duration of 3 years with a tentative approx. budget of €80,000.
    - The Icelandic Donor Partners are (1) Family Justice Center in Reykjavik and (2) Women's Shelter Association, Kvennaathvarf in Reykjavik
  - It is envisaged that a full application will hopefully be submitted in 2021, once the issue of finding a suitable expert in the area of Community Psychology, able to provide effective staff training in Malta and Iceland on Trauma Informed Care and Cultural Sensitivity in the Context of Gender-Based Violence, is resolved.
- **Listen to ME!** - The NFP received a revised proposal for a Bilateral Initiative between Ms Celine Farrugia, Managing Director of **Discern Group** as Project Leader and the **Ministry for Justice, Equality and Governance** (MJEG) as Project Promoter and the Rachel Eapen Paul Consulting and Peacepainting as the Norwegian Partners. This project aims to:
  - deepen knowledge about gender-based violence and domestic violence among professionals;
  - raise awareness on violence prevention, victims' rights and support services
  - promote a networking collaboration among stakeholders at a local and partner level by exchanging best practices and sharing and transfer of knowledge.
    - The project has an updated budget of €138,000 (excl €24,840 VAT) and it is envisaged to be implemented during the period June 2021 to December 2022 for a period of 18 months. The initiative will develop and run an Online training programme for professionals, Workshop for children and teachers and an Awareness campaign thus ensuring better access to justice to victims of gender-based and domestic violence. The initial proposal had been discussed during the JCBF and further discussions ensued after the JCBF meeting with a view that the proposal is revised to include a lower budget and MJEG as project leader; then to be re-submitted to the Donors in 2021.

### (3) **Health**

- **The Ministry for Health (MFH)** retained the Genetics proposal (which had been presented during the 3rd JCBF meeting in 2019) but replaced the Biosimilars and Transgender Health Services initiatives with another two potential initiatives. The initiatives under the umbrella proposal, through which the Icelanders would gain from the assessment of the Icelandic Health Information System carried out by MFH, are 3-fold:- Observation of the Operations at and Learning from the experience of Department of Genetics and Molecular Medicine at Landspítali University hospital (National University Hospital), Reykjavik; Exploration

of the Icelandic Module as a potential solution for childhood obesity and Exploration of the Icelandic Neonatal Screening Programme for rare diseases with a view to expanding the Maltese Programme. However, due to the pressure imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the collaboration required between all relevant partners has not materialised yet.

- The NFP communicated with the Research Support Service Directorate (RSSD) at the **University of Malta** (UoM) regarding a possible bilateral initiative in the area of Health. A meeting was held with the University on 23 March 2020, but feedback was not forthcoming.
- Communication has been ongoing since January 2020 with **Dar Kenn Għal Saħħtek (DKS) - a Centre for the treatment of Eating Disorders and Obesity and the Department of Health, Physical Education and Consumer Studies (HPECS) at the University of Malta**. A meeting to discuss the possibility of a bilateral initiative on Eating Disorders/Obesity/Nutrition, has so far not eventuated. It is to be noted that DKS had also an increase in cases due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- **The Malta Trust Foundation** submitted a project entitled *The Sunrise Project: Northern and Southern European Communities Collaborate to Address Youth Mental Health* with a revised title, which addresses the rise of mental health issues faced by youths living in Gozo, the sister island of Malta. It is directed towards tackling mental health disorders away from a hospital setting to a more informal community setting. The project envisages implementation through a multi-disciplinary team spirit, covering psychological group therapies and the facilitation and support of self-help groups by professionals with training in different types of interventions. The main activities shall include (1) a deeper analysis to identify ways as to how the current services offered to the Gozitan youths can be improved and provide a better service for enhanced empowerment, through collaborative efforts with the Donor partner and (2) provision of services to the target group based on the results of the above Activity, which can include but not limited to holistic group sessions, horse/equine assisted therapy, educational experience abroad. The Donor Partners are UiT The Arctic University of Norway and Marborg, Tromso Norway and the Local Partners are the Centre for Resilience and Socio-Emotional Health within the UoM and the Mental Health Association Gozo. The project will have a duration of 12 months (September 2021 to September 2022) with an approximate budget of €84,000 (incl VAT). It is envisaged that an application will be submitted to the Donors in 2021.

#### **Bilateral Initiatives in preparation of the Pre-defined projects**

Reference is made to the section above, in this same report entitled *Bilateral Outcome: Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the programme*, whereby bilateral activities and outcomes related to the initiatives connected with the implementation of the PDPs, have already been outlined.

#### **Conclusions**

A lot of effort was expended by the NFP in 2020 in trying to establish Bilateral Initiatives. The main challenges faced by the NFP were the following:

- Difficulties in locating Donor Partners;
- Capacity – whether staffing costs could be covered;
- Equipment costs, requested by the proposers, could not be considered eligible;
- the havoc of the COVID-19 Pandemic, which became a priority for some partners (e.g. MFH) and resulted in a sharp rise in Domestic Violence and eating disorder cases<sup>3</sup>. It also was the main cause of last-minute cancellations of trips for the initialisation of bilateral activities.

There had been prior agreement by the Committee that €125,000 under the Fund for Bilateral Relations (FBR) would be reserved for an Open Call for Bilateral Initiatives. However, in view that project applications in hand have now exhausted the €310,000 balance under the FBR (as the Committee had

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<sup>3</sup> <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/5-of-young-people-aged-10-to-16-have-eating-disorders.824404>

agreed that €30,000 would be ring-fenced for the preparatory visits for the PDPs), the JCBF agrees that the Open Call does not need to be pursued, and that Malta can retain the current Strategic Priorities.

The bilateral initiatives in hand will be discussed by the NFP, prioritised as per Award Criteria and recommended by means of a written procedure to the JCBF, for awarding in advance of the next 2021 JCBF meeting.

## Management and control system

No changes were effected to the document entitled "*Management and Control System Description*" (MCS), which was submitted as the final version on 27 May 2019, including six (6) annexes and finally approved in its totality by FMO on 29 August 2019.

The processing of payments on CARS 1421 continued as before in 2020, while the PO continued offering hands-on individual training to the staff members from the different project promoters, as and when required. During the training, these staff members familiarise themselves with the system and are assured that continuous assistance throughout the year shall always be given in order to minimize risks of incorrect inputting of claims in the system.

The only change, which would need to be reflected in all official documentation, including the MCS, is the transfer of the Parliamentary Secretary for European Funds (under which remit the Funds and Programmes Division, the EU Payments Unit and the Certifying Authority all fall) to the Office of the Prime Minister, instead of the Ministry for European Affairs and Equality. The change was officialised towards the very end of 2020.

## C. LEARNING

### 1. Monitoring

In line with Art 5.6.1 of the Regulations, the NFP and NFP as PO held bilateral meetings with the project promoters, notwithstanding the precarious situation resulting from COVID-19. The first **bilateral meetings** with each of the PPs for 2020 were held in person during February/March, but then FPD and the project promoters had to adapt to the circumstances and hold a further 3 bilateral sessions (April, July and October) with all the PPs online, through TEAMS. Meeting online facilitated the participation of multiple representatives of the stakeholders interested in the developments, issues and risks related to each project. The updated brief could also be shared online during the meeting, and at times, updated with new information as presented in real time during the meeting.

The PO complements these bilateral meetings with **desk-based and on-the-spot checks** on each expenditure claimed through CARS14-21, in order to ensure adherence and compliance with recruitment and procurement regulations, as well as communication obligations at both national and programme level. This process is ongoing from one IFR to another, before submission in March and September, respectively.

Both these monitoring exercises are crucial in identifying risks attributable to any activity on the projects and facilitates the possibility of taking collaborative, immediate mitigation measures together with the PPs and any other external stakeholder, when and as required. Examples in point are risks in delays resulting from bureaucratic measures in procurement procedures, whereby the PO liaised with the Department of Contracts within the Ministry for Finance, to expedite procedures as much as possible, in order to avoid any unnecessary delays. The NFP was also highly involved in liaising with Donor countries' representatives when the PP encountered difficulties in contacting bilateral counterparts, in preparation for their project's activities.

Other very effective monitoring instruments, which the NFP as PO utilises to capture and verify the progress towards agreed outcomes and outputs, at different timeframes, are the following:-

- **Forecasts of Likely Payments**, which enable the NFP, the NFP as PO and the PPs, to take stock of the expenditure they are disbursing and claiming in the system on a regular basis (4times a year). The exercise is fundamental in making one plan what the expenditure for the year ahead would like be, while making sure that the forecasts are realistic and reachable by the end of the period in question.
- **Project Progress Reports**, which are presented by the PPs bi-annually for every 6 months i.e. Jan-June and July-December, irrespective of any other reporting requested during the same periods. The report is intended to give a snapshot on progress (physical and financial) and any risks or issues needing mitigation and/or resolution during the reported period. The Line Ministry validates the report before it is submitted to the NFP. The NFP may request clarifications on the report. Once the PPR is sent to and approved by the NFP, a copy is sent to each Project Leader and Line Ministry for record and filing purposes, as per Section V - Monitoring of the Manual of Procedures Section 13.5.
- **Combined Strategic Annual Report**, which gives a holistic picture of the whole programme in Malta and for which the PPs are also asked to contribute and report on specific sections, outlining their situation as at the end of the year under review.

The Monitoring Plan for 2021 is attached to this report as Annex 5.

## 2. Evaluation

The NFP shall be issuing a call for tenders in 2022 for a final ex-post evaluation to be concluded by March 2023. The aim of this final evaluation exercise is to have *"a systematic, objective, and independent assessment of the design, implementation and/or results achieved in programmes and projects with the aim of determining the relevance, coherence, consistency, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and/or sustainability of the financial contribution"*. As main criteria for evaluation, MT intends to select the main criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the grants.

Results of this evaluation exercise will be presented in the Final Combined Strategic and Annual Report, on completion of the programme.

In view of the above, no changes are being reported in Malta's Evaluation Plan and hence, none will be uploaded in Annex 6.

## 3. Lessons learned

The year under review, 2020, was a difficult year for every human being, whatever his/her role and responsibility in life, whether parenting, schooling, employment, health and all other aspects of one's daily life! COVID-19 affected the way people started thinking, communicating, integrating and appreciating even the simplest of activities, especially if for months on end, none of us could continue our lives in the same normal way as it had always been before. Activities on EEA Norway grants programme in Malta was no exception and March 2020 was the hardest month of all since the whole country was being faced with an unknown intruder, who taught us to adapt to immediate changes and adopt new ways of doing and implementing activities and things on our projects!

The most effective lesson learnt through this experience was the importance of the need to communicate, especially when the whole population found itself in a lockdown and face-to-face meetings and gatherings became things of the past and could not be held anymore. Travelling to participate in international workshops and meetings (e.g. the Heads of NFP workshop, which had to be held in Iceland in March 2020) also became an unreachable objective! It was at this point that technology became our greatest ally, even for those, who were always sceptical about relying too much on it! Overnight, staff and PPs had to self-train themselves in MICROSOFT TEAMS, ZOOM, SKYPE FOR BUSINESS, GOOGLE and other similar virtual communication channels. Until the end of 2020, these communication channels became our primary source of meeting our colleagues, both national and foreign ones. Physical meetings had to be replaced by online ones, which did not turn out to be always the best solution, but definitely the only solution considering the circumstances!

The COVID-19 pandemic has considerably impacted the programme as a whole, perhaps each project in its own different way! The NFP and PO never ceased to monitor the projects and communicated with the PPs on a regular basis, through online meetings and phonecalls, in order to keep abreast on how certain

initiatives were being affected directly or indirectly. PDP1 suffered mostly from delays in importation of equipment due to restrictions imposed by other countries from where the goods were being delivered. PDP2's main setback was the fact that the multi-disciplinary team could not meet personally with the youths they were trying to help whilst all training opportunities were either scarce or not being held any longer. PDP3 had hoped to carry out a whole range of hands-on trainings to local council staff but these had to be postponed in the hope that things would be returning to some form of normality sooner rather than later! In the case of PDP4, which depends highly on tourism (a sector, which suffered the greatest setback during the pandemic), the greatest concern of HM is that the result indicators for the project may not be reached. HM, as the national cultural heritage agency, has also extensively suffered economically in the prevailing circumstances.

The process of identifying the inherent risks on our projects, attributable to this world-wide crisis, and the fear of all PPs that ultimately not all result indicators might be reached by the end of the projects, made everyone involved conscious of the importance of openly discussing these issues, on a national level and with the Donors, and collaborating together towards finding the best solutions. The Mid-Term Review was undoubtedly a very constructive and fruitful exercise, through which the NFP and PO had the opportunity to think over the situation and request extensions on all PDPs, in order to make sure that all PPs can make up for the time lost during the pandemic. Needless to say, the Donors and FMO were very understanding of the situation and all extensions were granted as requested.

## D. WORK PLAN

### WORKPLAN FOR 2021

Period	Activity	Responsibility
January	13 January – Communications Bilateral Meeting – online meeting via Zoom – outcomes of the meeting will be further discussed with PPs. Any relevant information will be uploaded on the website for easy reference by the various stakeholders	FMO
	Project Progress Report (PPR) covering the period 1 July – 31 December 2020 as per Article 7.2.2 of the Manual of Procedures.	PPs/NFP/PO
February	5 February – Monthly catch up Communication Meeting - outcomes of the meeting will be further discussed with PPs. Any relevant information will be uploaded on the website for easy reference by the various stakeholders	FMO
	11 February – Bilateral Monitoring Meetings during which the NFP/PO discuss with the PPs new activities, ongoing implementation and any pending issues related to procurement and/or status of the project.	NFP/PO
	15 February – Deadline for the Audit Authority to submit the	



	<p>reports on the System and Operational audits under the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021. During these audits, the IAID will perform system checks on the NFP and PO and operational checks on PDP1 and PDP 4 as well as the TA, PO Costs and the FBR.</p>	IAID
	<p>20 February – Forecast of likely payments – monitoring of expenditure of each project to be reported to the FMO based on the planned activities</p>	PO/CA
	<p>23 February – Process IFR on CARS following OTS checks that take place according to the payments incurred and uploaded on the NFP's payment system between July and December 2020.</p>	NFP/PO
March	<p>10 March – submission of IFR following OTS checks that take place according to the payments incurred and uploaded on the NFP's payment system between July and December 2020.</p>	NFP/PO
	<p>17 March – Communication Bi-monthly meeting via Zoom. Outcomes of the meeting are further discussed with PPs. Any relevant information is uploaded on the website for easy reference by the various stakeholders</p>	FMO
	<p>18 March – Monthly catch up communication meeting. Outcomes of the meeting are further discussed with PPs. Any relevant information is uploaded on the website for easy reference by the various stakeholders</p>	FMO
April	<p>9 April - External Audit of the Management and Control Systems in Malta in line with Article 11.3 of the Regulations, on the implementation of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021, will be carried out by KPMG Oy Ab.</p>	FMO
	<p>9 April – Monthly catch up communication meeting. Outcomes of the meeting are further discussed with PPs. Any relevant information is uploaded</p>	

	on the website for easy reference by the various stakeholders	FMO
	27 April – Bilateral Meetings during which the NFP/PO discuss with the PPs new activities, ongoing implementation and any pending issues related to procurement and/or status of the project.	FMO
	28 April - Bilateral Meetings during which the NFP/PO discuss with the PPs new activities, ongoing implementation and any pending issues related to procurement and/or status of the project.	FMO
		NFP/PO
May	Communication Bi-monthly meeting via Zoom. outcomes of the meeting are further discussed with PPs. Any relevant information is uploaded on the website for easy reference by the various stakeholders	FMO
	7 May - Monthly catch up communication meeting. Outcomes of the meeting are further discussed with PPs. Any relevant information is uploaded on the website for easy reference by the various stakeholders	FMO
	26 May – Annual Meeting – During the Annual Meeting the NFP/PO presents an overview of the projects and the programme as a whole during 2020. The CSAR 2020 will also be approved or otherwise during this meeting.	NFP/PO
June	4 June - Monthly catch up communication meeting. Outcomes of the meeting are further discussed with PPs. Any relevant information is uploaded on the website for easy reference by the various stakeholders	FMO
July	20 July – Forecast of likely payments - monitoring of expenditure of each project to be reported to the FMO based on the planned activities	PO and CA
	Bilateral meetings during which the NFP/PO discuss with the PPs new	

	<p>activities, ongoing implementation and any pending issues related to procurement and/or status of the project.</p>	NFP/PO
	<p>Communication Bi-monthly meeting via Zoom. Outcomes of the meeting are further discussed with PPs. Any relevant information is uploaded on the website for easy reference by the various stakeholders</p>	FMO
	<p>Project Progress Report (PPR) covering the period 1 January – 30 June 2021 as per Article 7.2.2 of the Manual of Procedures.</p>	NFP/PO
September	<p>15 September - submission of IFR following on the spot checks that take place according to the payments incurred and uploaded on the NFP's payment system between Jan and June 2021.</p>	NFP-CA
	<p>20 September – Forecast of likely payments - monitoring of expenditure of each project to be reported to the FMO based on the planned activities</p>	PO and CA
	<p>Bilateral meetings during which the NFP/PO discuss with the PPs new activities, ongoing implementation and any pending issues related to procurement and/or status of the project.</p>	NFP/PO
	<p>Date tbc - Procurement of freebies and production of an educational activity book to be disseminated at the Birgu Candle Festival in October (tbc due to Covid-19 restrictions). The educational activity book will include information on the Grants in Malta, through colouring activities and word puzzles for children. Copies of the educational activity book will be disseminated at schools, Local Councils, the SIT centre, and the Malta Maritime Museum.</p>	NFP/PO

October	<p>Communication Bi-monthly meeting via Zoom. Outcomes of the meeting are further discussed with PPs. Any relevant information is uploaded on the website for easy reference by the various stakeholders</p> <p>Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds Meeting (JCBF) – During the JCBF meeting, the NFP presents an update on the potential Bilateral Initiatives submitted during 2020 and the implementation of approved Bilateral Projects. Any issues regarding the projects such as finding Donor partners are discussed during the meeting.</p>	FMO
	<p>Date tbc - Exhibition on the EEA and Norway Grants at the Malta Maritime Museum during the Birgu Candle Festival 2021 (tbc due to Covid-19 pandemic).</p>	NFP/PO
November	<p>20 Nov – Forecast of likely payments - monitoring of expenditure of each project to be reported to the FMO based on the planned activities</p> <p>Bilateral meetings during which the NFP/PO discuss with the PPs new activities, ongoing implementation and any pending issues related to procurement and/or status of the project</p>	NFP/PO
December	Drafting of the CSAR 2021	NFP/PO

## E. ANNEXES

1. Updated results (indicator achievements)
2. Communication summary
3. Overview of contracted projects
4. Risk management
5. Monitoring plan
6. Evaluation plan
7. Evaluation report
8. Technical assistance report

## Annex 1: Updated results (indicator achievements)

### MT-LOCALDEV Local Development and Poverty Reduction

Objective: Strengthened social and economic cohesion								
Outcome 1: Improved access to and quality of health services in Malta								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
Number of children and adolescents receiving Sensory Integration (SI) therapy in Malta	Number	0	0 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	0	800	-
Level of satisfaction (by parents) with Sensory Integration (SI) services	Scale 1-5	N/A	1 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	1	4.00	Though the infrastructural and furnishing works were almost finalised by the end of 2020, the service could not be launched due to factors related to COVID 19. The value has to remain 0.
Number of children and adolescents seeking Sensory Integration (SI) services abroad through the Malta Community Chest Fund or other NGO funding	Number	7.00	7 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	7	0.00	-
Percentage of blood donations undergoing testing for West Nile Virus	Percentage	-	-	100	100	100.00 %	100.00 %	100% of blood donations are now being tested for West Nile Virus.
Percentage of neonates born in Malta screened for phenylketonuria (PKU) by 2021	Percentage	-	-	95	100	95.00 %	95.00 %	the target was reached by end of 2020
Output 1.1: Professionals trained in Sensory Integration (SI) Therapy								

Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
<b>Number of Occupational Therapists certified in SI</b>	Number	0.00	0 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	22	12.00, 2 of which shall be Norwegian OTs, who will not be gainfully employed in Malta	12 of these professionals have completed the training by The Collaborative for Leadership in Ayres Sensory Integration (CLASI), while another eight (8) Maltese OTs and two (2) female Norwegian OTs are also being trained in phase 2.
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	-	-	-	19	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<b>Number of Physiotherapists trained in SI</b>	Number	0.00	0 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	2	2.00	have completed the foundation training in SIT
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<b>Number of Speech Language Pathologists trained in SI</b>	Number	0.00	0 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	2	2.00	have completed the foundation training in SIT
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<b>Output 1.2: Sensory Integration Clinic set up and operational</b>								

Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
<b>Number of Sensory Integration Clinics set up</b>	Number	0.00	0 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	1	1.00	Due to COVID-19 related factors, launch of services was postponed to Q1 2021.
<b>Output 1.3: PKU screening service developed</b>								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
<b>PKU screening service added to the existing congenital hypothyroidism screening as part of blood spot testing</b>	Binary	No	No (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	Yes	Yes	-
<b>Number of Clinical Chemists trained in PKU screening</b>	Number	0.00	0 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	0	1.00	-
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<b>Number of Medical Lab Scientists trained in PKU screening</b>	Number	0.00	2 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	2	2.00	Training received by these two medical laboratory scientists was on the use of the UHPLC equipment.
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<b>Output 1.4: Nucleic Acid Amplification (NAT) testing developed</b>								



Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
<b>System and governance for NAT blood testing service in Malta set up</b>	Binary	No	Yes (Strategic Report 2019)	Reported 'Yes' in 2019			Yes	-
<b>Number of NBTS staff trained in NAT testing</b>	Number	0.00	0 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	9	2.00	Training was included in the contract for the supply of the machine, and the professionals were trained on the operation of the system.
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<b>Outcome 2: Improved well-being of vulnerable children and youths</b>								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
<b>Annual number of children and/or youth staying at the residential safe house</b>	Annual number	0	14 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	21	10	-
<b>Number of children and youths at risk accessing integrated services</b>	Number	0.00	108 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	325	500.00	-
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	-	-	-	141	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	-	-	-	184	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Age</i>								

<i>Children and youth (0-17)</i>	-	-	-	-	-	156	-	-
<i>Young adults (18-29)</i>	-	-	-	-	-	153	-	-
<i>Adults (30-64)</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Elderly (65+)</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	16	-	-
<b>Number of youths (16 -25) in education, employment or training 12 months after having received services</b>	Number	0.00	-	-	-	0	50.00	-
<b>Output 2.1: Opportunity Knocks (OK) pack developed for children and youth at risk</b>								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
<b>Number of OK pack copies distributed</b>	Number	0.00	0 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	1,457	2,000.00	-
<b>Output 2.2: A residential safe house for young people (under 18 years of age) set up</b>								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
<b>Capacity of the residential safe house of youths (in number of beds)</b>	Number	0.00	14 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	21	20.00	-
<b>Output 2.3: Integrated services for children and youths at risk provided</b>								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
<b>Integrated services (employment facilitation; business start-up skills,</b>	Binary	No	Yes (Strategic Report 2019)	Reported 'Yes' in 2019			Yes	-

confidence building) related to independent living provided								
<b>Outcome 3: Improved quality of life of deprived communities in urban localities</b>								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
<b>Number of vulnerable individuals benefitting from services provided through the Small Grants Scheme</b>	Number	0.00	0 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	0	1,000.00	The first 5 projects, awarded grants under the SGS 1st call, started implementation towards the end of 2020.
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Age</i>								
<i>Children and youth (0-17)</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Young adults (18-29)</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Adults (30-64)</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Elderly (65+)</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<b>Percentage of residents 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their local council's performance in targeted localities</b>	Percentage	34.62 %, Baseline to be determined once localities are selected following call for project proposals	-	0	0	-	38.43 %	The first 5 projects, awarded grants under the SGS 1st call, started implementation towards the end of 2020.

Output 3.1: Public administration staff in targeted localities trained in good governance principles								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
Number of local councils covered by the training on good governance	Number	0.00	66 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	66	20.00	-
Number of public administration staff trained in good governance principles	Number	0.00	89 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	89	20.00	-
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	-	-	-	48	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	-	-	-	41	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
Output 3.2: Pilot initiatives under the Small Grants Scheme implemented								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
Number of pilot initiatives implemented under the Small Grants Scheme by urban local councils	Number	0.00	0 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	5	6.00, Since the scheme is based on a bottom-up approach, the initiatives will be based on the aspirations of the residents living in the urban areas as highlighted in the same regional economic, social and cultural	A 2nd call for proposals is expected to be launched early 2021.

							community plans. Hence the concept note cannot be more specific about the results of these outputs at this point in time. Notwithstanding, the grant schemes will address the social, educational and environmental needs of these vulnerable individuals in the urban areas.	
<b>Outcome 4: Cultural Heritage Management enhanced</b>								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
Number of jobs created at the Malta Maritime Museum	Number	0.00	-	Reported 2023 and then annually			4.00	-
Annual number of unique digital visitors to the Malta Maritime Museum	Annual number	16,000.00	16,000 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	19,051	21,000.00	3051 were recorded as 'Page views (logged in, unique)' persons on the newly introduced MMM Facebook page
Annual number of visitors to the Malta Maritime Museum	Annual number	20,281.00	20,281 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	0	25,351.00	The museum has been closed since March 2020,

								due to COVID-19 restrictions.
<b>Average audience experience rating (on a scale of 1 to 5)</b>	Scale 1-5	3.12	3.12 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	1	4.12	The value should be 0. The Museum was closed for visitors almost all the year 2020 due to COVID 19 restrictions.
<b>Output 4.1: Malta Maritime Museum restored and upgraded</b>								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
<b>Number of Malta Maritime Museum assets digitised</b>	Number	0.00	0 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	0	2,600.00	Testing is still being carried on a number of artefacts, with the new procured equipment.
<b>Structural upgrade of the Malta Maritime Museum completed</b>	Binary	No	No (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	No	Yes	work-in-progress
<b>Total area of visitor facilities, museum and exhibition space added to the Malta Maritime Museum (in m2)</b>	Number	1,086.00	1,086 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	1,086	1,629.00	work-in-progress
<b>Output 4.2: Innovative presentation of the Malta Maritime Museum's collection supported</b>								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
<b>Number of events targeting audience development</b>	Number	0.00	0 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	0	6.00	no such events could be held during 2020 due to COVID 19 restrictions

<b>Number of new temporary exhibitions displaying Malta Maritime Museum objects</b>	Number	0.00	0 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	0	3.00	no such events could be held during 2020 due to COVID 19 restrictions
<b>Bilateral Outcome: Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the programme</b>								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
<b>Level of satisfaction with the partnership</b>	Scale 1-7	TBD, Survey to be carried out by the FMO	-	-	-	-	4.50, ≥4.5 and an increase on the baseline	-
<i>Financial Mechanism</i>								
<i>EEA Grants</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Norway Grants</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>State type</i>								
<i>Beneficiary State</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Donor State</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Level of trust between cooperating entities in Beneficiary States and Donor States</b>	Scale 1-7	TBD, Survey to be carried out by the FMO	-	-	-	-	4.50, ≥4.5 and an increase on the baseline	-
<i>Financial Mechanism</i>								
<i>EEA Grants</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Norway Grants</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>State type</i>								
<i>Beneficiary State</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Donor State</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

<b>Share of cooperating organisations that apply the knowledge acquired from bilateral partnership</b>	Percentage	N/A	-	-	-	-	50.00 %, Minimum 50%	-
<i>Financial Mechanism</i>								
<i>EEA Grants</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Norway Grants</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>State type</i>								
<i>Beneficiary State</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Donor State</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Bilateral Output 1: Exchange of knowledge and experience between Maltese and Donor State entities facilitated</b>								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Achievements until end of previous reporting period	Achievements until end of December 2020			Target	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Value		
<b>Number of projects involving cooperation with a donor project partner</b>	Number	0.00	4 (Strategic Report 2019)	-	-	4	3.00	-
<i>Financial Mechanism</i>								
<i>EEA Grants</i>	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
<i>Norway Grants</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
<i>Donor State</i>								
<i>Norway</i>	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
<i>Iceland</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Liechtenstein</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<b>Number of staff from Malta in exchanges</b>	Number	0	1 (Strategic Report 2018)	-	-	0	6	No travel could be done due to COVID-19 restrictions
<i>Financial Mechanism</i>								
<i>EEA Grants</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-



<i>Norway Grants</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Donor State</i>								
<i>Norway</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Iceland</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Liechtenstein</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Type of exchange</i>								
<i>Online</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Physical</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<b>Number of staff from Donor States in exchanges</b>	Number	0	-	-	-	0	6	-
<i>Financial Mechanism</i>								
<i>EEA Grants</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Norway Grants</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Donor State</i>								
<i>Norway</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Iceland</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Liechtenstein</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Type of exchange</i>								
<i>Online</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Physical</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-

## Annex 2: Communication summary

### a. Visibility of the Grants and the donors

The NFP prepared a diary for year 2021 and distributed them to all national stakeholders. As instructed by health authorities, no mass events could be held and this hindered the NFP to organise any publicity events for the general public or even for just a few persons! In September 2020, when restrictions had been slightly released, the staff within the Bilateral Funds Unit took the opportunity to join a beach cleaning event with the Ministry for Environment aimed at raising awareness about plastic litter in the sea. During this event, it was possible to disseminate information about the grants through the distribution of promotional items to those present.

With reference to participation in events organised by the FMO, on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020, the Communication Office within the FMO requested the NFP to share links with its relative networks:

- LinkedIn Group for the EEA and Norway Grants Network by encouraging the PPs and PLs to join the EEA and Norway Grants LinkedIn group
- Domestic and Gender-Based Violence fact sheet with NFPs networks

A survey was also filled in with regards to communication needs in light of Covid-19.

A Wikipedia translation about the EEA and Norway Grants was reviewed and sent to the FMO.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020, Ms Raquel Torres Prol as Malta's communication desk officer, informed the NFP that monthly catch-up meetings were envisaged to take place with effect from 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020, the Head of Communication at FMO, Ms Eva Honningsvag, informed the NFP that the first digital Annual Communication Workshop would take place on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Ms Alison Grech and Ms Angele Azzopardi participated in the workshop on both days whereas Ms Carmen Dalli attended for only the first half day. The topics discussed during these two days were *how to communicate in a digital era, milestones for 2021 and challenges and opportunities, digital transformation: are you ready for exponential change*, as well as presentation of *best practice examples from the Communication network* followed by *breakout sessions on how to work and stay together in a digital world*.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020, the Communication Office at FMO provided a virtual backdrop, which was disseminated to all the PPs.

**PDP1** - Year 2020 was a busy year vis-a-vis works at the Marsa Primary School. The Ministry for Health, in charge of PDP1 procured a billboard, which was affixed to the school façade to increase the awareness of parents, teachers and general public on the setting up of the Sensory Integration Therapy Centre. This billboard is situated in a prominent place and includes the EEA Grants 2014 – 2021 logo and co-financing text, which are clearly visible. Similarly, a roll up banner representing the 3 components of the project, namely the SIT, NAT and PKU, with the appropriate logos and co-financing text has been used during training, presentations, and seminars. The presentations also gave prominence and importance to the support of the donors in providing the grant by having the same representations of the donor on each slide's header and footer. Stickers with logo and text have been fixed to all the equipment, that was procured through the grant. The information leaflets on the SIT project, compiled in both Maltese and English, were distributed to teachers and parents at the Marsa Primary School. These leaflets will also be distributed to other schools, health centres, waiting areas in clinics and paediatric service centers in Malta and Gozo to increase awareness of the funding, that permitted the setup of the SIT centre. Once the service commences, the leaflets will also be available to download on the Ministry for Health and Ministry for Education and Employment websites.

**PDP2** - The Project Promoter is doing its utmost to promote the project with the public and other social stakeholders. OK professionals frequently are invited on TV and radio talk shows to promote the objectives and positive impact of the project. Furthermore, promotional material and other merchandise were produced (featuring EEA logos) to publicize further the project with youths, entities in general and the

public. This includes a cube net, that was disseminated among youths. A 30-minute and 3-second video were prepared by the Project Promoter to promote the grants as well as inform youths of the services offered by the Foundation for Social Welfare Services through this project.

**PDP3 and SGS** – the project promoter issued request for quotations for the procurement of various promotional materials such as folders, pens and roll up banners, which are disseminated during events. Same promotional materials were procured under the SGS costs to disseminate during the Project Selection Committees, launches of the calls, training and other events. The Local Government Division as the Programme Operator of the Small Grants Scheme organised a launch event with regards to the first call for proposals in March 2020 in order to explain the overall objective of the Small Grant Scheme to the potential eligible applicants. As a result, ten (10) applications were received with five (5) projects being awarded the grants.

**PDP4** – The project related to the renovation of the Malta Maritime Museum was promoted during a television program aired on the local TV station. During this interview, Heritage Malta explained what the project entails by explaining each section of the Museum that is being restored as well as a detailed explanation of the digitisation part related to the Museum's artefacts. The Norway Grants were also mentioned during this interview. Heritage Malta also prepared various short videos, which provide information on the project. A few links are being included under the section "Multimedia" below.

## b. Website and social media

Continuous updates are being uploaded to the 'eu funds' website. The website <http://eeanorway2014-2021.gov.mt/> is used mainly to report on all events and as a follow up of the new updates related to the projects under EEA and Norway Grants. All the legal documents related to the Grants are also uploaded on this website, including the MOUs between Malta and the Donors, The Regulations of the EEA and Norway Grants and the Programme Agreement. It also gives access to the project promoters and leader to regularly updated documentation such as the Manual of Procedures, Bilateral Fund Application Pack and other guidelines. This website is a tool both for the beneficiaries of these Grants as well as the public in general.

PDP2 - The Project Promoter continuously uses Facebook and Instagram as these are two of the most accessible and popular tools for youths. Promotional material and other innovative material are constantly being uploaded (and boosted accordingly) to inform them of the project and engage with interested youth.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/opportunityknocksmlta>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/opportunityknocks\\_malta/](https://www.instagram.com/opportunityknocks_malta/)

The Local Government Division responsible for both PDP3 and the Small Grant Scheme (SGS), is providing the public with information regarding both projects, in their respective dedicated web pages and Facebook on the following links:

<https://localgovernment.gov.mt/en/DLG/Department%20for%20Local%20Government/Pages/pdp3.aspx>;

<https://localgovernment.gov.mt/en/DLG/Department%20for%20Local%20Government/Pages/Small-Grants-Scheme.aspx>;

<https://www.facebook.com/PDP3NFM>;

<https://www.facebook.com/SGSNFM>

Another link namely <https://www.govserv.org/XX/Unknown/114036173333939/Small-Grant-Scheme---SGS---for-Urban-Localities-in-Malta> is also providing information related to the Small Grant Scheme under the Norway Grants.

PDP4 – This project is constantly being publicized through Facebook and Instagram. Links to these two social media platforms are the following:

<https://www.facebook.com/HeritageMaltaMMMProject> and <https://www.instagram.com/eeamaltamaritimemuseum/>

### c. Best practice examples

PDP2 - Besides the opportunity grants, the Foundation for Social Welfare Services prepared two videos to be aired on television and shared on Facebook. The videos explain the concept of the project, whilst informing the youths of the various opportunities offered by the foundation thanks to this project funded by the EEA Grants. The involvement of youths in these videos, who are the direct beneficiaries of these grants, enhanced even further the effectiveness of these visual tools. Examples in point, are the participation of a 15-year-old youth, who was in a drug rehabilitation programme and at the youths' facility centre in Imtahleb, who now managed to complete the one-to-one hairdressing course and another youth, who was adopted, neglected by the same adoptive parents, spent a lot of his teen years at a Mental health hospital due to mental health issues but has now managed to obtain a diploma from the Malta College of Arts, science and Technology (MCAST) and he was one of the 4 chosen candidates out of 30 people who applied for the B.Sc. Degree in Nursing.

PDP 4 – Heritage Malta participated in an international webinar – a conference organised by CeSHeT – Centre for Heritage and Territory Studies of the European University of Rome within the COST Action 18110 – Underground Built Heritage as a catalyzer for community value, which took place via Zoom due to the Covid-19 restrictions and travel bans. During this webinar, Heritage Malta described how the Norway Grants helped fund the Malta Maritime Museum Digitisation Project as a case study of how Museums are using digital tools to increase accessibility.

### d. Multimedia

The link below refers to the 30 second video prepared by Project PDP2 – Opportunity Knocks (OK) and shared on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/opportunityknocksmalta/videos/2996732620389426>

The following links refer to the TV programme and a few videos prepared for Project PDP4 – *The Malta Maritime Museum: local development through cultural heritage*. All the videos are also uploaded on Heritage Malta's YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/user/HeritageMalta>.

Link to the Programme aired on local tv station. Forward to 43:18 for the part dedicated to project PDP4 <https://fb.watch/4fhDwnA7Kh/>

Video launching the project and providing information about the project. <https://fb.watch/4fhJ9XJ2gW/>

Short Video Clip showing the start of civil works on the silos <https://fb.watch/4fhKWjDt2h/>

Another video providing information on the structural part of the project <https://fb.watch/4fil1mxJad/>

## Annex 3: Overview of contracted projects

### MT-LOCALDEV Local Development and Poverty Reduction

Outcome	Projects	#	# of donor project partners	Amount contracted	% of outcome budget contracted
<b>Outcome 1: Improved access to and quality of health services in Malta</b>	Pre-defined	1	2	€ 2,407,059	100.00 %
	Contracted through open calls	0	0	€ 0	0.00 %
	Contracted through small grants scheme	0	0	€ 0	0.00 %
	<b>Total Outcome 1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>€ 2,407,059</b>	<b>100.00 %</b>
<b>Outcome 2: Improved well-being of vulnerable children and youths</b>	Pre-defined	1	1	€ 941,176	100.00 %
	Contracted through open calls	0	0	€ 0	0.00 %
	Contracted through small grants scheme	0	0	€ 0	0.00 %
	<b>Total Outcome 2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>€ 941,176</b>	<b>100.00 %</b>
<b>Outcome 3: Improved quality of life of deprived communities in urban localities</b>	Pre-defined	1	1	€ 200,000	16.67 %
	Contracted through open calls	0	0	€ 0	0.00 %
	Contracted through small grants scheme	0	0	€ 0	0.00 %
	<b>Total Outcome 3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>€ 200,000</b>	<b>16.67 %</b>
<b>Outcome 4: Cultural Heritage Management enhanced</b>	Pre-defined	1	0	€ 2,015,529	100.00 %
	Contracted through open calls	0	0	€ 0	0.00 %
	Contracted through small grants scheme	0	0	€ 0	0.00 %
	<b>Total Outcome 4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>€ 2,015,529</b>	<b>100.00 %</b>
<b>Programme</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>€ 5,563,764</b>	<b>84.76 %</b>

## Annex 4: Risk management

### MT-LOCALDEV Local Development and Poverty Reduction

Programmatic risks						
Risk description	Risk related to	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk score	Response type	Risk N/A
Inadequate programme/project strategy or processes of the whole programme	Both objectives	1	4	2.00	Avoid/Terminate	No
	<b>Description of planned response</b>	To keep on the same current practice of constantly communicating on with all parties involved through various methods, so as to make sure that each project strategy remains focussed on the programme's objectives and processes.				
	<b>Description of actual response</b>	Despite the prevailing, difficult circumstances due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the NFP and PO continued on with constant communication, virtually or by phone as opposed to face-to-face interactions, in order to ensure identification of any divergences from the original projects' strategies and immediately address the issues to find the best solutions in the circumstances.				
	<b>Planned future response</b>	To keep on the same current practice of constantly communicating with all parties involved through various media and methods, so as to make sure that each project strategy remains focussed on the programme's objectives and processes.				
Inadequate programme/project strategy or processes of the Small Grants Scheme (SGS)	Reducing social and economic disparities	1	4	2.00	Transfer/Share	No
	<b>Description of planned response</b>	The NFP as PO shall build upon the strong professional relationship established with the SGSO and continue on the good practice of keeping constant communication with him. Representation by the NFP as PO, even though as an observer, will continue on the Projects Stakeholders Committee, which is the Monitoring and Selection board of the SGS.				

	<b>Description of actual response</b>	Year 2020 was a crucial year for the SGS since it marked its first concrete implementation activities. The good practice of sharing and discussing any documentation related to this activity, even before it is presented to the PSC, has been kept and became even more stronger in a professional way. The FMO are also being consulted in this process and hence the risk of having inadequate programme/project strategy or processes of SGS was very much minimized.				
	<b>Planned future response</b>	The NFP as PO will continue with the same good practice adopted for the 1st Call for Proposals (2019-20) even for the 2nd Call, planned for early 2021. Besides the constant communication between all parties, both the NFP as PO and the Malta's desk officer in the FMO shall both be participating in any PSC future meetings as observers.				
Technological issues related to CARSII	Both objectives	2	2	2.00	Mitigate	No
	<b>Description of planned response</b>	Besides the provision of in-house IT support on the system, MITA will always be available to provide immediate support on more complicated aspects of the database, as and if required.				
	<b>Description of actual response</b>	MITA, our support system, complemented by our own in-house IT unit, have been of great support throughout 2020. Their real-time interventions resulted in the smooth processing of the first payments processed through CARSII and claimed in the 2 IFRs for the year, without any particular hitches or complications				
	<b>Planned future response</b>	To ensure continued, improved functionality of CARSII, a PO staff member will continue to form part of a technical team, which regularly meets and works on new test cases, in order to upgrade CARS, as and where necessary.				
Obtaining permits	Reducing social and economic disparities	1	1	1.00	Accept	No
	<b>Description of planned response</b>	To keep constant contact with the Project Partners.				

	<b>Description of actual response</b>	Now that most of the structural works are either almost complete (PDP1) or in an advance stage of completion (PDP4), this risk is practically non-existent. No further changes to the premises, affected by the grants, are envisaged till the end of the programme and hence, no further permits should be required.				
	<b>Planned future response</b>	As a future contingency, the NFP as PO shall monitor closely the ongoing works at Malta Maritime Museum (MMM), just in case any new archaeological findings are made, restricting the contractor to stop works and/or requiring permits from the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage. This risk is very minimal (next to none), due to the vast knowledge of HM about the history of the building housing MMM. No surprises are expected!				
Lack of time for proper implementation	Both objectives	2	3	2.45	Mitigate	No
	<b>Description of planned response</b>	Regular bilateral meetings, when possible on bi-monthly basis, shall continue to be held by the NFP as PO with all project promoters to ensure a timely implementation of all activities on the projects. Only in this way can real time solutions be found in case of a crisis management issue.				
	<b>Description of actual response</b>	COVID-19 became a crisis management issue for all PDPs, for different aspects. Bilateral meetings continued in a virtual manner and through these, the NFP as PO could immediately relate to the preoccupations of all 4 PPs that, due to pandemic restrictions, they would have to postpone indefinitely some of their outputs. This was highlighted in the Mid-Term Review, discussed at length with the FMO and finally, all 4 PDPs were granted extensions on the duration of their projects as a mitigating measure.				
	<b>Planned future response</b>	Monitoring, through bilateral, ad-hoc and other reporting methods, the NFP as PO will be keeping track of the outputs and results achieved by each project. Due to the COVID situation and the restrictions it brought it with it for longer than expected, and the fact that an agreement was reached with FMO, some result indicators might only be reached by the end of the programme i.e. April 2024 and not by the end of the project itself.				
<b>Operational risks</b>						
<b>Risk description</b>	<b>Risk related to</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Risk score</b>	<b>Response type</b>	<b>Risk N/A</b>
Possible delays in procurement	Reducing social and economic disparities	2	2	2.00	Mitigate	No



	<b>Description of planned response</b>	Regular bilateral meetings, when possible on bi-monthly basis, shall continue to be held by the NPF as PO with all project promoters to ensure a timely implementation of all activities on the projects. Only in this way can real time solutions be found in case of a crisis management issue.				
	<b>Description of actual response</b>	Procurement issues were very commonly discussed between NFP as PO and PPs, the latter making sure that they are following the correct procedure in procuring services and/or supplies. Any delays were then discussed during the bilateral meetings and the NFP as PO assisted in liaising with the procurement divisions concerned.				
	<b>Planned future response</b>	The regular bilateral meetings will continue to be held in order to make sure that any delays in procurement, which ultimately will result in delays in disbursements, are assessed and solved in the shortest time possible.				
	Reducing social and economic disparities	2	2	2.00	Mitigate	No
Tender offers exceeding available budget	<b>Description of planned response</b>	Regular bilateral meetings, when possible on bi-monthly basis, shall continue to be held by the NPF as PO with all project promoters to ensure a timely implementation of all activities on the projects. Only in this way can procurement issues be discussed and hopefully solved in real time . A strong professional relationship will also continue with the Department of Contracts, who usually assist with such issues.				
	<b>Description of actual response</b>	Before embarking on any such activities, procurement issues were very commonly discussed between NFP as PO and PPs, the latter making sure that they were following the correct procedure in procuring services and/or supplies. Where the PP has a specific Ministry Procurement Unit (MPU), they were advised to consult with them, when in doubt. OTS findings were not only utilised for verification purposes but also as a teaching tool for future reference.				
	<b>Planned future response</b>	The NFP as PO will remain at the disposal of the PPs for whatever difficulty they might encounter during procurement procedures. The MPU and/or Department of Contracts (DOC) shall be consulted, when in doubt. OTS findings will continue to be utilised as a teaching tool for future reference, and not only for verification purposes.				
Tender offers found technically non	Reducing social and	2	3	2.45	Accept	No

compliant during the evaluation process	economic disparities					
	<b>Description of planned response</b>	Regular bilateral meetings, when possible on bi-monthly basis, shall continue to be held by the NPF as PO with all project promoters to ensure a timely implementation of all activities on the projects. Only in this way can procurement issues be discussed and hopefully solved in real time . A strong professional relationship will also continue with the Department of Contracts, who usually assist with such issues.				
	<b>Description of actual response</b>	In such instances, the PP was advised to re-issue the tender document, even though it would have meant longer time to award. In a particular case where time was of essence (PDP1), the PP, in consultation with the DOC, opted for an accelerated procedure.				
	<b>Planned future response</b>	Regular bilateral meetings, virtually and ad hoc, will continue to be held with the PPs so that similar problems can be assessed immediately and solved in as short time as possible.				
Eventuality of appeals lodged following publication of further results	Reducing social and economic disparities	1	3	1.73	Accept	No
	<b>Description of planned response</b>	The NFP as PO will continue to monitor each procurement process and take the necessary actions accordingly.				
	<b>Description of actual response</b>	The PPs were advised and encouraged to have adequate and knowledgeable persons on the Tender Evaluation Board, ensuring a sound, well-informed assessment of the bids received. In this way, the risk of receiving appeals following the publication of results was very much minimised. Emphasis was also made on the publication of correct and clear specifications, to avoid any doubts during the evaluation process.				
	<b>Planned future response</b>	The NFP as PO will continue to monitor each procurement process and take the necessary actions accordingly, consulting other experts in the field, as required.				
Retain the right staff in adequate numbers	Both objectives	2	2	2.00	Mitigate	No

	<b>Description of planned response</b>	Vacancies will continue to be regularly open and promoted on the Govt Recruitment Portal		
	<b>Description of actual response</b>	The two programme managers working in the Bilateral Funds Unit as NFP and PO staff were retained during 2020 and no further vacancies were opened during 2020.		
	<b>Planned future response</b>	The vacancy for a senior manager will open and be promoted on the government recruitment portal.		
<b>Overall risk of the programme</b>				
		<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Risk score</b>
OVERALL RISK OF THE PROGRAMME		2	2	2.00

## **Annex 5: Monitoring plan**

Please note this Annex is uploaded separately and is not visible in this document. Please download and print separately if needed.

## **Annex 6: Evaluation plan**

Not Available

## **Annex 7: Evaluation report**

Not Available

## Annex 8: Technical assistance report

### Overview of main activities

**Additional Management Systems** - The team of the Bilateral Funds Unit under the Funds and Programmes Division (FPD), within the Office of the Prime Minister, is managed by the Director: Programmes and Projects, Ms Carmen Dalli. In the absence of a Senior Manager all throughout 2020, this unit was also supervised directly by Ms Dalli. The latter was supported by two desk officers, Ms. Alison Grech and Ms Angele Azzopardi. Ms Grech fulfils the management function of the NFP as PO, while Ms Azzopardi fulfils the management function of the NFP, both on a full-time basis. 100% of their total working hours is charged through the EEA and Norwegian PO costs and TA respectively. The position of Senior Manager was still vacant until the end of the year under review.

The Financial Control Unit (FCU) within the Funds and Programmes Division also performs duties related to verification of payments such as procurement, on a sample basis. Ms Raisa Cacciattolo, programme manager, is currently verifying the payments before submitting the IFR. This manager reports directly to the Director General, Ing Anthony Camilleri, who acts as the Head of the Maltese NFP.

**Annual Meeting** - The Annual Meeting for year 2020 was held online on 27 May, via TEAMS, due to the lockdown and travel restrictions imposed on Malta in result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Officials from the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanism Committee (FMC), The Norwegian Embassy in Rome, the Embassy of Iceland in London, the Financial Mechanism Office in Brussels (FMO), and the Maltese NFP and NFP as PO all participated in this online meeting. The Annual Report 2019 and any updates till the date of the meeting were discussed and at the end, the report was approved by Donors and FMO.

The draft minutes of the Annual Meeting 2020 were sent to the FMO on 10 August 2020 and adopted accordingly by all stakeholders.

**Other meetings** - During 2020, the NFP continued the monitoring of the programme in a hybrid manner, notwithstanding the restrictions imposed through social distancing and avoidance of group meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The bilateral meetings with project promoters continued uninterrupted through technological means while on-the-spot checks and verifications of expenditure were carried out in-situ, always observing the pandemic obligations as instructed by health authorities. The same technological means were utilised for the Annual Meeting (as stated above), the Communications Workshops with FMO and the JCBF with the Committee members, which were all held online.

**Promotion and information activities** - The NFP prepared a diary for year 2021 and distributed them to all national stakeholders. As instructed by health authorities, no mass events could be held and this hindered the NFP to organise any publicity events for the general public or even for just a few!

Despite this, in September 2020, when restrictions had been slightly released, the staff within the Bilateral Funds Unit took the opportunity to join a beach cleaning event with the Ministry for Environment aimed at raising awareness about plastic litter in the sea. During this event, it was possible to disseminate information about the grants through the distribution of promotional items to those present.

### Budget overview

The following table gives an overview of the total TA budget for 2020 and cumulatively.

	Allocated Total Budget	Planned expenditure till end December 2020	Actual expenditure till end December 2020	Total Cumulative Disbursement till end December 2020	Planned expenditure for y ending December 2021
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>340,000</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>62,510</b>	<b>133,200</b>	<b>50,000</b>

## Procurement

Procurement procedures involved mainly the organisation of meetings in Malta, travel expenses (including procurement of flight tickets and subsistence allowance) and the procurement of promotional and information materials. The relative procurement procedures, as stipulated in section 5.1.1 'Public Procurement' of the Manual of Procedures, were strictly adhered to.

## Staffing

<b>National Focal Point</b>				
<b>Name of staff</b>	<b>Official position</b>	<b>Main tasks</b>	<b>Level of effort (% of working time)</b>	<b>Funded through the Grants (Y/N)</b>
Mr Raphael Scerri (until 31/03/2020)  Ing Anthony Camilleri (since 01/04/2020)	Director General (Funds and Programmes Division)	Head of NFP	10%	N
Ms Carmen Dalli	Director (Programmes and Projects)	NFP as PO - Monitoring the implementation of the management functions of PO	40%	N
Ms Alison Grech	Programme Manager (EU Funds)	NFP as PO project management-related duties	100%	Y (from PO Costs)
Ms Angele Azzopardi	Programme Manager (EU Funds)	NFP related duties	100%	Y (from TA)
<b>Certifying Authority</b>				
<b>Name of staff</b>	<b>Official position</b>	<b>Main tasks</b>	<b>Level of effort (% of working time)</b>	<b>Funded through the Grants (Y/N)</b>
Mr Edwin Camilleri	Chief Coordinator (EU Certifying Authority)	Counter checking and Submitting the forecast of likely payments four times a year and the IFRs twice a year	5%	N
Ms Yana Mifsud	Senior Manager (EU Certifying Authority)	Counter Checking and Submitting the forecast of likely payments four times a year and the IFRs twice a year	5%	N
<b>Audit Authority</b>				
<b>Name of staff</b>	<b>Official position</b>	<b>Main tasks</b>	<b>Level of effort (% of working time)</b>	<b>Funded through the Grants (Y/N)</b>

Ms Simone Sapiano	IAID Senior Audit Manager	Sample auditing of verified payments	5%	N
<b>Irregularities Authority</b>				
<b>Name of staff</b>	<b>Official position</b>	<b>Main tasks</b>	<b>Level of effort (% of working time)</b>	<b>Funded through the Grants (Y/N)</b>
Mr Mark Said	Director (Financial Investigations)	Preparation and Submission of irregularities reports	5%	N